

## Artikel Penelitian

# Assessing ageist behaviors of Indonesian adult persons using the Relating to Older People Evaluation (ROPE) survey

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### Abstrak

Ageism adalah salah satu masalah psikososial yang terabaikan dimana orang dewasa melakukan diskriminasi usia kepada lansia. Penelitian ini untuk menggambarkan prevalensi perilaku ageist di antara orang dewasa di kota Makassar, Indonesia. Metode ini digunakan desain survei cross-sectional. Survei Relating to Older People Evaluation (ROPE) telah digunakan sebagai instrumen untuk menilai perilaku ageist. Seratus orang dewasa merespons (tingkat respons (RR) 100%). Perilaku ageist positif menunjukkan bahwa responden menahan pintu terbuka untuk lansia yang lebih tua karena usia mereka (93%), menikmati percakapan dengan lansia yang lebih tua karena usia mereka (99%), dan meminta nasihat lansia yang lebih tua karena usia mereka (98%). Perilaku negatif seperti berbicara lebih keras atau lebih lambat kepada lansia karena usia mereka (95%), menggunakan kata-kata sederhana ketika berbicara dengan lansia (99%), dan ketika lansia memiliki penyakit, mereka mungkin berkata, 'itu normal di usia Anda' (96%). Orang dewasa melaporkan terlibat dalam perilaku penuaan yang berpotensi membahayakan kesehatan mental orang tua. Survei ini dapat menjadi acuan untuk mengatasi perilaku negatif pada lansia.

**Kata kunci:** Ageist Behaviors, Ageism, Elderly, Adult Person, Indonesia

### Abstract

*Ageism is one of the abandoned psychosocial problems that adult persons were doing age discrimination to the elderly. This study is to describe the prevalence of ageist behaviors amongst adult persons in Makassar city, Indonesia. The method was used a cross-sectional survey design. The Relating to Older People Evaluation (ROPE) survey has been used as an instrument to assess ageist behaviors. One hundred adult persons responded (response rate (RR) 100%). Positive ageist behaviors show that respondents hold doors open for elderly because of their age (93%), enjoy conversations with elderly because of their age (99%), and ask an elderly for advice because of their age (98%). Negative behaviors such as talking louder or slower to old people because of their age (95%), use simple words when talking to old people (99%), and when an old person has an ailment, they may said, 'that's normal at your age' (96%). Adult persons report engaging in ageist behaviors that potentially harm the mental health of the elderly. This survey can be a reference to solve negative behaviors for older people.*

**Keywords:** Ageist Behaviors, Ageism, Elderly, Adult Person, Indonesia

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### INTRODUCTION

The growth of the elderly group is progressively moving almost throughout the world, and it projected that every year would increase. The growth of the elderly population estimated to increase by 56 percent to 1.4 billion population in 2030 [1]. Indonesia reaches 20.24 million older adult people, equivalent to 8.03 percent of the entire Indonesian population [2]. It shows that Indonesia has enormous elderly citizen and need more concern, especially the social aspect.

Social support is an essential aspect of supporting the health of older adults with chronic diseases to achieve wellness status. Depression levels will reduce among the elderly that have positive support from life partners [3]. Elderly with functional welfare

status, being widows and chronic diseases have more close relationship [4]. Besides, the elderly with chronic diseases feel stigmatized from the social environment and affect assumptions as a symbol of weakness, which ends in a denial of themselves [5]. We can conclude that social support for the elderly plays an important role and also have a negative impact, such as ageism.

Ageism is one of the elderly psychosocial problems that have many affect for the elderly [6]. Ageism is an exciting phenomenon that is most likely to be destined to be elderly. This phenomenon is still often encountered, especially among students [7]. Changes in the symptoms of depression for four years in the elderly are closely related to the presence of ageism. Besides, self-perception of aging affects ageism and depression in the elderly [8]. The results of another study found that the depressive symptoms of gay seniors were closely associated with the internalization of ageism [9]. Elderly individuals in South Korea

are depressed due to the presence of ageism [10]. If this ageism continuously, the elderly can inhibit active and healthy ageing [11].

Other age groups have enormous potential to be the perpetrators of ageism. The study showed that college student who underwent age progression simulation has the potential of negative stereotypes in the elderly [12]. Other research on college students shows that there are aging anxiety in physical appearance, fear of elderly, psychological changes and ageism [13]. Another study on nursing students in Australia was to get that 87.5% did an ageist behavior [14]. Previous studies have shown how ageism is closely related to the incidence of depression in the elderly. Also, adult persons are most likely to perform the behavior of ageism in the elderly. It can be a deterrent to successful aging and lowering the quality of elderly life. Lack of research on how ageism among the elderly in Indonesia, information regarding ageism is needed.

**METHOD**

**Design**

A cross-sectional survey design was used.

**Setting and sample**

The target population in this study was adults persons in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Participants were recruited via an online google form. One hundred adult persons have participated in this study.

**Data collection**

ROPE (Relating to Older People Evaluation) instrument was used in this study. The ROPE survey consists of 20 items and divided into positive and negative ageist

behavior questions. The ROPE measured on a 3-point scale where '0' indicates never, '1' indicates sometimes and '2' indicates often.

**Data Analysis**

Data were entered into SPSS version 21 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample.

**RESULTS**

Demographic data. Table 1 outlines the demographic characteristics of participants in the current study. The current study was a 100% response rate of the survey. 82% of participants (17-27 years old) have dominantly participated in this study. Of these, there are 18% of participants with an age range from 28 to 49 years old. Besides, most of the participants are female rather than male, and 79% (79 participants) are not working in the elderly unit.

**Table 1. Characteristics of participants**

Characteristic	N	Percentage (%)
<b>Age (In years)</b>		
17-27	82	82%
28-38	15	15%
39-49	3	3%
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	23	23%
Female	77	77%
<b>Working in the elderly unit</b>		
Yes	21	21%
No	79	79%

Results of the Survey. Table 2 outlines the assessment of ageist behaviors of Indonesian adult persons in the current study.

**Table 2. Assessments ageist behaviors of Indonesian adult persons**

Item	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	M (SD)
Hold doors open for old people because of their age	7	57	36	1,29 (0,591)
Enjoy conversations with old people because of their age	1	48	51	1,50 (0,522)
Compliment old people on how well they look, despite their age	12	47	41	1,29 (0,671)
Ask an old person for advice because of their age	2	47	51	1,49 (0,541)
Talk louder or slower to old people because of their age	5	42	53	1,48 (0,594)
When I find out an old person's age, I may say, 'You don't look that old'	44	41	15	0,71 (0,715)
Offer to help an old person across the street because of their age	19	54	27	1,08 (0,677)
When a slow driver is in front of me, I may think, 'It must be an old person'	59	38	3	0,44 (0,556)
Use simple words when talking to old people	1	18	81	1,80 (0,426)
Send birthday cards to old people that joke about their age	98	2	0	0,02 (0,141)
When an old person has an ailment, I may say, 'That's normal at your age'	4	37	59	1,55 (0,575)

Item	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)	M (SD)
Tell old people jokes about old age	55	33	12	0,57 (0,700)
Call an old woman, 'young lady,' or call an old man, 'young man'	73	24	3	0,30 (0,522)
When an old person can't remember something, I may say, 'That's what they call a "Senior Moment"'	39	45	16	0,77 (0,709)
Vote for an old person because of their age	39	41	20	0,81 (0,748)
Avoid old people because they are cranky	60	39	1	0,41 (0,514)
Tell an old person, 'You're too old for that' (	66	33	1	0,35 (0,500)
Ignore old people because of their age	83	17	0	0,17 (0,378)
Vote against an old person because of their age	75	22	3	0,28 (0,514)
Avoid old people because of their age	89	11	0	0,11 (0,314)

Results of assessment ageist behaviors of Indonesian adult persons found that positive and negative ageist behaviors. Positive ageist behaviors of participants show that 93% of respondent hold doors open for older people because of their age (combined often and sometimes), enjoy conversations with older people because of their age (99%), and ask an older person for advice because of their age 98%. Besides, negative ageist behaviors show that such as talk louder or slower to old people because of their age (95%), use simple words when talking to old people (99 %), and when an old person has an ailment, they may said, 'that's normal at your age' (96%).

## DISCUSSION

Most of all participants have one or more ageist behaviors relating to the elderly. The most frequent type of positive ageist behavior reported by 99% of participants enjoy conversations with older adults because of their age (accumulated often and sometimes). Another positive ageist behavior was to ask an older person for advice because of their age by 98%. Then, positive ageist behaviors of participants show that 93% of respondents hold doors open for older people because of their age.

The previous study shows that exercise students have low levels of ageism and are interested in working with the elderly [15]. Another study reveals that undergraduate and graduate social work students and social service providers reported positive ageist behaviors [16]. Also, undergraduate students found that ageism affects knowledge and interaction with the elderly. It means that these factors affect levels of ageism [17]. The survey of workers in Norway shows that quite positive on conceptions of older workers [18]. Hence, the self-perception of aging is essential for the elderly to achieve successful

aging. Perceived age discrimination strongly related to self-perception of aging and self-perception of aging was significantly correlate to life satisfaction [8,19]. Also, the elderly with good self-perception aging feelings of resignation, self-acceptance, patience, and decreased fear of death [20].

From the result and previous studies, there are similarities to discuss. Indonesian adult's person has positive ageist behavior in dealing with the elderly in daily life. This finding is suitable with a previous study, which is an adult person apply desirable behavior. The adult person in Indonesia shows that positive ageist behavior in terms of making conversation with the elderly, asking for advice, and help the elderly by holding doors open. Positive ageist behaviors that were applied by participants were imperative to assist the elderly achieve life satisfaction and successful aging. Elderly who achieve successful aging potentially have a better quality of life from the positive ageist behavior of the adult person.

Results of the study show that the most frequent type of negative ageist behaviors reported by 95% of participants talks louder or slower to older people because of their age (accumulated often and sometimes). Then, 99% of participants use simple words when talking to older people. Also, participants reported that when an old person has an ailment, they may said, 'that's normal at your age' (96%).

Negative ageist behavior harms the psychological of the elderly. The previous study shows that ageism strongly related to affect mental health, specifically depression [21]. Ageism and ageist stereotypes have a substantial effect on the physical and cognitive of elderly and longevity [22]. The other study shows that 84% have experience ageism behavior such as jokes and birthday cards about old and disrespectful events [23].

Also, commonly the elderly have psychological reactions such as denial, anger, bargaining, despair, and resignation [24]. The comparative macro-level ageism index shows that Turkey has the highest score of ageism and practice age discrimination in workplaces [25]. Then, age discrimination can lead to suicidal ideation of Korean elders rather than the elder who did not deal with it [26].

Our results show that Indonesian adult's person doing negative ageist behavior to the elderly are generally relatively similar, mainly Indonesia was categorized as a low middle-income country like Turkey. Participants were doing negative behavior to the elderly, which is potentially affect mental health. Based on the previous studies, the elderly who attain age discrimination continuously have probability leading to depression. Then, the worst mental health problem as a side effect of ageism is suicidal ideation. Hence, our inference about ageism is very imperative, especially for the mental health of the elderly, so the adult's person needs to know and understand about this issue.

We acknowledge that the limitation of our study is the limits of operational defining ageism of the ROPE survey instrument. Also, we have researched the small sample size of participants. Next, questions of the instrument were not suitable for Indonesian cultures, such as giving a birthday card to the elderly.

## CONCLUSION

The study results reported the following items that assess the ageist behavior of Indonesian adult persons to include positive and negative ageist behaviors. Positive ageist behaviors such as hold doors open for older adults, enjoy conversations with older adults, and ask an older adult for advice. Negative ageist behaviors such as talking louder or slower to old people, use simple words when talking to old people, and when an old person has an ailment, they may said, 'that's normal at your age'. Negative ageist behaviors have affected the mental health of the elderly, and this is a crucial issue to know and understand by adult persons. Hence, we need to plan and design intervention programs for ageism issues among adult

persons. Further research is needed to enhance sample size and asses age discrimination and ageism levels among Indonesian elderly, which is a lack of information about this phenomenon. Also, ageism levels among family caregivers are essential to explore.

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