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Research Article

**DETERMINANTS OF AGE DISCRIMINATION EXPERIENCED BY
INDIVIDUALS AGED 65 AND OLDER LIVING IN 2 PRIVATE
NURSING HOMES IN ISTANBUL**

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ABSTRACT

The increase in the age of individuals causes their mental and physical structures to be perceived differently. Elderly individuals are thought to be unable to do the activities they can do due to social stereotypes, in addition to their reduced physical functions.

The main focus of the research is to evaluate age discrimination from the perspective of the participants. We aim to examine the types of age discrimination experienced by individuals living in nursing homes and their effects. In this context, themes and sub-themes were determined after the literature on the subject was reviewed. Then, the questions were created to identify the problems that cause age discrimination.

The qualitative research method was used as it was aimed to understand the subject studied more deeply and to look at the cases through the eyes of the participants. The inter-case analysis method and semi-structured interview technique were used in the study. Since the interviews are conducted individually and through the eyes of the victim, it is aimed to be analyzed at the micro and meso levels. Our interview schedule was made in a private nursing home in Istanbul, depending on the institutions. Case report was evaluated in terms of socio-cultural, psychosocial, and social norms.

Within the framework of a certain age (65 years and above), different results may emerge from the individuals interviewed because we examine age discrimination. Considering the data obtained as a result of the research, it is seen that there is not enough awareness about discrimination against the elderly, and sufficient supervisory and preventive measures are not implemented. It is thought that there may be physical and social changes caused by age-related changes, as well as political and socio-cultural factors. This research aims to identify the problems that cause age discrimination and to produce additional alternative actions to be taken.

Key Words; *Old age, ageism, violence, violence against the elderly, nursing home, case report.*

Introduction

Biological aging is due to the effect of the accumulation of a wide variety of molecular and cellular damage over time. This leads to a decrease in physical and mental capacity, an increased risk of disease and ultimately death (WHO, 2018). However, these changes may not always yield the same results. For example, if you want to use; Some 70-year-olds have extremely good health and functionality, while others 70-year-olds may experience the opposite health problems. Old age is a process that needs to be evaluated with its physical, spiritual and social dimensions. (Beğler & Yavuzer, 2012). In fact, there is not typically an elderly person (WHO, 2018). When describing the changes seen with the physiological dimension of old age and chronological age; old age with its spiritual dimension, perception, learning, psychomotor, problem solving and changes experienced by the individual in terms of self-characteristics. Sociologically, old age is related to the behaviors expected of a certain age group in a society and the values that the community gives to that group (Birren J.E. 1982).

Discrimination consists of a process that affects certain vulnerable persons or groups, or rather processes (Akdemir, N. 1997). It is expressed as an act of treating people based on personal characteristics or belonging to certain social groups differently and unfairly. In age discrimination, people may be discriminated against in many areas, as well as discriminatory behavior in many areas simply because of their age. EuroLink defined age discrimination as "the concept of age discrimination is applied in cases where the use of age for discrimination is unfair and unfair treatment of elderly workers" (Çakmakci, M., Gökçe-Kutsal, Y. 1997). The term "elder discrimination" was first used in 1969 by Robert Butler, the president of the National Institute of Aging of America. According to gerontologist Robert Butler, elder discrimination is the most effective form of discrimination in the world as an actionable term for older people, such as discrimination, racial discrimination, and sexism (Robinson, B. 1994).

Jay McConnell (2010) classifies old age and discrimination against older people as follows:

- Psychological approach (fear of aging and reminding the elderly of death),
- Socio-biological approach (Attribution of youth to energy, power and productivity in all societies; low status of old age and adoption of the idea that the elderly have little life),
- Cultural approach (devaluation of the elderly in society since the pre-industrial period),
- Economic approach (Decreased economic value of older people in the last 120 years.) (Macnicol, 2010).

In the literature, elder discrimination is explained by many in different ways (Pampel, C. F. 1998 & Thone, R. R. 1992). Palmore defined elder discrimination as "a term that expresses prejudice against older individuals through attitudes and behaviors" (Cilingiroglu, N., Demirel, P. 2004. & Robinson, B. 1994). Therefore, while examining the data on elder discrimination, positive and negative attitudes are discussed together. While a positive attitude towards the elderly improves the quality of life of the elderly, individuals who exhibit negative attitudes towards the elderly can also negatively affect the quality of life of the elderly. Examples of ageism include making jokes about old age, ignoring old problems, using derogatory language when talking to the elderly, excluding the elderly from society, being restless and being frivolous towards the elderly (Manichaelo, Brown and Kendall, 2000). Positive attitudes regarding elder discrimination; items such as affection, wisdom, reliability, wealth, political power, freedom and happiness; negative attitudes include disease, impotence, ugliness, and decline in mental functions, mental illness, uselessness, isolation, poverty and depression (Palmore, E.B. 1999). Negative behaviors also occur in daily life; behaviors such as treating an elderly person "as if he wasn't there," not paying the elderly, renting a house, or "you don't hear,

you don't understand" when treating an elderly person can be exemplified (McGuire et al., 2008). People of a certain age may have difficulty participating in social life because they are considered "old". Living alone, isolated in nursing homes can also be an example of social exclusion. An example of this is in the category of "sobering actions" by their environment, where "old" people want to go to certain places or do the activities they used to do (for example, going to pubs, wearing certain clothes, continuing to work or wanting to get married). Today, human life expectancy and average life expectancy are increasing. But prejudices against the elderly and the elderly have also increased, with the elderly underestimated and disrespected (Abrams, Russell, Vauclair and Swift, 2011). For example, if you want to use biased stereotypes against old age can be in the form of approaches. These approaches differ from society to society or among individuals. However, it is possible to perceive the biased attitudes towards the elderly on the basis of attitudes and behaviors towards the elderly or based on our own family in our social life, by observing that there are too many biased attitudes towards the elderly. When age discrimination is viewed, it is a phenomenon that has profound effects on the individual. If this phenomenon is accepted and awareness is not provided, it is possible that the elderly and victims who have been discriminated against due to their age will become more likely in society. This discrimination often has negative effects. At some point, social judgments are accepted and accepted as normal, and the person really evaluates himself after a certain age in a process in which more inadequate, weak, physical and psychological changes are severe. When an elderly person goes to the doctor, the fact that the doctor does not deal with the elderly individual and informs the relatives of the individual is a sign of discrimination, even if it is not done explicitly. In order to avoid discrimination, the person who has the problem should be spoken to first, problems and solutions should be conveyed, then the person or persons next to him should be approved and continued treatment. It can be mentioned that similar, invisible types of discrimination, especially attitudes towards the elderly, are common in society. If awareness is not provided, unconscious discrimination will continue to affect individuals.

Society is the most important factor in changing and accepting perceptions. Because thanks to these stereotypes formed in society, after a certain age, the person restricts himself, gives up most of what he does and convinces himself that he is incompetent. The person may have really lost his strength, increased pain, changed appearance or experienced many other effects, but he gives up most things under the invisible pressure of society just because he has aged, even though he has no effect. At this point, we can observe the pressure that society creates on individuals and many things through social taboos. It is well known that people are often categorized by age and distinguish between young and old. However, in modern society, the idea of age and the image of the elderly do not look positive. Prejudice against the elderly is attention. For example, the idea that "the elderly live in hospitals or nursing homes" is just one of the few stereotypes that continues in society (Cousins, 2005; Giddens, 2005). As life expectancy increases, the need of elderly individuals for such issues as employment, careers, leisure time, access to health and social services increases. In order to address these needs, it is necessary to put aside stereotypes and misconceptions in society and ensure the integration and social welfare of elderly individuals. As an important example for references to old age, it is a serious stereotype that individuals who work professionally in nursing homes do not want to send them by making accusations such as "hospice, last stop" etc. for the elderly or elderly in their own family. In order to transform such stereotypes and misconceptions, it is necessary to carry out various studies in society.

Case Report

The research is planned to be done with the interview technique, which is a qualitative method. Semi-structured interview technique will be used in the research. The interviews cover all individuals aged 65 and over living in a nursing home. Six participants living in a private

nursing home were interviewed. Interview questions consist of 15 questions. Codes for the 15 questions asked have been created. Subcodes have also been added to these master codes. The questions are designed to determine how older individuals define age discrimination in general and the effects of discrimination on the elderly. The study is a preliminary study and has now reached 6 participants (n = 6). The talks were held between 10 March and 17 March 2020. However, due to Covid-19, the research process has been interrupted. At the end of the pandemic, the negotiations will resume. Interviewees have been informed about the purpose of the interviews and no audio and video recordings have been used to make participants feel more comfortable sharing their experiences. The interviewees are numerically named from Participant 1 to Participant 6. MaxQDA.20 qualitative analysis program was used in the analysis of the findings.

6 Overview and Evaluation of Participant Cases

*Detailed information about the facts was obtained from what the one-to-one participants said. Ethically, the personal information of the participants has been kept confidential. Participants are referred to as "Participant 1, Participant 2".

Participant 1

Age: 96

Gender: Female

Marital Status: Single

Participant 1, who is 96 years old and female, explains the concerns that come with his age because his expectation of life is to wake up well. "That's what I expect from life, simple, trying to wake up in a good way," he said. Asked when you started to feel old, he said, "You get old when you crumple, now I'm hunched over, I'm bad every time I look in the mirror. When you're over 60, even in artists, you collapse after 65 at most. Mr. Emel, for example, when you are over 70, the brain is now covered." In this answer, the participant compares the way celebrities age with the way they age and talks about their difference. The important point here may be the internalization of old age and age discrimination by both society and individuals. Because their expectations of society and themselves also change and become more constrained as age increases. Restrictions such as "I'm already old, I can't go there", "I'm already old, I can hardly walk" and the fact that old age is expressed through these definitions are also meaningful points.

Participant 2

Age: 81

Gender: Female

Marital Status: Widow

An 81-year-old female participant, said, "I can't do most things, my hands are shaking. For example, I can't climb stairs with these feet. What we played last summer; Don't jump rope, sex. No one who thinks they're old says they can't. I feel like I'm 18, but I wish I could walk, if my knee didn't limp, I'd go shopping. I wish I could do this while I could, health. For example, the front of the cars is my deed. I wish I could walk. It's not walking, what can I do, thank God. Now we're going on a trip, a woman from the nursing home is sitting in the front seat, the priority is here with the crippled." In fact, it is not the increase in the age of the participant, but the increase of health problems. "I'm limping, it's affecting my mood, of course I don't have a husband. No one describes themselves as old, but they get very depressed and say, "I'm tired and I'm old." As a similar example, he mentions that the health problem affects mood. He talks about the morale and feelings that come with loneliness. "When we go to the doctor, he first takes the elderly's opinion, every now and then he looks at my daughter

or son and gets approval (nod, yes, no) he talks to my children in the background, gives them medication. He makes suggestions such as not going out too much, walking." As seen in this answer, it is important to get the opinion of the elderly first. When it comes to age discrimination, the lack of consideration of the elderly can make them feel more inadequate, but in this case the opposite is the case.

Participant 3

Age: 85

Gender: Female

Marital Status: Widow

"The life of this place is not as simple as it seems," the 85-year-old female participant said. I've gained weight from sadness before. Life here is hard. Nothing in life is what it seems. I had a lot of trouble because I was skinny and destined." The participant living in the nursing home was discriminated against due to age discrimination as well as physical and ethnic changes. "Old age; When you get sick and there's no cure, it's a step towards death. It's a loss of power." The participant considers that old age and loss of power are linked. He talked about the mood and the bad effects of being in a near-death situation. The definition of old age is different for each participant and is mostly defined by the loss of physical functions.

Findings

15 questions were asked to the 6 participants interviewed. Code for each question asked is generated and the answers are linked to the work. In analyzing the questions, the relevant codes were entered into the MAXQDA.20 qualitative analysis program and various tables were obtained.

After examining the responses of the participants, 15 main codes were created to analyze how age and age discrimination were interpreted by the participants. The codes and their meanings are given in the following table. "Financial difficulties," "physical change" and "fear" are the codes that stand out in the statements in which participants convey their feelings and thoughts about old age. "Fear" comes to the fore in the negotiations. Financial difficulties can cause fear. However, financial difficulty is not the only factor that causes fear. At the same time, there is a relationship between wear and tear of the body and fear. Health problems as a result of body wear cause pressure on elderly individuals. In another context, participants talked about the beautiful and difficult aspects of living in a nursing home. In general, they stated that they do not have many problems if they are compatible. On the other hand, they stated that the difficulties they experienced in their early days were replaced by acceptance and habit.

It will contribute to the literature about the problems experienced in the subject of old age and age discrimination, which are mainly covered in the research. Age discrimination is not only a problem of the individual experiencing this discrimination, but also a problem that concerns the society. It is as important to perceive the problem as it is to uncover it. If the problem is uncovered, it is also possible to produce solutions and contribute to solutions in other researchers. The perceptions of individuals regarding ageism (age discrimination) are shaped by their prejudices and attitudes. These situations are among the other issues that need to be investigated and explained in detail.6 The following statement of the participant is an example of what is said for the financial difficulties that are happening: Participant 5 for the code of financial difficulties; "My parents were always poor. Don't let God make you want anything from someone. May God not make you expect anything from anyone. Even if you wanted a little thing, it'd be huge, against people. Just don't let God embarrass me, just don't starve me. I never wanted wealth. The one who loves you, the one who doesn't, the one who doesn't. We're guided by the course of life, not us. (Participant 5) " commented. Statements of Participant 3; "I can't do most things, my hands are shaking. For example, I can't climb stairs

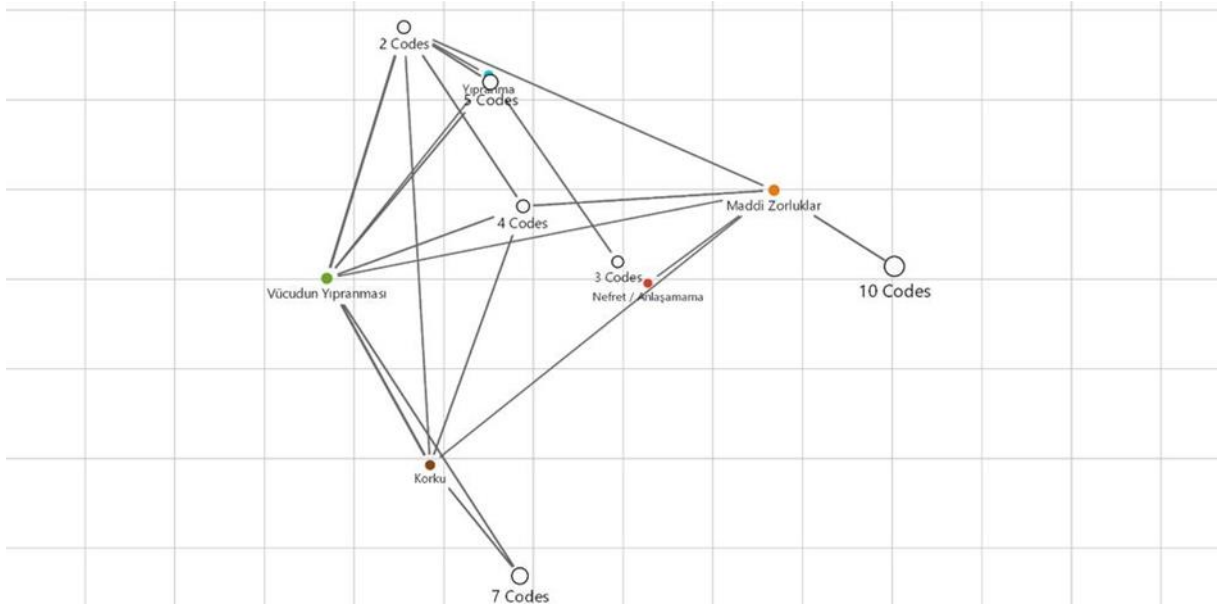
with these feet. What we played last summer; Don't jump rope, sex. No one who thinks they're old says they can't. I feel like I'm 18, but I wish I could walk, if my knee didn't limp, I'd go shopping. I wish I could do this while I could, health. For example, the front of the cars is my deed. I wish I could walk. He's not walking, what can I do?" (Participant 3) and participant 4's "I'm not going anywhere now. I'm getting tired. I don't even go out, in case I get sick. I can't do anything. It's hard to even put a sock on." (Participant 4) expressions are examples of physical change/body wear code. "When I look in the mirror, I feel 100-odd," participant 1 was quoted as saying. I woke up this morning, wrinkly. Now there's a fear of the body aging. You get old when you crumple, now I'm hunched over, and every time I look in the mirror, I'm bad. When you're over 60, even in artists, you're 65 at most, you're collapsing, Mr. Emel, for example. When you're over 70, the brain is now infected, and it can be evaluated in terms of memory loss." Elderly individuals in nursing homes were asked to express the conditions in the environment in which they lived. In general, although there were positive feedbacks, he made a negative comment about where he lived by a participant. This comment, "The life of this place is not as simple as it seems. I've gained weight from sadness before. Life here is hard. Nothing in life is what it seems. I had a lot of trouble because I was skinny and destined." (Participant 5) it is possible to say that the participant was discriminated against due to his physical characteristics in the nursing home where he or she lived, as well as age discrimination. People living in nursing homes should be evaluated by addressing the social pressures and psychological problems they are in. The discrimination they experience is not limited to age discrimination.

Table1: Codes and subcodes that consist of participants' responses

Code System	Katılımcı Erkek 1	Katılımcı Kadın 1	Katılımcı Kadın 2	Katılımcı Kadın 3	Katılımcı Kadın 4	Katılımcı Kadın 5
15- Yaşlı Öncelik						
Olumlu Bakış						
Beklentisizlik						
Kısıtlılık						
Memnuniyetsizlik						
Umutsuzluk						
14- Huzurevine Çevre Tepkisi						
Üzüntü						
13- Huzurevdekilerle İletişim						
Nefret / Anlaşamama						
İyi - Normal						
Kıskanılacağı Hissi						
Mesafeli						
Sakinlik						
12 - Huzurevine Giriş						
Yük Olmamak						
Çevreden Görme						
Ev Hissi / Mutluluk						
Maddi Zorluklar						
11- Yaşlı Olarak Tanımlama						
Hareketsizlik						
Yaşlı Hissetmeme						
9- Yaşlılık						
Hareketsizlik						
Vücutun Yıpranması						
Korku						
Öz Sosyal Dışlama						
Olumsuz Bakış						
7- Fiziksel Değişim						
Fiziksel Kısıtlılık						
Yıpranma						
Görünüşten Şikayet						
Sağlıklı Hissetmek						
Radikal Değişim Olmaması						
5- Gelecek İçin Hamleler						
Çalışmak						
Kayıp						
Korku						
Garantcilik						
4- Gündelik Yaşam						
Hareketsizlik / Mekana Kapanma						
Gezme (Hafif Aktivite)						
Deneyim Aktarma						
2- Hayat Tarzı						
Hastalık						
Eş Kaybı Sonrası Travma						

The 10 main codes consisting of the responses of the participants are "elderly priority", "environmental response to nursing home", "communication with nursing home residents", "entrance to nursing home", "definition as elderly", "old age", "physical change", "moves for the future", "daily life", "lifestyle". 36 subcodes have been created in connection with the master codes.

Table 2: Code Map



According to the code map, the codes consisting of the words used the most by the 6 participants are indicated. There are 10 codes related to financial difficulties, 7 codes related to fear, 5 codes related to attrition, 3 codes related to hatred and inability to agree. As the codes show, the themes that the 6 participants focused on the most; wear and tear of the body, fear, financial difficulties, hatred and inability to get used to.

Table 3: Codes and Relationships

Code System	Katılımcı Erkek 1	Katılımcı Kadın 1	Katılımcı Kadın 2	Katılımcı kadın 3	Katılımcı Kadın 4	Katılımcı Kadın 5	SUM
> 15- Yaşlı Öncelik	■	■	■	■			5
> 14- Huzurevine Çevre Tepkisi	■						1
> 13- Huzurevindkilerle İletişim	■		■		■	■	5
> 12 - Huzurevine Giriş	■	■		■	■	■	7
> 11- Yaşlı Olarak Tanımlama	■				■		2
> 9- Yaşlılık	■	■		■	■		7
> 7- Fiziksel Değişim	■	■	■	■			6
> 5- Gelecek İçin Hamieler		■		■	■		6
> 4- Gündelik Yaşam	■				■		3
> 2- Hayat Tarzı				■	■		3

The master codes are as shown in the table; "elderly priority", "environmental response to nursing home", "communication with nursing home people", "entrance to nursing home", "identification as elderly", "old age", "physical change", "moves for the future", "daily life", "lifestyle".

2014). It has also been suggested that health inequalities linked to age discrimination among older people can function at both a structural level (i.e., that social institutions promote prejudice against the elderly) and at an individual level (i.e., that older people absorb negative beliefs about aging) (Chang, E. Q et al 2020). The physiological causes of aging bring with them negative thoughts about old age. As the immune system and body age, deteriorations in health, diseases occur. It is the real source of problem that these negatives also discriminate outside of health due to rising age. Physiological causes and social causes should be studied and investigated differently from one another. The phenomenon of old age and age discrimination concerns many disciplines and are issues that need to be studied across disciplines. Sociological perspective facilitates the understanding and evaluation of the place of old age for individuals and societies, along with the study of old age, research of problems, social structuring. It is important for sociological research in terms of old age and social cohesion and awareness (Gönül, I. 2008).

Results and Recommendations

It determines whether older individuals interviewed in the study perceive the age discrimination they face in daily life. Different outcomes emerged from the individuals interviewed as older individuals examined the dimensions of age discrimination they experienced. Physical, social changes created by age-related changes can also be influenced by political and global factors. The fact that rising age has ceased to be a stigma is socially a factor that can take us forward. It can be clearly stated that social perceptions shape age discrimination. As a result, 6 participants were shown what dimensions they might be in by giving examples of their attitudes about age discrimination with their views. It resembles each other in codes made up of participants' responses. In general, it has been observed that the use of old age and fear together, making age discrimination happen in some cases without being made to feel, internalises these situations. Taking into account the results of elder discrimination in the research, measures should be developed to eliminate elder discrimination in the community and informing/awareness programmes should be integrated into strategic objectives to increase the level of sophistication of our country. Young people who interact with the elderly need to have more positive views, be able to approach the elderly more harmoniously, develop a number of programs to raise youth awareness, and develop new service models (Karaağaç, Temel, Yıldırım, 2019). Discriminatory behaviour towards social groups, especially older individuals, should be prevented and those who do not show sensitivity should be punished. With different studies, awareness of age discrimination can be developed and with its contribution in other disciplines, the problems of elderly people in particular need to be understood and solution proposals increased.

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