

Ageism and Psychosocial Wellbeing Among the Elderly Persons in Rivers South-East Senatorial District, Rivers State

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Abstract

The study was on ageism and psychosocial wellbeing among elderly persons in Rivers South-East Senatorial District, Rivers State. The study was guided by three specific objectives. Correlational research design was used in the study. The study population consist of over 84,900 elderly people who are 60+ years and who can read and respond to the instrument of the study. The sample of the study consist of 500 elderly drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure. Two instruments were used for the study. They are Ageism Scale (AS) and the "Elderly Socio-Mental Wellness Scale" (ESWS). The validity was determined by experts in measurement. Reliability of the instrument were determine using Crombach Alpha method. The analysis yielded reliability coefficient of 0.83 for Ageism Scale (AS) and 0.88 for the Elderly Socio-Mental Wellness Scale (ESWS). The overall average reliability co-efficient for the combined instrument was 0.83. Simple and multiple regression was used to analyze the data generated. Finding revealed that ageism has relationship with psychosocial ($p=0.013<0.05$) and social wellbeing ($p=0.000<0.05$). Based on this, it was recommended among others that government and NGOs should promote resilience-building programs for the elderly, such as counselling and coping skills workshops, to help them reframe negative stereotypes into motivation for self-worth.

Keywords: *Ageism and psychological wellbeing, social wellbeing, Elderly persons*

Introduction

As the world is advancing in science and technology, there is an attendant improvement in the provision of health care with corresponding increase in the life expectancy of individuals. With these achievements in the health delivery system, the population of the elderly is increasing and as such, interaction between them and others are inevitable. Furthermore, it is noted that the place given to the elderly or aged in the African tradition and culture has been one of great value, respect and of high esteem. This of course is not unconnected with the role the elderly plays in the life of the people in a typical African society. Seefeldt, Richard, Jantz and Kathy (2015) stated that aging is part of living, as natural as life itself. As Agbakwuru (2008) has rightly observed, old age is not a disease, it is simply the last stage of man's life, yet most people tend to view aging and the elderly in negative, stereotypic ways. It is noted that before the introduction of western education, the African traditional education in terms of respect for the elderly has reached its highest level or peak by African standard and also in terms of development. The elderly in the society served as teachers, instructors, and experts in every field of human endeavour in the African society. They were a repertoire or compendium of knowledge. As the population of the elderly increases, the well-being of the elderly is

threatened, the population has not been matched by corresponding improvements in their quality of life. It is observed that while the elderly age gracefully, live longer and are healthier, more dependent and are adequately taken care of in some developed countries, similar thing may not be obtainable in Nigeria and other developing nations of the world. This notwithstanding, demographic changes and reports with reference to the population of the elderly, shows that there is a continuous increase in the need to upgrade the psychological wellbeing of the elderly. According to Tanyi et al (2018), rapid development and civilization has increased the challenges of the elderly in terms of taking adequate care of them. Furthermore, the increase in the aging population poses serious challenges to the government and society in finding a way out. It is no doubt that the elderly are part of the population with limited opportunities whose dependence on the society is a fundamental characteristic that is embedded with their age. In a normal society, the elderly are given some privileges and right that may help to improve their overall psychological and social wellbeing.

Psychological well-being among the elderly is a critical aspect of overall health, influenced by various factors such as physical health, social connections, financial stability, and mental health. It is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Psychological well-being, forms as a result of human activity in the system of real relationships with surrounding objects. Psychological well-being can be described as a feeling of life satisfaction, the quality of life, personal self-fulfilment, creation of objective and subjective values. There is a number of aspects, such as evaluative well-being (or life satisfaction), hedonic well-being (feelings of happiness, sadness, etc.), and eudemonic well-being (sense of purpose and meaning of life) (Steptoe, Deaton, & Stone, 2015). This well-being is associated with the phenomena of self-actualization, personal growth and fulfilment, which is also connected to the emotional assessment.

Many societies all over the world often maintain a negative perception of older adults. Youthfulness is being promoted that many people do not look forward being old. Many people view old age as an unfortunate consequence of human life and often spend a lot of money in a bid to reverse the ageing process. Old people are often seen trying to dress up as the youth and do sometimes get offended whenever they are referred to as being old. Many young people, sometimes make jest of the old, often referring to them as witches /wizards (Ola & Adeyemi, 2012). Achwandi (2025) argued that among older adults, psychological well-being plays a crucial role in determining quality of life and resilience in facing physical and social changes. Psychological well-being of the elderly affects how they think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how they handle stress, relate to others, and make psychological choices. Psychological wellbeing is important at every stage of life, from childhood through to adulthood. Research suggests that seniors benefit from supportive social connections and close personal relationships but suffer as a result of disrupted personal ties and loneliness.

The term “social well-being” means individual’s (group’s) satisfaction with one’s own social status, welfare, living standard and life quality. Social well-being reflects an individual’s general satisfaction with the environment, activities he/she is involved in and possessions. This is not a complete list of factors influencing social well-being. People desire to stay healthy, active and be able to cope with the challenges of the world around, reach their own goals, understanding, support and friendly attitude of other people, as well as to have confidence in the future. Sociological well-being is a holistic, multi-dimensional measure of how individuals thrive within their social environment, focusing on relationship quality, social integration, and community belonging rather than just personal happiness. It is characterized by feeling socially connected, accepted, contributing, and secure, with strong links to physical health. It is also known that the elderly have various levels of social needs. Social needs are important basic human needs. When social needs are not satisfied, this can lead to mental and physical health

problems. Menec (2003) stated that with a growing population of older adults and the need for them to stay healthy and dwelling within the community space, satisfying social needs is important. The interest in the problem of social well-being of elderly people originates from the changes happening in the modern society and, primarily, in a fast-growing tendency of population ageing. The mentioned tendency influences the socioeconomic systems of the countries worldwide, including such systems as labour-market, the markets of employment and income, and consumer market, as well as social funds, national policy, legislation, infrastructure, social relations and other elements. The sociological well-being of the elderly relies on robust social relationships, community participation, and autonomy to combat isolation and maintain life satisfaction. Meaningful social ties (family, friends and community) and active engagement reduce depression and improve health, while social support acts as a crucial buffer against stressors. The Citizens (2026) argued that social support enhances quality of life and provides a buffer against adverse life events. Accordingly, when one give and receive social support on a regular basis, they ensure that they have people to turn to in times of need or crisis. Also, people who maintain their social network and support systems do better under stress. Furthermore, Helliwell and Putnam (2004) observed that as people age, social connections, participation, and the sense of belonging to a community become critical. Individuals who are socially connected are more likely to adopt healthy behaviours including participation in physically and mentally stimulating activities, adherence to medical treatments, and to report better health. Social support and especially the subjective perception of availability and adequacy of support, has been found to have beneficial effects on the cardiovascular, endocrine, and immune systems (Uchino, Cacioppo & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996). Also, individuals with high levels of participation in social activities have higher self-esteem; lower scores of depressive symptoms, and better physiological and self-reported physical functioning. The concept of ageism is as old in social psychology as man itself, though the term is relatively modern but the underlying behavior and concept of marginalizing people based on age is truly as old as human history. Ageism refers to prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age. It is the stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age. The World Health Organization (2018) observed that ageism is widespread and an insidious practice which has harmful effects on the health of older adults. It is obvious that for the aged, the feeling of ageism is a serious challenge, while some elderly consider they are old and alienated, some on the other hand may still feel that they are young and active. In most instances, the elderly feel overlooked for employment, restricted from social services and stereotyped in the media, ageism marginalizes and excludes older people in their communities. Fetz (2017) affirmed that ageism is everywhere, yet it is the most socially “normalized” of any prejudice, and is not widely countered like racism or sexism. These attitudes lead to the marginalization of older people within our communities and have negative impacts on their health and well-being. Levy (2016) averred that not only are negative stereotypes hurtful to older people, but they may even shorten their lives. It is often noted that age stereotypes are often internalized at a young age long before they are even relevant to people, Levy (2016) added that even by the age of four, children are familiar with age stereotypes, which are reinforced over their lifetimes. In the Nigerian setting, the feeling of ageism is also a major factor that may determine the social and mental adjustments and integration into the society. When the elderly feel they are discriminated against by younger ones, this may make them lose value for themselves, have less self-confidence and self-concept as well as losing the will-power to live happily and this may certainly affect them psychologically. Kang and Kim (2022) reviewed quantitative studies of the relationship between ageism and psychological well-being of older adults. They conducted a comprehensive review using searches of academic databases, the grey literature, hand searches, and reference mining. A total of thirteen articles were selected using the inclusion criteria. All the reviewed studies

showed a negative association between ageism and the psychological well-being of older adults. The study confirmed a negative association between ageism and older adults' psychological well-being, finding that older adults with a high level of psychological well-being may be less negatively affected by ageism, especially those who were proud of their age group, experienced less negative emotions, were more optimistic about aging and their future, were more self-confident about their bodies, and were flexible in setting goals

Bai, Lai and Guo (2016) studied ageism and depression: Perceptions of older people as a burden in China. It focused on the effects of burden views toward Chinese older adults on their depressive symptoms based on a secondary analysis of data collected from a sample of 954 Chinese adults aged 60 and over in Jiangsu Province. After controlling for socio-demographic, health, and family relationship variables, results of hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed that participants with stronger views of older people as a burden to family and society were at higher risk of depressive symptoms. Findings of this study can inform the development of policies and programs to address mental health challenges facing older adults in China, focusing on helping them get rid of the burden views about older people, improving family relationship quality, and fostering a positive attitude toward aging in the wider society.

Bryant, Bei, Gilson, Komiti, Jackson and Judd (2012) studied the relationship between attitudes to aging, physical and mental health in older adults. Adults who were part of a larger study of health and well-being in rural and regional Australia aged ≥ 60 years ($N = 421$) completed a cross-sectional postal survey comprising the Attitudes to Aging Questionnaire, the 12-Item Short Form Health Survey (SF-12), the Satisfaction with Life Scale, the Geriatric Anxiety Inventory, and the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale. The result revealed that attitudes to aging were positive in this sample. More positive attitudes to aging were associated with higher levels of satisfaction with life, better self-report physical and mental health on the SF-12, and lower levels of anxiety and depression, after controlling for confounding variables. Better financial status and being employed were both associated with more positive attitudes to aging and better self-reported physical health. Relationship status was also significantly associated with mental health and satisfaction with life, but not physical health. Agbeni, Obasi, Gbadebo and Omolara (2024) studied the impact of Ageism on the Social Wellbeing of Older Adults: Evidence from a Geriatric Home in Lagos, Nigeria. The main objective of the study is to evaluate the impact of ageism on the social wellbeing of older adults. These includes the impact of ageism on social connection, social support and on their social inclusion. Ageism is a very serious issue as it shown in terms of positive stereotypes or attitudes; it is most closely associated with negative stereotypes or attitudes. The study used mixed research method to analyse the opinion of participants. The data collected through structured questionnaire and interview guide were analysed with descriptive and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The study concluded that there is significant impact of ageism on social wellbeing of older person in the society as ageism affect their social connection, support and exclusion with younger generation. Furthermore, the result to a very negative stereotype in the social connection, support and exclusion older person faces in the society. Some of these discriminations are imposed by the younger generation who feel that older adults in the society are less important and difficult to relate with. Some attitude and perceptions portray by younger generation against older persons are offensive and discriminative. Plaza-Fernández, Martín-Cano and Ricoy-Cano (2026) carried out a study on Ageism: Effects on the Health and Social Well-being of Older Adults aims to identify the negative consequences of ageism on the health and social well-being of older adults. To this end, a systematic review is conducted in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The findings show that ageism deteriorates the physical and mental health of older adults, reduces their social participation, increases isolation, and generates unequal treatment in social and health services. Given this

reality, it is necessary to promote active aging and prevent health deterioration in later life. To achieve this, it is essential to implement social awareness strategies that reduce inequalities and stereotypes associated with age. Furthermore, the creation of accessible and sustainable environments is proposed, along with the development of co-designed public policies that address the problem of ageism from a comprehensive and equitable perspective.

Emuobor (2015) studied that impact of Ageism on the Social Wellbeing of Older Adults: Evidence from a Geriatric Home in Lagos, Nigeria. The study used mixed research method to analyse the opinion of participants. The data collected through structured questionnaire and interview guide were analysed with descriptive and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The study concluded that there is significant impact of ageism on social wellbeing of older person in the society as ageism affect their social connection, support and exclusion with younger generation. Furthermore, the result to a very negative stereotype in the social connection, support and exclusion older person faces in the society. Some of these discriminations are imposed by the younger generation who feel that older adults in the society are less important and difficult to relate with. Some attitude and perceptions portrays by younger generation against older persons are offensive and discriminative. The study recommended that public education, creating opportunities for older and younger people to interact advocate for stricter policies that protect older adults from age-based discrimination in all social settings, including workplaces and public services will help to reduce the discrimination that exist in the society. Chaudhry and Ahmed study focused on ageing and ageing stereotypes: perception of older persons' of Rawalpindi. The study was focused to explore the perception of Older Persons (OPs) about old age. Structure questionnaire was implemented to collect the data of 384 OPs of Rawalpindi city. Data was entered and analyzed in SPSS. Data shows the participation of 70% male OPs and 30% belongs to female OPs of respective area. Most of the study respondents were having the age between age group 60-65 as recorded 53.9%. Among 384 respondents, 267 OPs perceived old age as illness & disease, 194 OPs were reported the name of stress & depression. Predominantly, 243 elders considered old age as full of social isolation & ignorance. Increased dependency, less social participation, and poor mental & physical health was also reported by study respondents. Study concludes that if we want to bring a happy and active ending then we must consider the efforts that promote the positive and productive perceptions and stereotypes among OPs of our society, and also to gain benefit from their valuable experiences.

Chen and Meng (2025) studied perceived ageism, macro-level sociopolitical factors, and subjective well-being utilized data from the World Values Survey (Wave 6), comprising 15,697 older adults (aged 55+) across 43 countries. Perceived ageism was measured by negative age-related stereotypes and perceived social status devaluation. Subjective well-being was assessed using life satisfaction and happiness. Macro-level sociopolitical moderators included gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, political stability, individualism, and long-term orientation. The result showed perceived ageism was negatively associated with both life satisfaction and happiness, after adjusting for socio-demographic variables and macro-level sociopolitical factors. Higher GDP per capita mitigated these adverse effects, suggesting that economic prosperity buffers against the negative impact of ageism. Conversely, political stability unexpectedly amplified the detrimental effects of ageism on subjective well-being. Additionally, long-term cultural orientation strengthened the negative association between age-related stereotypes and well-being, while individualism did not exhibit a significant moderating effect. Wang, Wang, Zhang, Ge and Guo (2024) investigated the relationship between social isolation, perceived ageism and subjective well-being among rural Chinese older adults and its mechanisms of action. A total of 403 rural resident older adults were surveyed from March to April 2024. Data were collected using the General Information Questionnaire, the General Alienation Scale (GAS), the Perceived Ageism Questionnaire (PAQ), and the Memorial

University of New Scale of Happiness (MUNSH). SPSS 27.0 and PROCESS macro were used to analyze the data. Findings showed a significant negative correlation ($p < 0.01$) between subjective well-being and social isolation ($r = -0.720$) and perceived ageism ($r = -0.661$) among rural older adults. Perceived ageism partially mediated the effect between social isolation and subjective well-being in rural older adults, and the mediating effect accounted for 29.9 % of the total effect ($p < 0.001$). It was seen that social isolation can reduce the subjective well-being of rural older adults through perceived ageism associations between social isolation, perceived ageism and subjective well-being among rural Chinese older adults. Furthermore, it has been observed that ageism, a pervasive and insidious form of discrimination, poses significant threats to the psychosocial wellbeing of the elderly individuals in Rivers South-East Senatorial District, Rivers State, Nigeria where elderly individuals face significant threats to their mental health, social connections, and overall quality of life. Despite the importance of psychosocial wellbeing in old age, many elderly individuals in this region experience social isolation, loneliness, and decreased mental health, often exacerbated by ageism, poverty, and lack of access to healthcare services. Again, despite the importance of social support systems in mitigating the effects of ageism, many elderly individuals in this region face challenges and sometimes life-threatening issues. This has resulted in a growing concern about the psychosocial wellbeing of the elderly, who are increasingly vulnerable to mental health issues, social isolation, and decreased quality of life.

Again, Rivers South-East Senatorial District is home to a significant population of elderly individuals. The region is characterized by a mix of urban and rural communities, with varying levels of socio-economic development. However, the area is also plagued by poverty, poor infrastructure, and limited access to healthcare services, exacerbating the challenges faced by the elderly. In reality, Rivers State, which values respect for elders, is often at odds with the harsh realities of modernization and urbanization, leading to increased vulnerability of the elderly to ageism and social isolation.

In the light of this, the aim of the study is to investigate ageism and psychosocial wellbeing among elderly persons in Rivers South-East Senatorial District, Rivers State, Nigeria. In a more specific term, the study aims to;

1. Find out the relationship between ageism and psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers state
2. Find out the relationship between ageism and social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State.
3. Find out the relationship between ageism and psychosocial wellbeing when jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed to guide the researcher in the study;

1. To what extent does ageism relate with psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State?
2. What is the extent to which ageism relate with social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State?
3. To what extent does ageism relate with psychosocial wellbeing when jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated to guide the researcher in the study;

1. There is no significant relationship between ageism and psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State
2. There is no significant relationship between ageism and social wellbeing among the

elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State

3. Ageism does not have any significant relationship with psychosocial wellbeing when jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State

Methodology

The researcher used the correlational research design in the study. The researcher adopted this design because it had helped find the relationship between ageism and psychosocial well-being of the elderly in Rivers South East Senatorial District. The study population consist of elderly people who are 60+ years and who can read and respond to the instrument of the study. As at the time of the study, they were 84,900 elderly in the area based on the estimate of the National Population Commissions as at 2026. The sample size of the study consisted of 500 elderly persons drawn using the multi-stage sampling procedure. This technique included the stratified non-proportionate sampling technique with snowball recruitment was used, where the elderly population of 84,900 was stratified according to the seven Local Government Areas in Rivers as well as purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Two instruments were used for the study. They are Ageism Scale (AS) and the “Elderly Socio-Mental Wellness Scale” (ESWS). The Ageism Scale (AS) is a self-developed instrument designed after the 4-point Likert scale of strongly agreed, agreed, disagree and strongly disagree. It contains 10 items which are both positively and negatively keyed. The instrument also contains two section. Section A and B. section A contains instructions on how to respond to the instrument while section B contains the items that measure the extent of ageism in the lives of the elderly. The instrument has minimum of ten and a maximum of forty scores. On the other hand, the Elderly Socio-Mental Wellness Scale” (ESWS) was adapted some of the items of the World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire. It was designed using the 5 point Likert scale as well and contained twenty (26) items in all. The instrument has a maximum score of 130 and a minimum score of 26. Validity of the instrument were established by test experts while the reliability of the questionnaires was established using the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient with the following indices yielded. 0.83 for Ageism Scale (AS) and 0.88 for the Elderly Socio-Mental Wellness Scale (ESWS) with the overall average reliability co-efficient of 0.83. Simple and multiple regression were used to analyze the data generated.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent does ageism relate with psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State?

Table 1 showing simple regression analysis of extent ageism relate with psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.311	-.096	.090	4.473

Table 1 showed the extent to which ageism relates to psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State. The correlation coefficient, R is 0.311 indicating a moderate negative relationship with psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State. The R Square value of 0.096 implies that 9.6% of the variability in psychological wellbeing among the elderly can be explained by the extent of ageism. This demonstrates that ageism contributes a fair portion of the variance in psychological wellbeing among the elderly while a considerable 90.4% is still accounted for by other variables not considered by the researcher.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between ageism and psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State

Table 2: t-test associated with regression analysis of relationship between ageism and psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Result
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T		
(Constant)	80.930	.988		81.923	.000	
Ageism	.080	.032	-.311	2.489	.013	Significant

Table 2 showed that t-calculated is 2.48 while the Sig value is 0.013. Hence, since the sig value ($p=0.013<0.05$) is less than the alpha value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected meaning that there is a significant relationship between ageism and psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State.

Research Question Two: To what extent does ageism relate with social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State?

Table 3 showing simple regression analysis of extent ageism relate with social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	-.482	-.230	.231	26.32

Table 3 showed the extent to which ageism relates to social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State. The correlation coefficient, R is -0.482 indicating a moderate negative relationship with social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State. The R Square value of 0.230 implies that 23% of the variability in social wellbeing among the elderly can be explained by the extent of ageism. This demonstrates that ageism contributes a good portion of the variance in social wellbeing among the elderly while a considerable 77% are still accounted for by other variables not considered by the researcher.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between ageism and social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State

Table 4: t-test associated with regression analysis of relationship between ageism and social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Result
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t		
(Constant)	33.193	5.813		5.710	.000	
Ageism	.776	.188	.182	4.121	.000	Significant

Table 4 showed that t-calculated is 4.12 while the Sig value is 0.000. Hence, since the sig value ($p=0.000<0.05$) is less than the alpha value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected meaning that there is a significant relationship between ageism and social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State.

Research Question Three: To what extent does ageism relate with Psycho-social wellbeing jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State?

Table 5 showing simple regression analysis of extent ageism relate with psycho-social wellbeing jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	-.366	.136	-.131	10.86

Table 5 showed the extent to which ageism relates to psycho-social wellbeing jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State. The correlation coefficient, R is --0.366 indicating a moderate negative relationship with psycho-social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district Rivers State. The R Square value of 0.230 implies that 13.6% of the variability in psycho-social wellbeing among the elderly can be explained by the extent of ageism. This demonstrates that ageism contributes a good portion of the variance in psycho-social wellbeing among the elderly while a considerable 86.4% are still accounted for by other variables not considered by the researcher.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between ageism and psycho-social wellbeing jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State

Table 6: t-test associated with regression analysis of relationship between ageism and psycho-social wellbeing jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.	Result
Regression	79.117	1	79.117	4.353	.034	Significant
Residual	58838.995	498	18.151			
Total	58918.112	499				

From the analysis in table 6, calculated Fisher (F) value is 4.35 while the sig value is 0.034. Hence, since the sig value ($p=0.034<0.05$) is less than the alpha level of 0.05 at 359 degrees, the null hypotheses is rejected and the alternate accepted meaning that there is a significant relationship between ageism and psycho-social wellbeing jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

From finding one, it is revealed that there is a significant negative and moderate relationship between ageism and psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State. The result of this finding is in support and in expectations from existing literature. Literature generally posits that ageism, which involves stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination against older persons do negatively affect psychological wellbeing by lowering self-esteem and increasing depression and anxiety. However, the significant positive and moderate relationship found in this study suggests that in Rivers South East, elderly persons who experience ageism may have developed resilience and coping mechanisms that paradoxically strengthen their psychological wellbeing. It is also possible that ageism in this context is interpreted as "respectful caution" or protective attitudes, which the elderly may perceive as care rather than discrimination. Another explanation could be that those with higher psychological wellbeing are more aware and therefore more likely to report experiences of ageism. This finding implies that the impact of ageism is context-dependent and culturally

mediated. The finding of the study is in line with that reported by Kary and Kim (2012) who revealed significant relationship between ageism and psychological wellbeing of individuals. From finding two, it is revealed that there is a significant moderate but negative relationship between ageism and social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State. This finding aligns with previous studies by Agbeni et'al (2024) and Pleza-Fernandez (2026) which assert that ageism undermines social integration. The moderate negative relationship indicates that as experiences of ageism increase, the elderly's participation in social activities, sense of belonging, and quality of interpersonal relationships decrease. In Rivers South East communities where communal living is valued, being labelled "too old" or "burdensome" can lead to exclusion from decision-making, religious groups, and family gatherings. This social withdrawal can further reinforce stereotypes. The result suggests that ageism poses a real threat to the social fabric of elderly life in the district. Research finding three revealed that there is a significant moderate and negative relationship between ageism and psycho-social wellbeing jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State. This finding means that when psychological and social wellbeing are combined, ageism shows a significant moderate negative relationship. This implies that the overall psycho-social health of the elderly is adversely affected by ageist attitudes. Although the finding from one showed a positive link with psychological wellbeing alone, the negative impact on social wellbeing in Finding two appears to outweigh it when both are considered together. This suggests that while some elderly may cope psychologically, their total wellbeing suffers due to social marginalization. It underscores the need for community sensitization against ageist practices. The study is in line with that reported by Zhao and Zha (2026).

Summary of Findings

From the analysis in the tables, the following findings are made;

1. There is a significant positive and moderate relationship between ageism and psychological wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State.
2. There is a significant moderate but negative relationship between ageism and social wellbeing among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State.
3. There is a significant moderate and negative relationship between ageism and psycho-social

wellbeing jointly taken among the elderly in Rivers South East senatorial district, Rivers State.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between Ageism and Psycho-social Wellbeing among the Elderly in Rivers South East Senatorial District, Rivers State. From the study, ageism has a mixed but largely negative effect on the wellbeing of the elderly. Overall, the findings of this study highlight that the psycho-social wellbeing of the elderly in Rivers South East Senatorial District is largely shaped by ageism. Therefore, for the elderly to age with dignity, enjoy good mental health, and remain socially active, deliberate efforts must be made to eliminate ageism.

Recommendations

Based on the findings on the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Based on finding one that show significant negative and moderate relationship between ageism and psychological wellbeing, it is recommended that government and NGOs should promote resilience-building programs for the elderly, such as counselling and coping skills workshops, to help them reframe negative stereotypes into motivation for self-worth.
2. Finding two shows that there is significant moderate negative relationship between ageism and social wellbeing. hence, it is recommended that the Rivers State Ministry of Social Welfare and community leaders should launch anti-ageism campaigns in Rivers South East. This should

include town hall meetings, radio jingles in local dialects, and school programs to discourage stereotypes like "the elderly are a burden."

3. From finding three which reveals significant moderate negative relationship between ageism and psycho-social wellbeing jointly taken, it is recommended that health centers, and churches should integrate "Elderly Friendly" initiatives that address both psychological and social needs. This includes support groups and intergenerational programs that bring youth and elderly together to reduce prejudice and promote mutual respect.

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