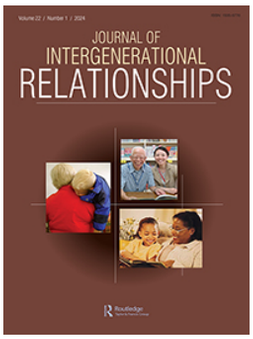

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Intergenerational Interaction, Financial Well-Being, and Ageism in Kazakhstan During Covid Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

As the age of a population increases, different problems arise in a society, which inevitably leads to ageism. The introduction of extraordinary measures to protect the older adults during COVID-19 further exacerbated the complexity of ageism and led to worsened financial well-being for households. This study aims to determine the financial and other factors associated with different ageist attitudes. 286 respondents from Kazakhstan participated in the online study, and the hypotheses were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results indicated a strong relationship between economic status and ageist behaviors. Moreover, COVID was positively associated with unfavorable ageist attitudes, whereas experience with older people reduces negative perceptions toward older people.

Contribution: The results add new evidence to the intergenerational research that investigated ageism triggers. It suggests that financial well-being is one of the main components of negative ageist behavior, while it does not have an impact on positive one.

KEYWORDS

Ageism; COVID; financial well-being; ageist attitudes; Kazakhstan

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in December 2019, has disrupted lives worldwide, leading to social distancing measures and legal orders aimed at curbing the virus's spread. Because epidemiological data showed that older people were at the highest risk of COVID-19 fatalities (Lytle & Levy, 2022), other age groups, particularly youth, blamed them for the restrictions. This oversimplification of older individuals as a homogeneously vulnerable group and age as a risk factor contributed to negative perceptions, portraying older people as burdens (Meisner, 2021). Furthermore, widespread income losses during lockdowns heightened stress and negative emotions among households, intensifying intergenerational tensions and giving rise to ageism, reflecting discriminatory attitudes

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toward older individuals (Ayalon et al., 2020). Economic uncertainty further intensified competition for resources, occasionally manifesting as age-related biases, particularly among the youth and middle-aged populations, toward older individuals.

Researching ageist attitudes has become crucial, especially in the wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, given its complexity and potential impact on intergenerational relations. While there is extensive research on this topic in developed countries, few studies exist in developing countries, often considering ageism a "Western" phenomenon (Henry et al., 2019). However, developing countries are also undergoing population aging, making this issue increasingly relevant. Importantly, there is limited research on the link between financial well-being and ageism during the pandemic, despite the financial challenges faced by poorer and developing countries (World Bank, 2021). Therefore, analyzing ageism with new approaches in the context of the pandemic helps to unpack unstudied determinants of different ageism forms that create obstacles to reaching the quality of aging and affect intergenerational relations within families and communities.

We chose Kazakhstan as a case study since the country's growth rate was low (2.5% in 2021 and 3.5% in 2022) with a high inflation rate (7%), and 26% of females and 22% of males reported job losses during the pandemic (Shaikh, 2022). This condition undoubtedly reflects the economic situation of these households. Secondly, Kazakhstan is among the developing countries whose population has already started the aging process. In 2020, the share of people within the total population aged 65 and over was 8% (World Bank, 2020), and this number is expected to increase further at a higher speed (APDA, 2020). The growing number of older people generates ageism, considering that older people put a strain on limited resources (North & Fiske, 2015). At this stage, scientific-based research would be handy for policymakers while implementing policies for the eradication of ageism. Despite the importance of the topic, it is still under-researched in Kazakh society, and its socio-structural predictors have been an open question until now. Finally, this country makes an interesting case due to its tradition of younger family members being culturally and financially responsible for older parents. This practice could engrain age-old stereotypes in society even more by considering them a burden, especially during COVID-19, when most families experience financial hardships.

Our research question explores the connection between financial well-being and ageism, as well as other factors influencing ageist attitudes. To answer these questions, we conducted a survey among Kazakh respondents ($n = 286$) using structural equation modeling (SEM). Our findings reveal that individuals under 63 years old with better financial well-being exhibit fewer unfavorable ageist attitudes, while the opposite holds for poorer respondents. The COVID-19 outbreak exacerbated ageism, but experience with older individuals was associated with reduced ageism, especially among youth.

Our research emphasizes the importance of addressing ageism in society and highlights that ageist attitudes are not limited to Western countries but also affect developing nations in the early stages of population aging, particularly those facing financial difficulties.

The paper's structure includes an introduction, a review of existing literature on ageism during the pandemic and in Kazakhstan, research methodology, results, discussion, and a conclusion with limitations of the study.

Literature review

In recent decades, the third largest type of discrimination, after racism and sexism, has been ageism toward older people (Barth et al., 2021; Palmore, 1999). Ageism involves discriminating against a particular age group, typically targeting older adults and perpetuating stereotypes related to biological age (Cary et al., 2017). Until recently, the problem of aging was viewed as a demographic situation indicating a decline in fertility and an increase in life expectancy (Fraser et al., 2020). However, recent trends indicate that the aging process will accelerate, and thus a lack of perspective toward older adults and intergenerational solidarity affects the entire social order (Ehni & Wahl, 2020).

Ageism permeates various facets of society, including the media, healthcare, and the labor market (Fraser et al., 2020; Meisner, 2021). Despite legal protections and increased retirement ages, older workers still face hurdles in employment due to age-related biases, such as perceptions of decreased productivity, inflexibility, and health issues. These stereotypes persist, affecting hiring decisions (Lössbroek et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated ageism and intergenerational tensions (Ayalon, 2020; Petretto & Pili, 2020). Government measures to protect older adults during the pandemic led to the emergence of age-based stereotypes, complicating attitudes toward older individuals (Silva et al., 2021) As Alonso et al. (2020) show for Spain, although pandemic stress affected younger age groups more, this did not mean that younger age groups were more tolerant of older people, but rather that it increased their negative feelings toward older people. Erasmus (2020) shows, that in South Africa age discrimination is strictly prohibited by law, but they disadvantage to access major medical services.

Several studies have investigated the impact of COVID-19 on intergenerational interactions, such as Sutter et al. (2022) revealing ageist stereotypes among younger adults in the USA and Canada, accompanied by intergenerational conflicts over resource allocation and perceiving them as warm but less competent. Spaccatini et al. (2022) found that younger individuals expressed more support for isolating and implementing selective lockdown measures targeting older people. Berde et al. (2023) studied ageist attitudes in Hungary, Tunisia, and Uzbekistan during pandemic, uncovering increased intergenerational tension, particularly in smaller cities. Meanwhile, Lytle and Apriceno

(2023) highlighted the association between hostile ageism and overall intergenerational tension, while benevolent ageism contributed to consumption and identity-related tension. Swift and Chasteen (2021) showed that the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the view that older people are vulnerable and amplified both benign and malignant ageism. Additionally, Vervaecke et al. (2021) pointed out that articles about ageism during the COVID-19 pandemic have focused on malign ageism, while benign ageism has been reinforced just as much. Previtali et al. (2020) showed that the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced ageist attitudes and intergenerational solidarity as well.

Moreover, younger people also encountered ageist attitudes during the pandemic, being perceived as less likely to follow public health guidelines, causing perceptions that they were more careless or less concerned with other people's health. However, older adults reported facing more ageism during the pandemic (Barth et al., 2021; Fraser et al., 2020). Various methods have been employed to identify age discrimination during COVID-19, including analyzing memes and hashtags (Sipocz et al., 2021), conducting interviews (Barth et al., 2021), and surveys (Werner et al., 2021). In our research, we utilized surveys to determine the factors of ageism in the wave of COVID-19. Unlike the previous studies, we focused on different ageist attitudes, such as unfavorable (stereotypes, discrimination, and COVID-related ageism) and favorable (competence and warmth), as well as a new approach to the ageism determinants.

The role of older people in Kazakh context

In the Kazakh context, traditions and values are deeply intertwined with the family institution, where older people rely on their children, grandchildren, and relatives for social and financial support. However, societal changes, including individualization, urbanization, and nuclearization[1] of families, are impacting the lives of older people. While extended families are more common in villages and among Kazakh citizens in certain regions, some families struggle to accommodate older parents, leading to cases of domestic violence, often concealed due to cultural sensitivities (UNFPA, 2021).

The demographic shift in Kazakhstan necessitates not only meeting older citizens' basic needs but also fostering their active participation in society (UNFPA, 2021). The government has raised the retirement age beginning from 2018, which is currently 59.5 years, and will be equal to that of men – 63 years – by 2027. However, employers still prefer younger workers due to stereotypes about older employees' inflexibility and unable learning new approaches to work due to their Soviet education and working style. adaptability and technological skills (Izekenova et al., 2021; Smirnova & Tatibekov, 2013).

The COVID-19 pandemic fueled stereotypes, further disadvantaging older workers who were already underrepresented in the labor force It could be seen that only 3–4% of the older adults are employed, and of those, 19.3% are self-employed (APDA, 2020).

Empirical evidence indicates that older people in Kazakhstan faced worsened conditions during the pandemic, including social isolation, movement restrictions, and economic challenges (Izekenova et al., 2021). Some older people were left without pensions as a result of the online banking system, increasing poverty among them (Akanova, 2020; APDA, 2020). Despite the increasing age discrimination toward older people, to our knowledge, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through empirical analysis has not been investigated. We aim to fill this gap.

Research methodology

Data collection

For the purposes of this study, we conducted a survey between late January and early February 2022, while the COVID-19 pandemic was still critical in Kazakhstan. Since the beginning of January, the coronavirus cases have increased by 41% within the past two weeks and daily cases were the highest since the beginning of the pandemic (Astanatimes, 2022). It prompted the introduction of stricter measures in the country, such as mobile applications for accessing public places and city categorizations based on infection rates, starting from January 5, 2022. Thus, we were forced to recruit our survey participants online, distributing them via social media, in particular, through large Facebook and WhatsApp groups, where people from all cities in Kazakhstan with different ages, genders, and educational backgrounds are subscribed.

Additionally, we encouraged participants to share the question link with their acquaintances. Thus, our sample became free of skewness. The participation was completely anonymous, and there were no identifiable participants. The study followed ethical procedures. The languages of the questionnaire were Russian and Kazakh, the two main spoken languages in Kazakhstan. Initially, we developed the survey in English, and through a back-to-back translation process, we translated it into Russian and Kazakh.

Usually, the rule of 10 is used as a popular sample size recommendation. According to this rule, one should have at least 10 observations for each item of the questionnaire (Collier, 2020). Thus, we expected to recruit at least 200 respondents for testing path analysis with the observed variables and 20 items. Ultimately, we collected responses from 316 individuals; however, we excluded incomplete responses, focusing on those who provided answers to all essential items, including their attitudes toward older individuals and socio-

demographic details. Consequently, we retained and analyzed data from 286 respondents in our final analysis.

Research framework and hypothesis development

As we stated in the introduction, we aimed to test whether financial well-being, experience with older people, and COVID have an impact on ageist attitudes toward older people. Thus, according to the literature, we developed the following hypothesis:

Financial well-being

In today's society, economic status is pervasive and impacts how individuals see themselves and affect how they act toward others. Thus, many problems occur in a society, such as social tensions where unequal economic conditions exist (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). The studies confirmed that the level of income impacts people's tolerance, generosity, and attitudes (Côté et al., 2015). Furthermore, less income leads to less satisfaction with life and less tolerance toward other social groups (Hout, 2003).

In addition, in some societies, family members are still accustomed to giving their aging parents a portion of their earnings as a symbol of respect (Ng et al., 2002). The recent COVID-19 pandemic reduced family incomes significantly. Thus, we hypothesize that people who do not have adequate financial security view older people less positively and vice versa.

- H1a: Having more income is negatively associated with unfavorable ageist attitudes such as stereotypes, discrimination, and COVID-related ageism.
- H1b: More income positively impacts favorable attitudes toward older people, such as competence and warmth.

Intergenerational contact

Contact with outgroup members provides an opportunity to reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954). Ageism-related studies have also confirmed that having experiences, such as quantity and quality of contact with other age groups, reduces negative ageist attitudes toward older people (Bousfield & Hutchison, 2010). Thus, our next hypothesis is that having experience with older people, especially during the pandemic, will reduce negative ageist behavior.

- H2a: Having experience with older people is negatively associated with unfavorable ageist attitudes such as stereotypes, discrimination, and COVID-related ageism.
- H2b: Having experience with older people impacts positively on favorable ageist attitudes such as competence and warmth.

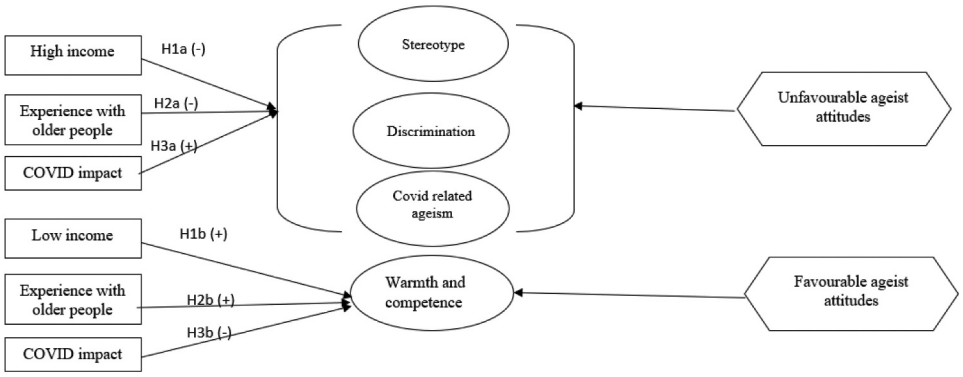

Figure 1. Research framework.

COVID impact

The COVID-19 pandemic strongly affects all realms of life and is also testing society's tolerance for older people in most countries. As older people were more vulnerable than young people, governments in some countries sought to take extraordinary measures to protect older adults. This led to resentment among many younger citizens, who felt that their older compatriots prevented them from pursuing their everyday lifestyles (Fraser et al., 2020). In addition, the COVID-19 crisis engrained age stereotypes. Therefore, we consider the impact of COVID on ageist beliefs to be negative.

- H3a: The COVID-19 impact is positively associated with unfavorable ageist attitudes such as stereotypes, discrimination, and COVID-related ageism.
- H3b: COVID-19 impacts negatively on favorable ageist attitudes such as competence and warmth.

Other control variables

Besides the abovementioned predictors of ageism, we added control variables such as age, gender, the size of the settlement, and education to uncover other factors that could impact ageist attitudes.

Figure 1 depicts the development of a research framework based on a theoretical framework and the relationship between hypotheses.

Measures

Dependent variables

To comprehensively investigate ageism, we considered both positive and negative attitudes, leading to four distinct dependent variables that characterize attitudes toward older individuals: stereotypes, discrimination,

Table 1. The factors and their items used in the questionary.

Factors	Items
Stereotype	Many old people just live in the past.
	Old people complain more than other people do.
	Many old people are not interested in making new friends preferring instead the circle of friends they have had for years.
	Many old people are happiest when they are with people their own age.
Discrimination	Most old people should not be allowed to renew their driver's licenses.
	Teenage suicide is more tragic than suicide among the older adults
	Old people should find friends their own age
Competence & warmth	The company of most old people is quite enjoyable.
	Old people deserve the same rights and freedoms as do other members of our society.
	Older people should feel welcome at social gatherings of young people
	Older people can be very creative
COVID-related ageism	Covid is "old people problem"
	Doctors spend too much time treating old people sick with COVID-19

competence and warmth, and COVID-related ageism (Table 1). According to the literature review, older adults mostly experience negative ageist attitudes rather than positive ones. Hence, we mostly used several types of negative ageist attitudes.

We applied some items of the Fraboni Ageism Scale (FAS) for stereotypes, discrimination, competence, and warmth according to the tests (Fraboni et al., 1990), such as instrument reliability and validity (Table 3). The FSA was selected to assess a multidimensional approach to ageism through three measures. Furthermore, compared to other measurements, it has more positive criteria, adequate internal consistency reliability (0.86), and fully captures ageism (Ozel Bilim & Kutlu, 2021).

For each factor (Table 1), respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement using the 5-point Linkert scale, ranging from totally disagree (1) to totally agree (5). The statements were as follows:

The consistency analysis confirmed that all items measured the same dimensions of age-related attitudes.

Independent variables

Independent variables were chosen based on our hypotheses. Financial well-being was measured through respondents' economic status. It ranged from 1 to 4, meaning higher values indicate better financial well-being. Another independent variable of interest was the experience of people regarding older people. They were asked whether they live with or/and work with older adults. To capture the COVID impact in our survey, individuals were asked whether they were infected with coronavirus, so we added a binary variable. Additionally, we collected demographic information such as age, gender, residency, and education to consider potential influences on ageism.

Results and discussion

Respondent profiles

Our study sample includes 118 (41.3%) males and 168 females (58.7%). As we aim to detect ageist attitudes, we included only respondents under 65 years old. Thus, the respondents' age distribution is between 18 and 63 years old. In terms of settlement size, it was mixed between different residential areas, but the majority of them (46.2%) came from Kazakhstan's larger cities. The sample was mixed in terms of educational level. Most of them had tertiary education (71%), followed by post-secondary education (19.2%) and secondary education (9.8%). Table 2 contains additional descriptive statistics about the respondents.

Table 2. Summary of demographic characteristics of responders.

Variables ($n = 286$)	n	%	Mean	Min	Max	St. dev.
Gender			0.41	0	1	-
Male	118	41.3				
Female	168	58.7				
Age (years)			33.8	18	63	10.67
Education			2.61	1	3	0.66
Secondary education	28	9.8				
Post-secondary vocational education	55	19.2				
Higher education	203	71.0				
Marital status			2.41	1	5	2.41
Married	143	50				
Single	115	40.2				
Others	28	9.8				
Place of residence			3.16	1	4	0.91
Countryside	12	4.2				
Small town	60	21.0				
Regional capital	82	28.7				
City of republican significance	132	46.2				
Financial well-being			2.16	1	4	0.7
Experience with older person			0.72	0	1	-
Got COVID			0.76	0	1	-

Table 3. Instrument reliability and validity.

Factor	Variable	Stand. loadings	α	C.R.	AVE
Stereotype	S1	0.787	0.751	0.833	0.572
	S2	0.799			
	S3	0.731			
	S4	0.706			
Competence & warmth	W1	0.855	0.746	0.841	0.572
	W2	0.611			
	W3	0.785			
	W4	0.754			
Discrimination	D1	0.595	0.646	0.767	0.527
	D2	0.764			
	D3	0.803			
Covid	C2	0.847	0.605	0.835	0.717
	C3	0.847			

Construct reliability and validity

Initially, we analyzed item scales for reliability and convergent validity. Our analyses were done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 and the Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) version 27. Usually, for assessing the reliability of items, composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha, and average variance extracted (AVE) are used. The required values for the CR and Cronbach's alpha should meet 0.7 and 0.6, respectively, threshold values for each scale (Pallant, 2020), and the AVE threshold should be above 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Our items met the recommended threshold values (Table 3), so we can conclude that our model is reliable.

The confirmatory factor analysis was performed using the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method to examine structure validity. The data fit the model well, according to the modified CFA indices ($\chi 2(41) = 75.785$, $p < .05$, $\chi 2/df = 1.802$, Comparative Fit Index(CFI) =.982, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) =.975, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) =.054).

Hypothesis checking

SEM was used to assess the hypothesized model. Ageism is not directly observable – it is latent. Therefore, using SEM can uncover relations between such variables (Russo & Stol, 2021). In addition, it allows one to handle one or more dependent and independent variables at the same time (Astrachan et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2019).

First, we construct latent factors such as stereotypes, competence and warmth, discrimination, and COVID-related ageism to determine the independent variables' impact on the dependent variables. To incorporate ageist attitudes into the final model, covariances between them were estimated. The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between them.

Figure 2 demonstrates illustrates the final SEM, with ageist attitudes as the dependent variables represented by circles, and observed variables shown in squares. The arrows denote causal relationships. To assess the model's adequacy, we conducted various fit tests, including χ 2 to the degree of freedom ratio, root mean square error approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and parsimony comparative fit index (PCFI). Table 4 provides the results of these goodness-of-fit indices, demonstrating that our model is well-suited for analysis.

Discussion

The SEM results, presented in Table 5, provide valuable insights into the complex relationships between variables and ageist attitudes during the

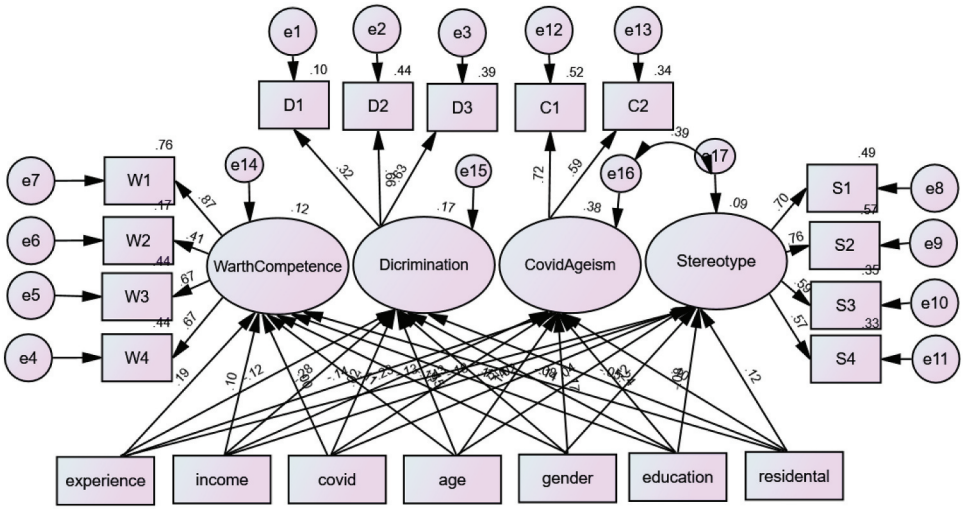

Figure 2. SEM predicting ageist behavior.

Table 4. Overall model fit analysis.

Fit indices	Allowable range	Modified model	Model fitness assessment
χ2 (Chi-square)	The smaller the better	176.5	Pass
Ratio of χ2 to degree of freedom	<3	1.48	Pass
RMSEA	<0.08	0.041	Pass
CFI	>0.90	0.950	Pass
TLI	>0.90	0.920	Pass
PCFI	>0.50	0.595	Pass

Table 5. The results of estimated model.

	Warmth & competence	Discrimination	Stereotype	COVID-Ageism
Experience	0.311	−0.103	−0.222	−0.276
	(0.105)***	(0.66)	(0.117)**	(0.127)**
Income	0.039	−0.090	−0.119	−0.165
	(0.44)	(0.029)***	(0.045)***	(0.048)***
COVID	−0.031	0.019	0.050	0.807
	(0.124)	(0.067)	(0.123)	(0.141)***
Age	−0.013	0.006	0.003	0.011
	(0.005)**	(0.003)*	(0.005)	(0.006)**
Gender	−0.279	0.136	0.197	0.326
	(0.107)***	(0.062)**	(0.106)*	(0.115)***
Education	0.239	−0.082	−0.096	−0.308
	(0.088)***	(0.049)*	(0.087)	(0.096)***
Residence	−0.090	−0.22	0.101	0.082
	(0.060)	(0.033)	(0.060)*	(0.065)
R^2	0.120	0.180	0.084	0.412

Note: *, **, ***represents Significance level at 10%,5% and 1% respectively.

COVID-19 pandemic. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of ageism and its dynamics in intergenerational interactions.

One noteworthy finding is the significant role of personal experience as a predictor of ageist attitudes. Unlike previous studies, our empirical analysis supports the idea that COVID-19 has introduced intergenerational

complexities. Surprisingly, individuals who contracted COVID-19 were more likely to hold older people responsible, leading to a negative association with pandemic-related ageism. Conversely, having contact with older individuals positively influenced favorable ageist attitudes, including perceiving them as warm and competent, while simultaneously reducing the prevalence of negative stereotypes. These results align with the intergenerational contact theory (Allport, 1954).

Our findings may be attributed to Kazakh traditions, where children are taught from an early age to be respectful and honest when interacting with older individuals. Family plays a significant role in providing support for older members, often leading to older people residing with their children's families. However, as society modernizes, these traditions may change, underscoring the need for government efforts to maintain intergenerational contact and combat ageism.

Financial well-being emerges as another crucial predictor of ageism, a dimension largely unexplored in previous studies. High-income individuals display greater tolerance toward older adults, whereas lower income levels correlate with more unfavorable ageist attitudes. This finding aligns with the idea that low-income individuals may be less inclined to embrace the concept of elder respect due to financial obligations (Xie et al., 2007).

Our findings could be supported by the fact that young and middle-aged people were harmed more financially by the pandemic, and they might not have enough funds until the economy recovers (Sundarasen et al., 2020). However, older adults were also impacted by the epidemic in Kazakhstan, as they rely solely on younger family members for financial support rather than having their own independent financial reserves. Given that this study was carried out at a relatively later stage of the pandemic, the harmful impact of COVID on financial well-being would have been noticeable. People who live in Kazakhstan experienced a reduction in their family income. On the one hand, it led to an increase in poverty from 8.3% to 12.7%. On the other hand, a decrease in income accompanies a decrease in pension contributions, which is a hurdle for the funded pension system (Izekenova et al., 2021). This financial strain could contribute to viewing older people as burdens, consistent with findings from the UNFPA survey on the socioeconomic well-being of older people in Kazakhstan (UNFPA, 2021). They pointed out that due to the worsening economic situation in Kazakhstan during the pandemic, domestic violence toward older adults is increasing, even though it was not common before.

The demographic variables also showed the importance of predicting ageism. Age correlates negatively with warmth and competence but positively with discrimination and pandemic-related ageism. Gender emerged as a strong predictor, with males more likely to consider older people less warm and competent and exhibit more unfavorable ageist attitudes, including discrimination, stereotypes, and COVID-

related ageism. Education has increased, it correlates positively with having more warmth and competence and less other prejudicial attitudes toward older people. Residential areas showed moderate predictability for stereotypes, potentially supporting the modernization theory, where living in larger cities is associated with increased stereotypes toward older people. These results provide partial support for our hypotheses.

Conclusions

The present study contributes further insights into the determinants of ageism by examining the intergenerational attitudes of young and middle-aged individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic has exacerbated age discrimination, this research addresses the underexplored role of financial factors in shaping ageist attitudes. By conducting a self-reported survey in Kazakhstan, we aimed to uncover the relationship between various ageist attitudes and financial well-being.

The study's findings confirm that economic circumstances are associated with unfavorable ageist attitudes such as discrimination and stereotypes while having no impact on favorable ageist attitudes. These timely findings suggest that individuals' financial situations are one of the main contributors to negative forms of ageism, especially in the pandemic context. The study contributes conceptually to the understanding of ageism determinants, which can lead to intergenerational tensions and conflicts.

Additionally, our study underscores the importance of intergenerational interactions and experiences in mitigating negative ageist behaviors and promoting positive attitudes toward older adults. It also highlights the adverse impact of COVID-19 on attitudes toward older people.

The sample size is relatively modest, warranting future studies with larger and more diverse participant groups for improved representativeness. Randomizing response options in Likert scale questions can reduce order bias. Longitudinal data would enable causal analysis.

Despite these contributions, our study has limitations. The relatively modest sample size warrants future studies with larger and more diverse participant groups to enhance representativeness. Randomizing response options in Likert scale questions can reduce order bias. Second, we did not use longitudinal data, which allows us to address causality. Third, Social desirability bias may affect self-reported surveys, suggesting the need for complementary research methods. Finally, recruiting participants through social media may introduce sample bias, necessitating consideration of broader demographics in future studies.

Policy implications

Addressing ageism is essential for promoting social integration and community participation across all age groups. Combating ageism can foster social cohesion and inclusivity, ultimately strengthening intergenerational relationships. One promising approach to facilitate interaction and mutual support between generations is to combine children's and youth centers with centers for older adults. These initiatives can provide opportunities for individuals of different ages to interact, share experiences, and support one another, leading to more positive perceptions of older individuals and greater respect for their wisdom and life experiences.

At the same time, families will continue to play a significant role in providing support for their older relatives in accordance with Kazakhstani national customs. Thus, their financial well-being is crucial for their attitudes toward older adults. In this regard, public policies will be necessary to assist family members who provide intra-family care services in balancing their family and job obligations. In addition, securing jobs, which bring income to society, is also one of the main actions for combating ageism. As it was found that those who had low income were more likely to be ageist than others, it raises the question of the adequacy of the institutional context and highlights the desirability of making the official policy more age-friendly.

Note

1. Nuclearization is the process of transforming an extended family into a nuclear family, which consists of two parents and their children.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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