

# "You Look So Good For Your Age": The First Steps of Creating a Measure of Daily Experiences of Ageism

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## BACKGROUND

**Ageism** is a form of prejudice based on one's perceived age (Cary et al., 2017)

- **Benevolent ageism** refers to when older adults are viewed and treated with a paternalistic lens (high warmth/low competence), such that the actions may seem positive, but still communicate negative assumptions about age (e.g., lack of competence)
- **Positive ageism** refers to the favorable stereotypes and behavior directed toward older adults, that is free from negative assumptions
- **Hostile ageism** refers to overtly negative stereotypes and treatment toward older adults

The current research on ageism is limited in:

- Lack of focus on ageist **experiences**, as most research examines ageist **attitudes**
- Current ageism experiences do not include positive or benevolent experiences
- Little research has explored ageism in younger and middle-aged people
- No current research has examined how ageism is experienced in a daily diary method

**The goal of our research is to create a measure of daily experiences of ageism to use in a future daily diary study**

## METHODS

We started our process by conducting a literature review of articles about ageist experiences (Allen et al., 2021; Chasteen et al. 2020), ageist attitudes (Horhota et al., 2019) and scales that assess ageism (e.g., Cary et al., 2017; Cherry, 2008)

We first created items by rephrasing previous scales/examples found in our literature review, such that they were framed to capture personal experiences

Once we finish generating items, we will pilot their content validity with pre-testing, constructive feedback, and survey administration from participants of different ages (Boateng et al., 2018)

After the questions are edited, we will run factor analysis to establish how many factors are included and focus on item reduction (Boateng et al., 2018)

Our final stage will be to evaluate the validity (e.g., convergent, divergent, test-retest) and reliability of our scale

## EXAMPLE ITEMS

### Example Benevolent Items

1. Someone complimented me on how I look, despite my age
2. I was called "young" in a harmless manner
3. Someone helped me with an everyday act (e.g., opening doors, crossing the street, carrying bags), even though I did not need the assistance
4. People insist on helping me with things I can do on my own
5. I have felt someone went out of their way to shield my feelings from something upsetting
6. Someone reminded me to be careful in case I might hurt myself doing everyday tasks
7. People repeated things to me because they thought I did not understand the information the first time
8. Others adapted the way to speak to help me understand them
9. Others tried to make information more easily understandable for me
10. I was treated with unearned respect, because of my age
11. I was offered a discount or special offer, because of my age
12. People go out of their way to make sure that I do not have to get up from where I am sitting
13. I am referred to as a term of endearment (e.g., dear, sweetie) by people who don't know me well
14. People often laugh at what I say, even if I didn't intend to be funny

### Example Positive Items

1. Someone said that I was wise or mentioned my wisdom
2. Someone asked me for advice and/or mentoring because of my gained life experiences
3. Someone mentioned that I care about future generations
4. Someone offered a gesture of respect due to my age
5. Someone assumed I was mature because of my age
6. Someone assumed I had knowledge based on my age

### Example Hostile Items

1. I was ignored because of my age
2. I was avoided because of my age
3. Someone treated me unfairly at work due to my age
4. I was treated with a lack of respect due to my age
5. I was told jokes that poke fun at people my age
6. I was called an insulting name that relates to my age
7. Someone made jokes about my age
8. I was told that I had a "Senior-Moment"
9. People repeated things to me in a frustrated tone because they assumed I could not hear
10. I was talked to with simple phrases or words, because they assumed I could not understand
11. Others assumed I could not hear well because of my age
12. Others assumed that I could not understand complex information because of my age
13. I was called "young" (i.e., hey young lady") in a condescending tone
14. I was perceived as unattractive because of my age
15. I was not allowed to participate in activities because they thought I was unable due to my age

## WHAT'S NEXT?

### Our next steps:

- This research is ongoing
- We will continue to create and evaluate new items to depict experiences of ageism
  - Need more positive ageism experiences
- Remove items that appear to be:
  - Redundant
  - Poorly worded
  - Do not fully capture ageist experiences
- Research assistants of the SMILES Lab will start the pre-testing phase in the Fall
- We hope to test with pilot participants of different ages

### Why is this research important?

- Everyone ages, and ageism is a harmful prejudice that negatively affects health and is costly, estimating \$63 billion per year (Levy et al., 2009; Levy et al., 2020)
- Ageism is considered a worldwide crisis (Levy et al., 2022)
- This study provides necessary tools to better capture how ageism is experienced in everyday life, and could provide insight on to how to address and reduce ageism

**SMILES Lab**  
Sexuality, Minoritized Identities, & Lifespan Experiences

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