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Extended Summary:

Introduction:

If we ask ourselves whether there are consequences stemming from ageist discrimination, the answer is yes. These consequences can be serious and far-reaching for the health, well-being, and human rights of older adults. They include reduced quality of life, increased social isolation and loneliness, limited ability to express their sexuality, and a higher risk of violence and abuse (Informe Mundial sobre edadismo, 2022). Ageism is considered by many authors as the third major form of discrimination in our society, following sexism and racism (Butler, 1980; Stallar et al., 2002).

The focus of human activity and its development is evident in towns and cities. Hence, one of the best policy responses to population aging is to make cities more age friendly. This involves ensuring that urban centers have the necessary human, financial, and social resources to implement positive and innovative changes.

Therefore, this Bachelor's Thesis is an empirical work focused on the field of discrimination against older people. It will analyze the results of a research study on Age-Friendly Cities conducted by the Jaume I University of Castellón. The analysis will examine two questions from a survey administered to a group of people over 60 years old to determine if there are differences based on their self-perceived discrimination and their perception of age-related discrimination in general. Furthermore, the results will be compared by gender to identify any significant differences that should be considered for the future.

Multiple investigations, such as those documented in the Global Report on Ageism (2022), demonstrate that ageism negatively affects various aspects of older people's lives. In summary, it can contribute to premature loss of independence, increased disability rates, higher levels of depression, and premature mortality in individuals who, under different circumstances, would maintain a productive, satisfying, and healthy life. Ageism has effects on individuals at a physical, mental, and social well-being level, but it also impacts society. It generates significant economic costs due to the social and health problems it creates, requiring substantial financial investment in research and intervention programs, while also squandering the valuable assistance and collaboration that could come from this segment of the population.

It should be noted that this age discrimination, according to multiple authors such as Lemus and Expósito (2005), among others, does not affect all older people equally and is often exacerbated when it is associated with certain social characteristics, such as lack of resources, gender, or ethnicity. However, the Global Report on Ageism (2022), after reviewing related research, states that there is no conclusive data regarding these variables but recommends considering them when planning effective strategies to reduce ageism.

Furthermore, the Spanish population over 64 years old amounts to 9.5 million people as of January 1, 2022, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2022). Additionally, the population of Spain is aging more rapidly than other European nations. A brief explanation for this is that the baby boomer generation is aging, the birth rate has decreased since the 1970s, and there is increasing longevity due to new lifestyles, socialization, climate change, and technological advancements. All of this suggests that there will be a demographic shift in the long run, with the proportion of people over 60 projected to increase by 32% by 2050 (Porcel & Valpuesta, 2012). We must be prepared for this, as it is not a problem but rather a sign of progress in our society.

To combat this discrimination on October of 2007, coinciding with the International Day of Older Persons, the World Health Organization formally launched the guide on Age-Friendly Cities, encouraging cities to adapt to the needs of their aging populations. The aim of this guide is to assist in creating communities, environments, and services that support active and healthy aging. An age-friendly city promotes active aging by maximizing health, participation, and security opportunities to enhance the quality of life for older individuals as they age (OMS, 2007).

With that said, and considering all the context provided, this Bachelor's Thesis will focus on the citizens of Castellón and their study of Age-Friendly Cities. In 2016, a project was already carried out, achieving a high degree of objectives. Following the recommendations for continuous improvement, the City Council of Castellón opened a tender for the execution of this new project. In the resolution decree published on May 2022, it was determined that the Universitat Jaume I would conduct the new diagnostic study.

The needs assessment project was carried out using various methodologies. On one hand, it employed a qualitative methodology based on focus groups composed of older individuals, caregivers, and service providers, to gather demands and proposals that would help establish a new action plan for the entire city. On the other hand, a quantitative methodology was utilized through a cross-sectional survey, which collected information on various aspects related to the city's age-friendliness and the general satisfaction level regarding the eight areas mentioned in the Age-Friendly Cities Guide.

In this present study, we will focus on the aspect of respect and inclusion outlined in the guide, specifically concerning discrimination, as it is a fundamental pillar of ageism. To do so, we will employ the quantitative methodology used in the research, evaluating the questions related to discrimination.

Objectives:

- Evaluate the level of self-perceived and perceived discrimination towards older people in a sample of older individuals.
- Hypothesis: There are no gender differences in self-perceived and perceived discrimination towards older people.

Methodology:

A cross-sectional survey consisting of a total of 33 questions, two of which are included within the section on respect and social inclusion and are directly related to the variable of discrimination:
11. Do you believe that older people experience discrimination based on their age?
12. Have you personally felt discriminated against because you are an older person?
Both questions were answered using a Likert-type scale: never, rarely, sometimes, often, always, acquiring a score ranging from 1 to 5.
The target population for the study consisted of all individuals aged 60 and above residing in the city of Castelló de la Plana in 2021. This population comprises 43,740 individuals, of which 24,695 are women and 19,045 are men.
The selected sample for the survey consists of 301 respondents, all from Castellón, including 189 women, 109 men, and 3 who abstained from answering. It is not a random sample; respondents were selected from specific senior centers.
To analyze the results of the two questions, SPSS was used, and a Student's t-test was calculated.

Results:

In general, out of the sample of 301 older individuals, 75.4% perceive age discrimination, while 21.6% believe there is no discrimination, indicating a significant level of perceived discrimination. When evaluating self-perceived discrimination, 61.1% reported not identifying themselves as being discriminated against, while 35.2% considered themselves to be discriminated against.
By analyzing the mean scores of their responses, we can observe that there are no significant differences in perception based on gender. Women scored an average of 2.97 for the perception of discrimination towards others, compared to 2.94 in men. In terms of self-perceived discrimination, women had an average score of 2.06, while men had an average score of 2.07. These data indicate that there does not appear to be a likelihood of differences.
The Student's t-test shows that these differences in the groups are not statistically significant with $p < 0.5$.

Conclusions and Possible Improvements:

These differences could potentially be explained by social desirability bias, as in many cases, individuals tend to present a positive self-image, and one way to achieve this is by expressing culturally appropriate ideals. Admitting that they feel discriminated against could indicate a sense of hostility or vulnerability. To mitigate this bias, it would be advisable to administer the questionnaire to a larger number of individuals to obtain more reliable data, although the current sample used is quite representative. If this is indeed the case, it is positive to know that older people in Castellón do not perceive themselves as being discriminated against, but it is important to consider that they do acknowledge age discrimination in general and it should be considered. It would be recommended to administer the questionnaire again in a few years, after implementing the intervention plan, to observe if the new plan has successfully reduced the perception of discrimination among older individuals.
The data also confirm the hypothesis, as no differences in perception were observed based on gender. This is an interesting finding considering the lack of information on this aspect. It should be noted that these conclusions apply specifically to the analyzed sample, which had a higher proportion of women than men. Although the population of Castellón has a higher number of older women than men, it is possible that with a more balanced gender distribution in the sample, different results could be observed.

Edadismo en la población mayor de la ciudad de Castellón:

Introducción:

Existen numerosas consecuencias procedentes de la discriminación edadista, las cuales pueden graves y de largo alcance para su salud, bienestar y derechos humanos. (Informe mundial sobre edadismo, 2022).

Por lo que el presente TFG es un trabajo empírico centrado en el campo de la discriminación hacia las personas mayores, en el que se van a utilizar los resultados de una investigación sobre Ciudades Amigables realizada por la Universidad Jaume Primer de Castellón, para observar si existen diferencias entre la percepción de discriminación por edad hacia la población en general y hacia ellos mismos.

OBJETIVO: evaluar en una muestra de personas mayores el nivel de discriminación autopercibida y percibida hacia las personas mayores.

HIPOTESIS: no hay diferencias por género en la discriminación autopercibida y percibida hacia las personas mayores.

Metodología:

Participantes:

301 encuestados de Castellón con edad media 69,74 DT=6,155 : 189 mujeres, 109 hombres, 3 sin contestar. Muestra no aleatoria

Instrumento:

Encuesta transversal, que consta de 33 preguntas en total de las cuales dos, son las incluidas dentro del punto de respeto e inclusión social y estan relacionadas directamente con la variable de discriminación:

11.¿Cree que las personas mayores sufren discriminación por razones de edad?

12.¿Se ha sentido discriminada/o por ser una persona mayor?

Ambas se respondían con una escala de tipo likert: nunca, rara vez, a veces, muchas veces, siempre. Adquiriendo por lo tanto una puntuación de 1 a 5. Al realiza el análisis de los datos, del 1 al 2 se consideraba como que la respuesta era NO, mientras que del 3 al 5 como que la respuesta era SÍ.

Análisis: **Procedimiento:**

SPSS y T de Student   n=301-298   N=43.740   NC=95,5%   Z=2   Error=5,93

• Resultados:

En general: 75,4% percibe que hay discriminación por edad – 61,1% no autopercibe discriminación hacia ellos por edad.

Tabla 1- Porcentajes de discriminación percibida

OPCIONES	GENERAL	PROPIA
1 Nunca	4,3%	**35,2%**
2 Rara vez	17,3%	**25,9%**
3 A veces	**56,1%**	29,6%
4 Muchas veces	**16,6%**	5,3%
5 Siempre	**2,7%**	0,3%

Por géneros: NO hay diferencias significativas por género entre las medias de los grupos.

Tabla 2 - Medias de las respuestas en mujeres y hombres

	M	H	T	gl	P
General	2,97	2,94	0,24	290	0.404
Propia	2,06	2,07	-0,045	288	0,482

• Conclusiones y posibles mejoras:

Se puede concluir que las personas mayores de Castellón perciben elevados niveles de discriminación por edad en la sociedad, pero no perciben esa discriminación hacia ellos mismos, ni se observan diferencias de percepción según géneros, lo cual podría llegar a ser explicado por la deseabilidad social y es importante a en cuenta por parte del Ayuntamiento de Castellón para implementar el nuevo plan de acción.
Sería recomendable tras la aplicación de dicho plan, volver a realizar la encuesta para observar si hay mejoras en la percepción de discriminación.
Resaltar que estas conclusiones son las que se han obtenido a día de hoy con la evaluación presente, pero existen numerosas variables que influyen en la percepción de discriminación, como el aspecto generacional y los roles de género, que van cambiando junto a los momentos que vive la sociedad, influyendo en nuestros pensamientos y sentimientos, por lo que se debe seguir investigando para mejorar los planes de intervención y conseguir una sociedad igual de inclusiva y respetuosa para todos.

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