

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Ageist Stereotypes and Attitudes Towards Older People in Türkiye

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## Abstract

With the population aging in Türkiye, the nature of intergenerational relationships in society has begun to change, which has brought about ageism and age-based discrimination. Acquiring a higher visibility during the COVID-19 pandemic, ageism has serious negative consequences both for those exposed to it and for the society. This study aims to examine the prevalence of ageist stereotypes and attitudes towards older people in Türkiye. Quantitative analyses were conducted on secondary data obtained from a survey with a nationally representative sample on ageism and age discrimination. Results showed that older people were more commonly described as 'wise', 'competent' and 'reliable', while less commonly described as 'healthy', 'in touch with life,' and 'friendly'. Additionally, the prevalence of describing older people as healthy, friendly, and trustworthy was lower among younger people compared to middle-aged and older people. Younger people's agreement with four ageist statements regarding the participation of older people and their impact in social life is higher than middle-aged and older people. Ordinal regression analyses were conducted to investigate the factors associated with negative attitudes towards older people. They revealed that age and lifestyle are the most significant factors shaping ageist attitudes, but a distinct set of factors shape each attitude.

**Keywords:** Ageism, older adults, stereotypes, attitudes, quantitative analysis

## Öz

Türkiye'de nüfusun yaşlanmasıyla birlikte toplumdaki kuşaklararası ilişkilerin doğası da giderek değişmeye başlamıştır. Bu değişimin önemli sonuçları arasında yaşlı ayrımcılığı yer almaktadır. Dünyada ve Türkiye'de özellikle COVID-19 pandemisi sırasında daha da görünür hâle gelen yaşlılık hem yaşlılığa maruz kalanlar hem de toplumun yapısı açısından ciddi seviyede olumsuz sonuçlar doğurmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'de yaşlılara yönelik kalıp yargılar ve tutumları incelemektir. Bu amaca yönelik olarak, temsili bir örneklem ile yaşlılık ve yaş ayrımcılığı üzerine gerçekleştirilen anket uygulamasından elde edilen ikincil veriye nicel analizler uygulanmıştır. Bu analizler ışığında, yaşlıların "bilge", "yetkin" ve "güvenilir" olarak tanımlanma oranlarının daha yüksekken, "sağlıklı", "hayatın içinde" ve "arkadaşça" olarak nitelendirilme oranlarının daha düşük olduğu görülmüştür. Ayrıca, yaşlıları sağlıklı, arkadaşça ve güvenilir tanımlama oranlarının, orta yaşlılara ve yaşlılara kıyasla, gençler arasında daha düşük olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Tutumlarda da benzer bir tablonun ortaya çıktığı görülmektedir. Yaşlıların sosyal yaşama katılma ve toplum üzerindeki etkilerine dair dört yaşçı ifadeye gençlerin katılımı, orta yaşlı ve yaşlılara kıyasla, daha yüksektir. Son olarak yaşlılara yönelik olumsuz tutumlarla ilişkilenen faktörlerin neler olduğunu anlamak adına uygulanan ordinal regresyon analizler, yaş ve hayat tarzının tüm tutumlarla ilişkili olduğunu ortaya çıkarmış; ancak, her bir tutum için ayrı faktörlerin de rol oynadığını göstermiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yaşlılık, yaşlı bireyler, kalıp yargılar, tutumlar, nicel analiz

## Introduction

A phenomenon not only experienced by developed countries, population aging has also accelerated in many developing countries, including Türkiye. According to TurkStat 2024 data, the share of the population aged 65 and over in the general population in Türkiye has reached 10.6%. Although this rate may not seem as high, the older population has increased by 21.4% in the last 5 years. According to population projections, the proportion of the older population is expected to increase to 12.9% in 2030, 16.3% in 2040, 22.6% in 2060 and 25.6% in 2080. These projections indicate that population aging will inevitably and rapidly continue in Türkiye.

The needs and demands of an aging population introduce serious transformations in the structure of a society. Yet, the extent to which social policies in Türkiye are adequate to meet the unique demands of a rapidly aging population is debatable. Studies on ageism and age discrimination in Türkiye are insufficient, and policy documents also reflect this insufficiency. For example, in the 12<sup>th</sup> Development Plan (2024, p. 195), only the statement that "measures will be taken to prevent social exclusion of the older individuals" was included among the policies and measures on aging, but discrimination against older people is not even mentioned.

The Global Ageism Report (2021) published by the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that one out of every two people in the world practices ageism against older people. Existing studies have shown that ageism and age-based discrimination are common in many countries (Ayalon, 2019; Swift et al., 2018). Officer et al. (2020) showed that ageism is more prevalent especially in countries with a larger older population. Therefore, it could be stated that there is a close relationship between the rate of population aging and increase in ageism towards older people. On the other hand, Ayalon (2019) has shown that the perception of older and young people as a threat to society goes hand in hand, in other words, ageism against older and ageism against younger people are interrelated.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ageism towards older people has become more visible (Ayalon et al., 2021; Ng et al., 2022a; Visintin, 2021).

Since the risk of contracting and dying from coronavirus was considered to be higher for older people, both benevolent ageism and hostile ageism have been carried out against the older population (Cary et al., 2017). In other words, practices aimed at protecting older people from coronavirus, which could lead to human rights violations, have become widespread in addition to the negative attitudes such as blaming older people for the spread of the virus. During the pandemic, many actors, ranging from politicians to media outlets, have further contributed to the triumph of ageism by portraying older people as "helpless, fragile, individuals who do not contribute to society" (Ayalon et al., 2021, p.50).

Similarly, studies have demonstrated that ageism increased in Türkiye during the pandemic period (Çiçek & Mercan, 2020; Madran, 2021; Taşdelen, 2020; Varışlı & Gültekin, 2020). Most empirical studies on ageism in Türkiye have been conducted with very specific and small samples such as university youth and healthcare workers (Demir, 2020; Ersoy & Palantöken-Engin, 2023; Yılmaz et al., 2012) or through media analysis (Taşdelen, 2020; Tuncal et al., 2017; Zengin, 2015). A large-scale study on the determinants of ageism revealed that attitudes towards older people are in general positive but shaped by age, marital status, gender, income, and education level (Demir Gökmen et al., 2020).

This study is based on quantitative analyses applied to secondary data obtained from a survey conducted with a nationally representative sample (N= 2258) to examine stereotypes and attitudes towards older people in Türkiye. By presenting the prevalence and associated factors of ageism in the country, it aims to provide important insights for social policy makers and social workers in combating ageism against older people.

## Ageism and Age-based Discrimination

Butler (1969) was the first social scientist to use the concept of ageism and coined this term to refer to the negative perceptions and attitudes towards members of a group based solely on their age. In this definition, ageism is considered as a combina-

tion of what we think or feel – stereotypes, prejudices – and discriminatory behaviors towards both older and younger people. Today, ageism is considered the sum of attitudes, behaviors, institutional practices, and policies (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018; Con Wright, 2020; Çayır, 2012). Moreover, it is argued that ageism includes not only negative judgments but also positive judgments, and therefore it is crucial to make a distinction between "hostile ageism" and "benevolent ageism" (Cary et al., 2017; Lev et al., 2018).

Ageism can also be directed towards young people; however, most of the research in both international and national literature focuses on ageism towards older people. Ageist stereotypes and attitudes towards older people start at a young age and are reinforced throughout life (Marques et al., 2020). There are some theories that explain ageism at micro, meso, or macro level. Among the social psychology theories that offer explanations at the micro level, terror management theory, stereotype embodiment theory, and social identity theory are the most frequently used (Lev et al., 2018; Taşdemir, 2022). While the terror management theory is a theory that aims to explain the origins of ageism from young and middle-aged people towards older people, the stereotype embodiment theory aims to explain the ageism of older people towards their own age group (Lev et al., 2018). Social identity theory provides a broader framework for understanding the origins of ageism among all age groups. The common point of these theories is that they accept that age is a social construct and that positive or negative judgments are made about individuals in different age groups based on this construct.

Some studies have shown that being younger, male, and less educated is directly related to ageist perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards older people (Officer et al., 2020). However, a systematic analysis reveals that the strongest determinants of ageism, especially among young and middle-aged people, are the quality of communication with older people, and positive and negative representations of older people (Marques et al., 2020). Cooney et al. (2022) examine the relationship between perspectives on one's own aging and knowledge about aging and ageism. The study in

question showed that ageist judgments, attitudes, and behaviors are more likely among young people who have greater concerns about their own aging and lower levels of knowledge about aging. Moreover, intergenerational interactions affect the prevalence of ageist perceptions and attitudes (Drury et al., 2016; Kwong & Yan, 2023; Özkan Bardakçı & Girgin Büyükbayraktar, 2025; Yılmaz & Çolak, 2017). As intergenerational interaction increases, discriminatory attitudes and behaviors towards older people decrease. The negative portrayal of older people in the media also causes the widespread use of ageist stereotypes in society (Taşdelen, 2020; Tuncal et al., 2017; Zengin, 2015). Additionally, policies towards aging and older people strongly shape ageist stereotypes and ageism in society (Ng et al., 2022b).

The concept of ageism has been expanded over time to signify a form of discrimination that can be self-applied and shaped by one's feelings and orientations towards one's own age. This situation, called "self-ageism", occurs when older people perceive their own age identity negatively and internalize negative stereotypes about older age created by society (Ayalon et al., 2021; Ishikawa, 2023). The main determinant of self-ageism is observed to be the health status of older people (Marques et al., 2020). Some social scientists argue that there is a strong relationship between ageism and healthism and emphasize that the stereotype of being sick and disabled attributed to older people triggers age-based discrimination (Gekoski & Knox, 1990; Overall, 2006). Similarly, Gendron et al. (2024) argue that there is a close relationship between ageism and ableism in modern societies. Older people's association of their old age with diseases affects their health and thus their mortality rates (Stewart et al., 2012).

### **The Effects of Ageism on the Individual and Society**

Ageism towards older people is referred to as "a worldwide crisis" (Levy et al., 2022). This crisis has important implications for individuals' health, well-being, and human rights. Kang and Kim (2022) show that the impact of ageism on the psy-

chological well-being of older people is quite negative. Studies based on systematic analysis also emphasize that ageism has a global dimension in the way that has a serious negative impact on the physical health of older people worldwide (Chang et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2021).

In addition to its individual effects, ageism has significant effects on society. For example, Levy et al. (2020) state that ageism leads to various health problems that impose a huge financial burden on society. Similarly, Swift et al. (2017) point out that ageism creates serious obstacles for individuals to achieve the ideals of active aging, making it impossible for older people to make a positive contribution to social functioning. Moreover, the widespread circulation of age-based stereotypes in society triggers age-based discrimination (Voss et al., 2018). Therefore, the most important consequence of ageism is the conscious or unconscious exclusion of older people from many areas such as education, working life, politics, sports, and participation in the public sphere.

For the reasons mentioned so far, Higgs and Gilleard (2022) interpret ageism as a regime of oppression. Indeed, age as a matrix of domination has become increasingly important in intersectionality studies. Ageism intersects with other forms of discrimination such as sexism and racism, leading to differentiated experiences within the older population (Krekula et al., 2018; Steward et al., 2023). Many studies show that ageism intersects with sexism, and therefore, older women experience ageism differently from older men (Saadati, 2024; Yelboğa & Varol, 2018).

Ageism, becoming more and more visible all over the world, brings with it a diversification in the ways of combating this form of discrimination. The World Health Organization has named 2021-2030 as the "Decade of Healthy Ageing". The organization provided some strategy recommendations to reduce ageism as a prerequisite for healthy ageing under the headings of policies and laws, educational interventions, and interventions in intergenerational communication (WHO, 2021). As many studies on the origins of ageism have shown, social policies (Ng et al., 2022b) and intergenerational communication (Drury et al., 2016; Kwong

and Yan, 2023) are some of the important tools to combat ageism.

## Methods

This exploratory study aims to understand stereotypes and attitudes towards older people in Türkiye. To do so, it examines secondary level data<sup>1</sup> collected by conducting a survey on a nationally representative sample of individuals over the age of 15 in Türkiye in October 2023 (KONDA Barometresi, 2023). KONDA Research and Consultancy Company conducts public opinion surveys on a regular basis and follows broad ethical principles, such as voluntary participation, anonymity, and confidentiality. Upon request, I received the data from this company in SPSS sav data format, with no personal identification contained.

For this survey, a set of questions were developed based on my suggestions. These questions were designed to help us understand the age-inclusive or exclusive character of people's friendship networks and households, as well as their self-rated health. The primary motivation to include questions on people's social networks stemmed from previous research showing an association between contact with older people and ageism (Drury et al., 2016; Kwong & Yan, 2023; Özkan Bardakçı & Girgin Büyükbayraktar, 2025; Yılmaz & Çolak, 2017). Given the literature on how ageism relates to health outcomes (Chang et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2021; Kan & Kim, 2022), a question on self-rated health was also included.

The questions about experiences and expressions of ageism were modeled after the questions from the Ageism Module of the *European Social Survey* (ESS), which was last conducted in Türkiye in 2011 (Abrams et al., 2011). The questions about age identification, namely "at what age people generally stop being considered young" and "at what age they start being described as old" were translated directly to Turkish. Adjectives associated with older people were likewise taken from the ESS but adapted rather than directly translated to Turkish. Statements examining the attitudes towards older people in Türkiye were also adjusted for the Turkish context.

<sup>1</sup> The data are available upon request via [veri@konda.com.tr](mailto:veri@konda.com.tr).



In all questions about adjectives appropriate for and attitudes towards older people in the ESS, the age is consistently stated as 70. In this survey, 60 was used as the age for the questions on the adjectives because previous research has shown that people regard themselves older at younger ages (Abrams et al., 2011; McConatha et al., 2004) and studies on older people in Türkiye consider 60 or

65 to be the beginning of old age. The age of 70 was kept for the questions about the attitudes towards older people because free public transportation is available to people over the age of 65, and age-related disabilities and chronic diseases are more likely prevent older people from active contributions in much older ages.

This study focuses on two themes: (a) stereotypes and (b) attitudes towards older people. In order to understand stereotypes about older people, participants were presented with a list of adjectives such as "friendly", "competent", "respectable", "responsible", "healthy", "wise", "reliable," and "in life". They were asked to indicate the adjectives in this list that they deemed appropriate for individuals aged 60 and over without any limitations in the number of adjectives they could use. In order to understand attitudes towards older people, four statements were included in the survey.

These statements are as follows, respectively: "I support older people's use of public transportation free of charge.", "I believe that people over the age

*Table 1. Demographic Information about the Sample*

	18-29 Years N=669	30-59 Years N=1494	60+ years N=425	Total N=2588
<b>Sex</b>				
Female	312 (46,8%)	783 (52,6%)	200 (47,2%)	1295 (50,2%)
Male	355 (53,2%)	705 (47,4%)	224 (52,8%)	1284 (49,8%)
<b>Age</b>	23,58±3,375	43,45±8,256	66,91±6,154	42,16±15,470
<b>Education Status</b>				
Below high School	120 (18,1%)	696 (46,7%)	316 (74,5%)	1132 (43,9%)
High School	316 (47,6%)	405 (27,2%)	64 (15,1%)	785 (30,4%)
University	228 (34,3%)	389 (26,1%)	44 (10,4%)	661 (25,6%)
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Turkish	499 (74,6%)	1184 (79,3%)	360 (84,7%)	2043 (78,9%)
Kurdish	126 (18,8%)	224 (15,0%)	27 (6,4%)	377 (14,6%)
Zaza	5 (0,7%)	14 (0,9%)	7 (1,6%)	26 (0,1%)
Arab	18 (2,7%)	24 (1,6%)	6 (1,4%)	48 (1,9%)
Other	21 (3,1%)	48 (3,2%)	25 (5,9%)	94 (3,6%)
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Single	481 (72,2%)	155 (10,4%)	17 (4,0%)	653 (25,3%)
Engaged	30 (4,5%)	10 (0,7%)	0	40 (1,6%)
Married	151 (22,7%)	1252 (84,0%)	318 (75,4%)	1721 (66,7%)
Widow	1 (0,2%)	45 (3,0%)	78 (18,5%)	124 (4,8%)
Divorced	3 (0,5%)	29 (1,9%)	9 (2,1%)	41 (1,6%)
<b>Employment Status</b>				
White-collar worker	137 (20,5%)	362 (24,3%)	10 (2,4%)	509 (19,7%)
Workers, shopkeepers, farmers	192 (28,8%)	468 (31,5%)	42 (9,9%)	702 (27,2%)
Retired	-	107 (7,2%)	237 (56,0%)	344 (13,3%)
Housewife	86 (12,9%)	481 (32,3%)	121 (28,6%)	688 (26,7%)
Student	191 (28,6%)	4 (0,3%)	-	195 (7,6%)
Unemployed	61 (9,1%)	66 (4,4%)	13 (3,1%)	140 (5,4%)
<b>Household Type</b>				
Single person household	48 (7,3%)	67 (4,5%)	67 (16,0%)	182 (7,1%)
Married couple (without a child) household	52 (7,9%)	204 (13,8%)	170 (40,5%)	426 (16,6%)
Nuclear family household	442 (66,8%)	1033 (69,9%)	134 (31,9%)	1609 (62,9%)
Three generations household	34 (5,1%)	134 (9,1%)	41 (9,8%)	209 (8,2%)
Extended family household	23 (3,5%)	27 (1,8%)	7 (1,7%)	57 (2,2%)
Other	63 (9,5%)	13 (0,9%)	1 (0,2%)	77 (3,0%)
<b>Settlement Code</b>				
Rural	73 (10,9%)	174 (11,6%)	46 (10,8%)	293 (11,3%)
Urban	225 (33,6%)	495 (33,1%)	143 (33,6%)	863 (33,3%)
Metropolitan	371 (55,5%)	835 (55,2%)	236 (55,5%)	1432 (55,3%)
<b>Lifestyle</b>				
Modern	375 (56,6%)	414 (28,0%)	73 (17,5%)	862 (33,7%)
Traditional Conservative	223 (33,6%)	727 (49,2%)	177 (42,5%)	1127 (44,1%)
Religious Conservative	65 (9,8%)	337 (22,8%)	166 (39,9%)	568 (22,2%)

of 70 are a burden on the healthcare system in Türkiye.", "I think that people over the age of 70 make important contributions to the Turkish economy.", "I think that the proportion of people over the age of 70 should be lower in Turkish politics." A 5-point Likert scale was used to ask the participants to indicate their level of agreement with each statement - *absolutely true, true, neither true nor false, false, absolutely false*.

## Sample

In this study, sample selection was limited to individuals over the age of 18 (N=2588). The average age of the sample was 42.2 and there was an equal sex distribution. Among the participants, the percentage of those with less than high school education (43.9%) and the percentage of those who were married (66.7%) are high. Looking at the employment status of the participants, the percentage of workers, tradesmen, and farmers (27.2%) is almost the same as the percentage of housewives (26.7%). Most of the participants (78.9%) stated their ethnic origin as Turkish. More than half of the sample are those who lived in metropolitan areas (55.3%) and had a nuclear family structure (62.9%).

## Analysis

Before starting the analysis, some variables were recoded in accordance with the purpose of the study. First, the age variable was coded as a categorical variable, for three age groups: 18-29, 30-59 and 60+. This allows examining the distribution of stereotypes and attitudes towards the older people, which is the focus of the study, according to age groups.

In order to measure attitudes towards older people, the first and third statements listed above were reverse coded. Thus, all statements were coded as negative and agreeing with the negative statements was interpreted as a more ageist attitude. In addition, the answer to each statement indicating attitudes was coded binary as "Absolutely true", "True" =1, "Neither false nor true", "False", "Absolutely false" =0.

The appropriateness of adjectives attributed to older people and attitudes towards older people

across three age groups were analyzed by using Pearson's chi square test and Cramer's V. Pearson's chi-square test was used to evaluate the independence of distributions between categorical variables (adjectives and age groups), as both variables were categorical, and the aim was to assess association patterns between categories. The strength of these associations was assessed using Cramer's V, which provides a measure of the effect size for chi-square tests. To explore the factors that can be associated with attitudes towards older people, ordinal logistic regression analysis was conducted, as the dependent variable (attitudes) was ordinal in nature and the goal was to model the relationship with predictors, treating age as a continuous linear predictor (Agresti & Finlay, 2009). Statistical significance level was accepted as  $p < 0.05$  in all tests. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Windows 26.0 package program was used for statistical analysis of data.

## Results

### Stereotypes about Older People

In Turkish society, there are many adjectives that may or may not be considered appropriate for older people. For example, it is generally accepted that people lose some of their abilities as they age and become more passive and dependent. They may also be considered to gain new qualities such as wisdom and experience to replace some of the qualities lost with age. These stereotypes ignore differences in gender identity, class, or other social identities, and characterize people based solely on their chronological age.

Table 2 presents which adjectives the participants find appropriate for people aged 60 and over. More than half of the sample (51.5%) considered the adjective "respectable" appropriate for the older people. This shows that the most important and positive stereotype of the older people in Turkish society is respectability. This adjective is followed with "wise" (45.7%), "responsible" (40.1%), "reliable" (39.9%), and "competent" (32.5%).

"Healthy" is the least used adjective for older people. Only 9.3% of the sample considered this

adjective appropriate for older people. In other words, negative stereotypes about the health of older people were prevalent in this sample. This situation could be tied to the fact that chronic diseases, disability, and general health problems are expected to increase with age. Following this adjective, the other least appropriate adjectives for older people are "friendly" (15%) and "vibrant" (26.6%).

When we look at the distribution of these adjectives according to age groups, the statistically significant ones are "healthy", "friendly", and "reliable" ( $p < .001$ ).

### Ageist Attitudes towards Older People

Ageism includes positive and negative age-based stereotypes as well as differences in age-based attitudes. In this study, attitudes towards older people were analyzed through four item statements about the position and contributions of older people in society.

As seen in Table 2, only one fifth of the sample (20.8%) supported the statement "I do not support older people's use of public transportation free of charge".

*Table 2. Distribution by Age Groups of Adjectives Declared Appropriate for Older People*

	Age (Grouping of 3)			Total (N=2516)	p
	18-29 Years (N=652)	30-59 Years (N=1452)	60+ Years (N=412)		
Friendly	56 (%8,6)	227 (%15,6)	95 (%23,1)	378 (%15,0)	<.001
Capable	195 (%29,9)	493 (%34,0)	130 (%31,6)	818 (%32,5)	0.181
Respected	339 (%52,0)	753 (%51,9)	203 (%49,3)	1295 (%51,5)	0.587
Responsible	254 (%39,0)	579 (%39,9)	177 (%43,0)	1010 (%40,1)	0.452
Healthy	41 (%6,3)	139 (%9,6)	54 (%13,1)	234 (%9,3)	<.001
Wise	294 (%45,1)	669 (%46,1)	186 (%45,1)	1149 (%45,7)	0.899
Reliable	188 (%28,8)	607 (%41,8)	209 (%50,7)	1004 (%39,9)	<.001
Vibrant	165 (%25,3)	394 (%27,1)	110 (%26,7)	669 (%26,6)	0.703

According to Cramer's V, there is a moderately weak relationship between "reliable" (.149), "friendly" (.130) and age groups, while there is a negligible relationship between "healthy" (.075) and age.

The percentage of those who considered the adjective "friendly" appropriate for older people is highest among the 60+ age group (23.1%) and lowest among the 18-29 age group (8.6%). Similarly, the percentage of those who considered the adjective "healthy" appropriate for older people is highest among the 60+ age group (13.1%) and lowest among the 18-29 age group (6.3%). However, both in the total population and among each age group, the percentage of those who listed the adjective 'healthy' as an appropriate adjective for older people is quite low. Finally, while only 28.8% of those in the 18-29 age group considered the adjective "trustworthy" appropriate for the older people, this percentage increases to 41.8% in the 30-59 age group, and the highest rate (50.7%) is observed in the 60+ age group.

This result shows that the overall sample does not have a negative attitude towards the use of public transportation by older people. Similarly, the statement "I believe that people over the age of 70 are a burden on the healthcare system in Türkiye" was supported by a very low percentage of respondents (15.6%).

On the other hand, more than half of the participants (57.7%) agreed with the statement "I do not think that people over the age of 70 make significant contributions to the Turkish economy". This result reveals the stereotype that people over the age of 70 cannot make economic contributions because they are most likely to be in their retirement. Finally, more than half of the respondents (59.9%) agreed with the statement "I think that the proportion of people over the age of 70 should be lower in Turkish politics". Considering that most of the active politicians in Türkiye were almost in their 70s at the time of the survey, this result becomes even more critical.

**Table 3. Distribution by Age Groups of Attitudes Towards Older People**

	Age Groups			Total	p
	18-29 Years	30-59 Years	60+ Years		
I do not support older people's use of public transportation free of charge.	186 (%28,0)	294 (%19,8)	55 (%13,0)	535(%20,8)	<.001
I believe that people over 70 years of age are a burden on the healthcare system in Türkiye.	131 (%19,7)	206 (%13,9)	65 (%15,5)	402 (%15,6)	0,003
I don't think people over 70 years of age make significant contributions to the Turkish economy.	460 (%68,8)	827 (%55,7)	201 (%47,6)	1488 (%57,7)	<.001
I think the proportion of people over the age of 70 should be lower in Turkish politics.	435 (%66,5)	877 (%59,2)	219 (%51,8)	1531 (%59,9)	<.001

When we consider the distribution of agreement with these ageist attitudes by age groups, we see that all of them are statistically significant. According to Cramer's V, there is a weak relationship between the first and third attitude and age ( $>.10$ ), while there is a negligible relationship between the second and fourth attitude and age ( $>.05$ ).

We observe that the highest levels of agreement for each statement are among the 18-29 age group. While 28% of those in the 18-29 age group did not support free public transportation use of the older people, it dropped down to 19.8% in the 30-59 age group and to 13% in the 60+ age group ( $p<.001$ ). Similarly, the percentage of those who believed that people over the age of 70 are a burden on the healthcare system is 19.7% in the 18-29 age group, while it is 13.9% in the 30-59 age group and 13% in the 60+ age group ( $p<.005$ ).

Negative statements about the contribution of those aged 70+ to the economy and their place in politics, which were accepted at much higher percentages in the general sample, were also supported at higher percentage among young people and lower percentage among the older people. For example, while the percentage of those who did not think that people over the age of 70 make significant contributions to the economy is 68.8% in the 18-29 age group, this percentage decreases to 55.7% in the 30-59 age group and remains at 47.6% in the 60+ age group ( $p<.001$ ). The percentage difference between the youngest and the oldest group is above 20 points.

In other words, there is a significant difference between younger and older people in terms of their agreement with this statement. However, when we look at the percentage of those who thought that the proportion of people over the age of 70 should be lower in politics, the percentage

difference between younger and older people decreases to 15 points.

While the percentage of those in the 18-29 age group who agreed with this statement is 66.5%, it is 59.2% in the 30-59 age group and 51.8% in the 60+ age group ( $p<.001$ ). As noted, more than half of the older people agreed with this statement, in other words, they also supported the idea of a lower proportion of older people in Turkish politics.

The results of the ordinal logistic regression analysis examining the factors associated with attitudes towards the older people are presented in Table 4 with odds ratios. Model 1 presents the analysis of the factors associated with the attitude of not supporting the older people's use of free public transportation. Model 2 presents the analysis of the factors associated with the attitude of thinking that people over the age of 70 are a burden on the healthcare system. Model 3 presents the analysis of the factors associated with not believing that people over the age of 70 contribute to the economy. Model 4 presents the analysis of the factors associated with the attitudes of believing that the proportion of people over the age of 70 should decrease in Turkish politics.

These analyses demonstrate that two factors are statistically significantly associated with each attitude: age and religious conservative lifestyle. In Model 1, not supporting older people's free use of public transportation has a statistically significant relationship with age, religious conservative lifestyle, and high school education. While supporting this ageist attitude is negatively associated with being older and having a religious conservative lifestyle, it is positively associated with having high school education compared to having less than high school education.



**Table 4. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis on Factors Associated with Attitudes Towards Older People**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Traditional conservative	0.981 (0.089)	0.885 (0.081)	0.758* (0.069)	0.770* (0.072)
Religious conservative	0.686* (0.080)	0.782* (0.092)	0.551* (0.063)	0.545* (0.062)
Age	0.985* (0.003)	0.989* (0.003)	0.978* (0.003)	0.994* (0.003)
Sex (female)	0.879 (0.072)	0.761* (0.063)	0.852* (0.068)	0.825* (0.067)
Marital status (married)	1.157 (0.101)	0.859 (0.075)	1.053 (0.090)	0.934 (0.081)
Education (high school)	1.348* (0.130)	0.973 (0.095)	1.067 (0.102)	0.962 (0.093)
Education (university)	1.178 (0.129)	0.844 (0.094)	0.863 (0.093)	1.013 (0.111)
Working	1.112 (0.097)	0.906 (0.079)	1.107 (0.094)	1.130 (0.098)
Urban	0.999 (0.123)	0.709* (0.085)	1.113 (0.134)	1.654* (0.201)
Metropolitan	1.021 (0.120)	0.564* (0.065)	1.058 (0.121)	2.083* (0.243)
1 2	0.427* (0.083)	0.220* (0.043)	0.023* (0.005)	0.151* (0.030)
2 3	1.275 (0.248)	0.634* (0.124)	0.074* (0.015)	0.307* (0.061)
3 4	2.434* (0.476)	1.466 (0.288)	0.235* (0.046)	0.614* (0.121)
4 5	4.357* (0.863)	3.726* (0.758)	0.739 (0.142)	1.461 (0.288)
Num. Obs.	2508	2504	2510	2492
AIC	7097.9	6807.6	7391.9	7326.7
BIC	7179.5	6889.2	7473.5	7408.2
RMSE	2.48	2.24	3.64	3.71

\* p &lt; 0.05

In Model 2, age, gender, religious conservative lifestyle, urban, and metropolitan residence have statistically significant relationships with the belief that people over 70 years of age are a burden on the healthcare system. Being older, being female, having a religious conservative lifestyle, and residing in an urban or metropolitan area are negatively correlated with this ageist attitude. In Model 3, there is a statistically significant relationship between not believing that people over the age of 70 contribute to the economy and age, gender, traditional conservative lifestyle, and religious conservative lifestyle. Supporting this ageist attitude is a negatively correlated with being older, being female, having a traditional conservative lifestyle, and having a religious conservative lifestyle.

In Model 4, there is a statistically significant relationship between believing that there should be fewer people over the age of 70 in Turkish politics and age, gender, traditional conservative lifestyle, religious conservative lifestyle, urban and metropolitan residence code. Being older, being female, having a traditional conservative lifestyle, and having a religious conservative lifestyle are positively correlated with this ageist attitude, whereas there is a negative correlation with residing in an urban or metropolitan area.

## Conclusion and Discussion

This study aims to examine perceptions and attitudes towards older people in Türkiye. For this purpose, a series of quantitative analyses were applied on secondary data obtained from a nationally represented sample to examine the association between age and embracing ageist stereotypes for

older people. Furthermore, ordinal logistic regression analysis was conducted to understand the determinants of ageist attitudes. The most important finding of this study is that the chronological age of the individual is closely related to the level of support for ageist stereotypes and attitudes. This finding, which manifests itself in the form of supporting less ageist stereotypes and attitudes as one's age increases, is in line with the findings of previous studies on this subject (Abrams et al., 2011; Marques et al., 2020; Officer et al., 2020).

Primary analyses revealed, in a more descriptive way, the adjectives considered appropriate for older people, i.e. stereotypes, and then the distribution of attitudes towards older people among the three age groups. The adjectives considered appropriate for older people overlap with the general stereotypes in society. While older people are seen as respectable and wise at higher percentages, they are seen as healthy and friendly at very low rates. The percentage of young people considering all these adjectives appropriate for older people was lower than those in the middle age and older age groups. The highest percentage of considering all these adjectives appropriate for older people were found among older people themselves. However, there is a significant, albeit weak, relationship between considering the adjectives friendly, trustworthy, and healthy appropriate for older people and age groups.

In terms of attitudes towards older people, support for the free use of public transportation by older people and the belief that older people are not a burden on the healthcare system were more prevalent in the sample. This indicates that ageist attitudes towards the use of public transportation and healthcare system are lower among the public. The free use of public transportation by older people is a common practice in many cities of Türkiye, therefore, people in general may have already recognized it as a right for this demographic group. Previous report based on the ESS ageism module data has also shown that Türkiye was one of the countries in which people had the least agreement with the statement that older people are a burden on healthcare system (Abrams et al., 2011). Furthermore, some scholars argue that healthcare services are associated with a heuristic bias (Jensen &

Petersen, 2017), which refers to the idea that everyone deserves healthcare services regardless of age or need. The relatively low agreement with this particular statement can be explained with heuristic bias.

However, the percentage of those who think that older people do not contribute to the economy and that there should be fewer older people in Turkish politics is more than half of the sample. This shows that ageist attitudes are more acceptable when it comes to economy and politics. Yet, all these attitudes show significant differences according to age. Analysis reveals that young people have more ageist attitudes than other age groups. This finding is especially important considering that ageist attitudes of younger people towards older people indicate lower levels of intergenerational solidarity in the society, despite dominant political discourse commending the intergenerational solidarity in the country. Furthermore, ageism among younger people may lead to intergenerational conflict, particularly owing to the uncertainty about the youth's economic future and discontent with the political leaders in the country. Ulus (2020) found a similar result in a study on young university students' interactions with and perceptions of older people and stated that resolving this potential intergenerational conflict should be prioritized in all aspects of life, particularly in families and schools. Although ageist attitudes towards older people are the least among older people, even older people agreed, to a certain extent, with ageist attitudes towards older people when it comes to economy and politics. However, because this study is based on quantitative data, the underlying reasons for ageist attitudes towards older people among both young and older people, particularly in terms of economy and politics, are unknown.

Finally, according to the results of ordinal logistic regression analysis, the two factors that have a significant relationship with each of the ageist attitudes are age and religious conservative lifestyle. In other words, it is an important finding of this study that those who are older and have a religiously conservative lifestyle have less ageist attitudes. It is understandable that as age increases, individuals exhibit less ageist attitudes towards issues that concern their own lives momentarily.

This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies which have also shown that older people have less ageist attitudes towards their own age group (Abrams et al., 2011; Marques et al., 2020; Officer et al., 2020). On the other hand, although it is known that the older people can also practice "self-ageism" (Ayalon et al., 2021; Ishikawa, 2023), this is not the case in this study. This might be because self-ageism is most closely associated with the health status of older people (Marques et al., 2020), yet older people in this sample were not differentiated by their health status. This is one of the limitations of this study, as age groups are based on their chronological age rather than age identity, not taking into account both biological and subjective age. Therefore, future studies should study the extent to which older people in Türkiye practice self-ageism as well as reasons behind self-ageism.

It is possible to associate the fact that those with religious conservative lifestyles exhibit less ageist attitudes due to the common norms of "respect for elders" and "reverence for the older people" emphasized in Islam. However, more studies are needed to examine the mechanisms underlying the relationship between religiosity and attitudes towards the older people in depth. Finally, the findings that women have statistically significantly less ageist attitudes in three of the four attitudes call for more in-depth studies on how gender affects ageism. Further studies employing qualitative or mixed methods are needed to investigate the underlying reasons for ageism and to understand the mechanisms by which some factors, such as religiosity and gender, are connected with ageism.

This study aims to make significant contributions to the academic literature, as well as social policymaking and social work targeting older people. On the one hand, findings of this study contradict with the previous study that concluded that there is a positive judgment towards older people (Demir Gökmen et al., 2020). This situation calls for further research on the extent to which ageism towards older people in Türkiye is prevalent in society and the factors which shape it. Additionally, the finding that ageism is more prevalent among young people renders studies and practices aimed at increasing intergenerational interaction more important. Higgs and Gilleard (2022) characterized

ageism as a regime of oppression. Indeed, ageist stereotypes and attitudes towards older people do not only remain as perceptions and attitudes but may also lead to ageist behaviors. For example, not thinking that older people contribute to the economy may lead to ageist attitudes and behaviors dominating work life regulations, posing an obstacle to older people's involvement in the labor force. As a result, we need more research on ageist attitudes and practices toward older people in a variety of fields, including the economy and politics. Based on research findings, anti-ageist regulations in public spaces, such as workplaces, should be developed and implemented.

Considering that discrimination against older people has not yet been included in policy documents or on the agenda of politicians in Türkiye, it becomes clear that important steps need to be urgently taken to address this issue. As WHO (2021) recommends that all policies and practices to reduce ageism should be evidence-based, further studies are needed to better understand the prevalence and patterns of ageism supported by data. Furthermore, meaningful actions should be put in place to change the common and predominantly negative narratives about age and aging. In light of these recommendations, the most important recommendation of this study is to put into effect critical trainings, practices, and practices addressing ageism towards older people in Türkiye. Older people should be active participants in all these discussions and implemented actions. Finally, intergenerational solidarity between younger and older generations should not be taken for granted but rather promoted by well-designed and effective programs.

### Conflict of Interests

The author has no conflict of interests to declare.

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