California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

2013

Ageism in American society: Are aging women of color assertive enough?

Tina Maria Doss-Collins

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project

Part of the Gerontology Commons, Race and Ethnicity Commons, and the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation

AGEISM IN AMERICAN SOCIETY: ARE AGING WOMEN

OF COLOR ASSERTIVE ENOUGH?

_____

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

_____

by

Tina Maria Doss-Collins

June 2013

AGEISM IN AMERICAN SOCIETY: ARE AGING WOMEN

OF COLOR ASSERTIVE ENOUGH?

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

-----

by
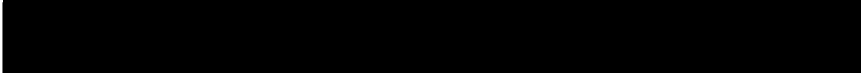
Tina Maria Doss-Collins

June 2013

Approved by:

███████████████████████████████████

Dr. Teresa Morris, Faculty Supervisor
Social Work

6-6-13
Date

███████████████████████████████████

Rev Larry D. Weaver, Senior Pastor,
Atherton Baptist Church

███████████████████████████████████

Dr. Rosemary McCaslin,
M.S.W. Research Coordinator

ABSTRACT

Ageism is a form of discrimination. Discrimination based on age is akin to racism, sexism and any other form of bias. The study focus was ageism and assertiveness in aging women of color. The study examined a relationship between ageism occurring with these women and their response to it, if any. There were 41 participants in this study. They were all women of color 60-years of age and older. The participants were members of a church located in Los Angeles County. Non-probability convenience sampling was the method used for participant selection. Positivism was the approach used for this study. The expectation was that ageism would measure high and assertiveness would measure low within this population group.

The research results revealed that awareness was a key factor for influencing experiencing ageism and assertiveness. The finding showed that ageism did measure high within this population; however, with the addition of awareness, higher levels of assertion occurred. Implications of the findings for micro social work practice are increased awareness that women of color are experiencing this kind of discrimination. The knowledge

may assist social workers with engaging these women a little differently. Macro social work practice can benefit because awareness of ageism, can affect the way agencies and human service organizations assess and engage women of color. Future research recommendations include survey questions focused on awareness, research results indicate awareness as a factor for experiences and assertiveness. Further research could include sampling from different sites and comparing the results of the sites.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

DEDICATION

To my mom because without her graduate school would not have been possible. For my dad who loves me unconditionally. To my brother who believes in me and has been my "cheerleader" throughout this process. To my best friend that stayed my best friend even though, I neglected her terribly. I love you all and thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

ASSESSMENT

Introduction

This chapter explains the research question. It includes an explanation of the Positivist paradigm and the rationale for utilizing this paradigm. The literature gathered on ageism in American society, aging of women of color, and assertiveness was discussed as well as the theoretical orientation chosen for this study. The chapter addressed the potential contributions of this study to micro and macro social work practice.

Research Focus

The research focus of this study is "Ageism in American Society: Are Aging Women of Color Assertive Enough?" The following are definitions for ageism and assertiveness. Ageism is a word coined by Butler (1989) who defines it as "a systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this with skin color and gender" (p. 139). Assertiveness is defined by Kilkus (1993) as, "Assertiveness can be defined as interpersonal respect and empowerment" (as cited in Smith, 1997, p. 1).

This study asks these questions, "Do aging women of color 60-years of age and older experience ageism?" If yes, "How do they respond to it?" It is important to discover, if these women are experiencing ageism, is the experience more external or are they internalizing it. If the women were externalizing their ageist experiences, they would "lash out" at those projecting those attitudes toward them. On the other hand, if the women internalized the experiences, they would say nothing and hold in their dissatisfaction. If the women are internalizing the experiences, this may well start to affect their health and negatively affect other areas of their lives.

In order to gain a clear perception of the study focus, the women of color answered questions regarding their experiences with ageism, and their level of assertiveness was measured. The assumption was that ageism would measure high and assertiveness would measure low for the women of color.

Paradigm and Rationale for Chosen Paradigm

The positivist paradigm was used for this study. Positivism was used for this study because it allows the researcher to develop the project without the biasing of

the study participants (Morris, in press). The positivist paradigm uses quantitative research method, which uses an etic perspective. An etic perspective looks at a situation from the outside looking in. This is perfect for the positivist researcher because this puts them in the position of an observer looking inward. The outsider can take a deductive, objective view and draw a conclusion from objective data.

The rationale for utilizing the positivist paradigm is the participants do not influence the development of the study. The hypothesis and questions for the research study is developed before any type of engagement occurs. In this study, there were no interviews or any excessive engagement with the study participants. This was the best approach for this study because the population involved is part of a marginalized group, and may be hesitant to participate if there was too much engagement. This was thought, to be the best approach to use with groups seen as marginalized and that may not have had much exposure with research studies.

Literature Review ·

The literature review focuses on factors related to ageism. It specifically addresses ageism in American society, aging of women of color, and assertiveness. The literature review begins with a discussion of the historical context of the problem. Then the review discusses aging and women of color to understand the affected population. The literature review concludes with a discussion of ageism in general and assertiveness.

Ageism in American Society

Butler coined the phrase "ageism" in 1968. He was the Chairman of Columbia Advisory Committee and actively involved with aging issues. Butler (1989) defined ageism as "a systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this with skin color and gender" (p. 139). This is what Cohen, Sandel, Thomas, and Barton (2004) said about aging in America, "American society has a long-standing tendency to overvalue youth and as a consequence has generated and perpetuated negative stereotypes about older adults and the aging process," (p. 330).

There has been a substantial amount of research conducted on other forms of prejudice and discrimination but little on discrimination based on age. According to Nelson (2005) "Age prejudice in this country is one of the most socially-condoned and institutionalized forms of prejudice, such that researchers may tend to overlook it as a phenomenon to be studied" (as cited in Nelson, 2002a; Palmore, 1999, p. 208).

The consensus of the authors is that ageism consists of negative stereotypes, misconceptions, and fear of aging. According to Palmore (2005), "The most frequent misconceptions about aging tend to reflect negative stereotypes", (p. 89). Ageist stereotypes and fear of aging are prevalent in American society and have no factual basis. Ory, Hoffman, Hawkins, Sanner, and Mockenhaupt (2003) say "ageist stereotypes are harmful to health, functioning, and well-being, also stereotypes are not fixed and change over time" (p. 164-165).

There are many misconceptions surrounding the aging process. These involve perceived "losses". Common perceived losses are; hearing loss, asexuality, loss of cognition abilities, loss of usefulness, and these are only a few. There is a considerable amount of fear

surrounding aging. When a younger person sees an older person, they do not recognize what they will eventually become. Kelchner (2000) says, "No one and no profession is immune from the fear of growing older" (p. 87). It is important that social workers are culturally aware because discrimination applies to more than issues of ethnicity.

According to Nolan (2011), "Aging in the United States raises challenges in terms of belonging, especially for older people," (p. 317). Human beings are social creatures; they all want to have a connection to others. Ageism is as intrusive and invasive as cancer. The aging phenomenon will occur with all aging persons, no matter the social status or socioeconomic standing. According to Ory et al., (2003), "Ageist stereotypes are pervasive in U.S. society and harmful to older adults' psychological well-being, physical and cognitive functioning, and survival" (p. 164).

Aging and Women of Color

The literature concerning aging women of color involves race as well as gender issues. The consensus is that these women face many challenges in addition to

ageism. Women of color must endure the burdens of prejudice, discrimination, and inequities.

The literature discusses something called "double jeopardy" a phenomena that occurs with women of color. "Double jeopardy" according to Dowd and Vern (1978) is when the minority group's status is disadvantaged, then when aged they experience devaluation in the status associated with old age in the society (p. 427). As these issues are occurring in their lives, they may start to feel negative effects according to Yang and Levkoff (2005) "Internalized ageism among older minorities is pernicious, undermining both their self-worth and the importance of their existence" (p. 43).

Gender plays a significant role along with race and ageism in the lives of women of color. Men in American society have the luxury of "aging gracefully", women do not. Calasanti (2005) says appearance is among the markers for old age, this is the reason for earlier on-set of old age for women because how they look has more social capital than do other aspects of their lives (p. 10). Gender plays such a huge role in an aging women's life, this is what Hurd (2000) said "The social worth of women has been linked more closely with their

physical appearance compared to the situation for men,
and these social valuations decline more markedly with
age for women than they do men" (p. 19). The literature
confirms the burdens endured and the obstacles faced by
women of color. They are apt to face many of the same
issues as do women not of color but their experiences far
more intensified.

Assertiveness

The literature reviewed for assertiveness seems to
agree that older adults need to acquire the skill.
Assertiveness is communication and behaviors. Learning
the skills to become more assertive is not difficult. It
is a skill, which takes practice to achieve the desired
results.

Kilkus, (1993) says, "Assertiveness can be defined
as interpersonal respect and empowerment" (as cited in
Smith, 1997, p. 1). There are reasons for unassertive
behavior in older adults. According to Furnham (1983),
older people may be unassertive because they may not have
learned the skills of assertiveness when younger, or they
have lost confidence in their ability to act assertively
(p. 31).

Older persons could benefit from assertiveness training to build their strengths and empower them. Pitt and Roth (1978), "Assertive training helps people learn to be more aware of themselves, to respond to their wishes and feelings, and to express themselves more directly" (p. 274). This type of training would work wonders for aging women of color because learning this skill will empower them toward positive changes. According to Franzke (1987), the outcomes of assertiveness training may increase the perceived, if not actual, level of control for the older person in interpersonal relationships (p. 13).

Assertiveness training would actually benefit these women. According to Williams and Stout (1985), "Highly assertive individuals were found to be more internally controlled and to experience fewer health problems than were individuals low in assertiveness" (p. 169). This information suggests that the women would experience health benefits from being more assertive. The training is not a curative for all their needs and problems but it is a step in the direction to them gaining their self-esteem and self-worth back.

The information gathered from the literature appears to show ageism and assertiveness problematic in American society. The literature suggests that older adults will derive benefits from practicing assertive behavior. Older adults can learn assertiveness and practice it with skill. Assertiveness strengthens and empowers the older adult to become more self-aware. The literature says it helps older adults better express their feeling and wishes to others more directly.

Assertiveness can help older adults feel more in control in their interpersonal relationships. In addition, adults practicing assertiveness achieve better health outcomes. The literature appears to suggest a need for assertiveness for this population, and it promotes positive benefits for older adults learning to use it.

Theoretical Orientation

The theoretical orientation for this research project is Empowerment. Turner (2011), Empowerment considers principle time orientation present, past and future, it recognizes the importance of diversity, benefits individuals, and communities as well (Turner, 2011, book cover). Empowerment, according to Parsons

(2002) is, "A multisystem-level integrative approach geared toward restoring power and self-efficacy to disempowered populations" (para. 1). Disempowered populations often include people of color, women, children, the oppressed, and the poor.

Turner (2011) said, "The empowerment approach makes connections between social and economic injustice and individual pain and suffering" (p. 160). Use of empowerment may help elevate some of the pain and suffering they may have experienced or maybe experiencing from the effects of ageism. Empowering aging women of color may assist with bringing awareness of ageism to the forefront in their communities and in the process heighten assertive responses. According to Lee (2001), "People can and must take themselves and their environments in hand to attain empowerment" (p. 44).

Contribution of Study to Micro and Macro Social Work Practice

Ageism is a reality in many of the members of the aging population. Women of color are affected by ageism, we know this because the results of the research show when awareness is high, and their level of experience and

assertion are higher (Table 2). This means because of their awareness they are sensitive to ageism's existence.

This study has the potential to assist micro social worker to assess for signs of ageism and offer appropriate interventions. In addition, this research project will help gain understanding of how clients can best communicate their wishes and problems to the social worker because of heightened awareness; also, there is the potential to show they can be more assertive in their interactions with others.

This study has potential to dispel ageist assumptions and to enable micro practice social workers to look at the person in front of them as a whole person. Social work macro practice social workers will benefit by having the tools to become more effective change agents for the aged and for aging women of color. They may be able to accomplish this by advocating for changes in policy and programs at the macro level.

Summary

This chapter included an introduction to the research material covered in the chapter. It explains the choice of paradigms, and the literature used to gather

knowledge about the topic. There is a discussion of how

this new knowledge will advance social work practice for

the future by bringing awareness to ageist practices and

actions.

CHAPTER TWO

ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

Chapter two describes the study site, the services

offered by that study site, the study participants, and

the gatekeeper. It explains the approach used to engage

the study site gatekeeper. This chapter discusses the

researcher's preparation to carry out the study as well

as diversity, ethical and political issues. In addition,

the role technology played, if any in the research study.

Study Site

The study site was a church located in the city of

Hawthorne, Los Angeles California. The city of Hawthorne

is a working class community. According to U.S.

Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau

Hawthorne California (2010), the total population of the

city is 84,293, and 12,228 of them are aged 55 and over.

The median household income for the city of Hawthorne is

$45,622, the mean retirement income is $21,715; 66.6

percent are family households. The percent of households

containing one or more members aged 65 and over is 14.8

percent; and the educational attainment is 26 percent-

high school graduates, 23 percent- some college or no college, 8.6 percent- Associates degree, 11.4 percent- Bachelor's degree and 4.8 percent- Masters or professional degrees.

The church is nestled in the middle of a single-family household community, and has been there since 1955. The study site serves a high proportion of women of color and this is the population needed to conduct the research. Currently there are 1300 members of the congregation. The members are a diverse mix of intergenerational families residing in the surrounding area.

The mission statement for the church is "A church striving to lead its members to a loving, learning, loyal, and lasting relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ". The Pastor of the church has been the leader there for over 13-years. The church vision is "Re-establishing a Standard of Excellence in God's Church through: Education, Renovation, Rejuvenation, and Evangelization." To assist with fulfilling the mission and the vision, the church offers a multitude of services to the members of the congregation. For example, there

are ministries for men, women, youth and others totaling over thirty-seven.

The church houses an accredited daycare center on the premises for children ages 2 through 5. It offers Christian education classes for children, youth, and adults. Members have the option to attend bible study four days a week, three evening and one afternoon class.

Church services are held twice each Sunday, one service at 8:00 a.m. and the other at 11:00 a.m. Prayer requests are taken via the church website 24-hours, 7-days a week. The selection of the study site depended upon the availability of the desired study participants. The study site provided the participants needed to conduct this research study.

Engagement Strategies for Gatekeepers
at Research Site

In the initial engagement phase, the Graduate student from California State University, San Bernardino, became reacquainted with the gatekeeper, the Pastor, via telephone. The Pastor was contacted at a specified date and time and the research focus was explained. The researcher explained the type of participants needed to carry out the study. The researcher explained that the

data would be collected from the participants using self-administered surveys.

The study site was because of the availability of the desired age range (60 years of age and over), the gender, and ethnicity of the potential participants. The researcher explained that the research project involved ageism, and assertive behaviors in aging women of color. The researcher explained to the Pastor, how vital it is for women of color to participate in research projects because there is so little research involving this population.

The researcher discussed the type of instrument that would be administered to the study participants. In addition, the researcher notified the Pastor of the human subjects training that was required of researchers. The researcher asked the Pastor if they had ever participated in research previously and have they considered the benefits to their congregation. The study discussed the potential benefits of this research study as a whole, to the participants, and to social work practice.

The Pastor was told that he and the congregation would be informed of the study results. There was a discussion regarding anonymity and informed consent with

the Pastor. The Pastor explained to the researcher that before approving the research, he must see the survey.

The second engagement involved e-mailing the survey questions to the gatekeeper for approval. The third engagement involved the gatekeeper approving the research project via e-mail and asking when it needed to commence. After, the Pastor consented to the research project at the church; he said he would provide the agency permission letter.

There was an introduction of the research information to the potential participants by the Pastor. He explained the purpose for the researchers impending visit and that a survey completion was involved. He told them that participation in the study was voluntary. There is no anticipated further engagement with the study participants unless requested. True positivist researchers have very little contact with the study participants as not to influence them in any way.

Self-Preparation

To prepare for this study the researcher educated herself concerning ageism and assertiveness issues that the study participants may have encountered. To

accomplish this, the researcher located literature such as scholarly articles, journals, and books discussing ageism and assertiveness. The literature for the study was found in the university library, and on the internet.

Cultural sensitivity involved paying close attention to the culture and customs of the participants and the study site. To accomplish this, the researcher learned as much as possible about the population. The researcher located demographic information about the city and the population. Through this information the researcher learned, the socioeconomic status, education attainment, and household composition of the study participants. This information gave a deeper understanding and clearer picture of the participants of the study.

Diversity Issues

The researcher must be aware and sensitive to the population's age, education level, and social status. There could be a possible issue because of the potential 20 year or over age difference between the researcher and the study participants. With only nine percent of the population attaining master degrees there is a high probably that these women have not attained that level of

education. They could possibly feel intimidated by the level of their educational pursuits, compared to the researcher.

The researcher educated herself to the politics and ethics of working with church members by asking the Pastor questions and reading about the church. The researcher is sensitive and culturally aware of oppressed and underrepresented populations. To accomplish this, statistics were assessed on the U.S. Census website for demographic information of the community.

Ethical Issues

The positivist researcher was aware but did not anticipate potential harm to the study participants, by the study. Anonymity for the participants was clearly stated. One way of ensuring anonymity was to explain to the participants that they were not required to sign anything or submit any identifying information to participate in this study.

The research committee whom approved the research project addresses any legal and moral issues. The researcher underwent Human subject's mandatory training so as not to harm any participants. The researcher

educated herself to be aware of special populations, and the potential harm for their participation such as feeling from old wounds of discrimination and ageist treatment resurgence.

Political Issues

Political issues could have arisen if; the proposed site of the research study was at a large or small agency setting. A moderate sized church was the research site. There could possibly have been some politics going on at this smaller setting but not at the level of a larger setting or agency.

There could be potential for political issues because of the age range of the study participants. There could have been a problem if, someone at the facility felt they should have been in the study instead of someone else. Explaining the age requirement addressed this. In addition, the researcher explained that the church had nothing to do with the study or the selection of the study participants.

The Role of Technology in Engagement

There was no engagement with the study participants after the initial engagements for data collection.

However, there was engagement with the gatekeeper via telephone and e-mail. The positivist researcher limited the contact to the research site as to not influence or bias the study. Technology was not an issue for this positivist study because the contact with the study participants will be face to face.

Summary

This section introduced the engagement process with the study participants at the church site. There was discussion about how the researcher had previous knowledge about the study population. The researcher was prepared for diversity issues by practicing sensitivity to the groups' ethnicity, age, gender, educational attainment, and religious affiliations. There was awareness of ethical and political issues by following the ethical standards and understanding the political climate of the agency site. The researcher adhered to ethical standards and the Human subjects training taken to prepare for research.

CHAPTER THREE

IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This chapter describes the study participants and
the selection of the study participants. The chapter
discusses the data collection method, the phases of data
collection, data recording, and data analysis. It also
discusses termination and follow-up, communication of
findings and the dissemination plan, as well as a
summary.

Study Participants

Participants for this study were women of color
60-years of age and over. Their ages ranged from 60 to 85
years of age. Forty-one women voluntarily participated in
the study. The researcher could see these women had high
regard for each other by the way they greeted each other
with hugs and big smiles. Many of the congregation
members were from the surrounding community. The church
has experienced tremendous growth over the years with
both the congregation size and structural additions. The
women appeared to be a congenial group; the researcher

observed from their prayer sessions and bible study together.

Selection of Participants

Participants were selected using nonprobability convenience sampling. Nonprobability convenience sampling does not assume all values for all variables in the population of interest have a normal distribution; consequently, no assumptions can be made for predicting the likelihood that something will happen (Morris, in press). Convenience sampling is selecting a sample because of availability.

Volunteers for participation in the study were invited to take part in advance of the researcher's arrival, by announcement to the congregation by the Pastor. The potential participants were asked their age by the researcher after they entered room 106, in order to ensure they were in the target age range. The researcher reiterated the age requirement for the study after the women were assembled in room 106. After meeting the age and ethnicity requirement, the participants were included in the sample.

Data Gathering

The design for this positivist study was a survey
gathering quantitative data. The correlational design
measure an association between the variables ageism and
assertiveness. The sample was women of color 60 years of
age or over. The data collection instrument was a
self-administered Likert standardized survey consisting
of closed ended questions. The questions were Likert
scale standardized questions; gathering data at the
ordinal level (see Appendix A).

Awareness, experience, and assertiveness are the
questions included in the survey instrument. The Likert
scale measures dimensionally and this assists in gaining
insight into the attitudes and opinions toward ageism by
awareness, experience, and assertiveness by the aging
women of color 60 years of age or older. The survey
questions explored their experience with ageism and their
response to it. These types of questions addressed their
perceptions of aging: how they perceive their aging
selves, how they think others perceive them as aging
adults, and do they confront negative perceptions. The
survey also asks the participant's age and ethnicity

these are very pertinent questions because they describe the population demographic.

Phases of Data Collection

It could be argued that data collection starts after the initial visit to the research site, because there is an exchange of data between the researcher and the site. A Likert scale standardized self-administered survey was composed using closed ended questions. The research study was introduced to the study participants via general announcements at the church.

A room was set up in advance by the study site for the completion of the surveys. Although, the participants knew the researcher was coming, the researcher asked after arriving, if they wanted to participate in the anonymous research project. The participants received the survey instrument directly from the researcher.

The researcher visited the site on a Thursday night for Senior Bible Study, and two separate Sundays, one for Senior Sunday school, and the other for Sunday service. The participants received an informed consent attached to the survey and were asked to read it then put a check mark or an x on the form before starting the survey. To

ensure anonymity, signatures are not required on the informed consent. As each completed survey is collected, each participant received a debriefing statement.

Data Analysis

A quantitative statistical procedure for hypothesis testing was the analyzing method. The hypothesis testing measured the study participant's experiences with ageism by looking at relationships between awareness, experience, and assertiveness. The testing methods were univariate analysis, which tested one variable at a time to look at the distribution of the values of each variable, multivariate analysis to test relationships between the dependent variable awareness, and the independent variables experience, and assertion all at once. The last analysis preformed was an ANOVA to test the difference between the means of awareness, experience, and assertion. A self-administered Likert scale survey instrument with closed end questions is the data recording method.

Summary

The content of this section included a description of the study participants and the selection method for

the participants. It includes background information on the research sites. This section explained how the data was gathered and how the data was analyzed.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION

Introduction

The chapter explains the results of the univariate,

multivariate, and ANOVA data analysis and the

implications for micro and macro social work practice.

Data Analysis

The data software used to analyze this study was

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The

SPSS program analyzes statistical data and evaluates the

numerical data gathered for this quantitative study.

There were 41 (N = 41) participants that took part in the

survey, N = 41.

First, a Univariate Analysis was run to look at one

variable at a time. There were eight sets of questions

with three questions each, totaling 24 questions on the

survey instrument. Each survey set contained three

questions, which included one awareness question, one

experience question, and one assertiveness question

(Appendix A). Each set of survey questions offered four

response choices, Strongly Disagree, or Disagree, or

Agree, or Strongly Agree. Each survey question and

response was input into SPSS and given a value, such as Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, Disagree (D) = 2, Agree (A) = 3, Strongly Agree (SA) = 4. All the data was analyzed into values, which gives descriptive statistic frequencies such as percentages for each response (see Table 1).

Items 1 through 8 from Table 1 yielded interesting results as seen by the following discussion. A majority agreed that younger people tend to speak louder to older adults, yet a large percentage disagreed with experiencing it but many agreed they would stop the younger person if they were speaking loudly to them. A large percentage disagreed with I am frequently told that, I am too old to do certain things, however a majority agreed that they were too old to do certain things and almost half agreed they would say it is not true.

Over half disagreed that doctors ignore or brush off complaints of pain from older patients and they disagreed they were ignored or brushed off, but they did agree to act assertively. Over 40% felt that older adults were mistreated because of their age and a higher percentage believed they had been mistreated because of their own

age and an even higher percentage agreed they would speak up about it.

A hardy percentage agree the opinions of older adults are frequently disregarded by younger people, nevertheless, they disagreed that their opinions are disregarded by them and they disagreed that they no longer express their opinions. Over half disagreed that salespeople ignore older adults when they are shopping with younger people and close to the same percentage do not believe they are ignored by salespeople either and over half would do something about it if they were ignored.

Fifty-one point two percent of the women felt that older adults are discriminated against because of their age but curiously, they did not feel they are discriminated against because of their age and close to half responded they would speak up about it. There was a close margin between 36.9% agree and 39% disagree for the question older adults are treated with less respect because of their age, a majority disagree they have felt less respected and over half agree that they would speak out against it.

Overall, it appears when these women are aware of ageism and have experiences with it they admit to asserting themselves. In addition, some of the responses seem to suggest that the women are aware of ageist behaviors occurring to others but not directly to them.

The responses show that if the woman has awareness, it affects her experience and level of assertion.

The following are sample questions and responses; Table 1. shows the percentages of strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree, responses to the survey questions.

Table 1. Univariate Analysis

N = 41		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 1.	a.	9.8%	34.1%	41.5%	14.6%
	b.	4.9%	61%	26.8%	7.3%
	c.	12.2%	22%	39%	26.8%
Item 2.	a.	26.8%	43.9%	24.4%	4.9%
	b.	17.1%	24.4%	56.1%	2.4%
	c.	9.8%	34.1%	43.9%	12.2%
Item 3.	a.	9.8%	53.7%	22%	14.6%
	b.	24.4%	48.8%	19.5%	7.3%
	c.	7.3%	4.9%	46.3%	41.5%
Item 4.	a.	14.6%	26.8%	41.5%	17.1%
	b.	29.3%	46.3%	17.1%	7.3%
	c.		2.4%	41.5%	56.1%

N = 41		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 5.	a.	12.2%	24.4%	46.3%	17.1%
	b.	12.2%	51.2%	26.8%	9.8%
	c.	39%	48.8%	4.9%	7.3%
Item 6.	a.	14.6%	53.7%	24.4%	7.3%
	b.	19.5%	51.2%	22%	7.3%
	c.	14.6%	7.3%	51.2%	26.8%
Item 7.	a.	9.8%	26.8%	51.2%	12.2%
	b.	19.5%	46.3%	24.4%	9.8%
	c.	36.6%	48.8%	9.8%	4.9%
Item 8.	a.	12.2%	39%	36.6%	12.2%
	b.	19.5%	51.2%	24.4%	4.9%
	c.	7.3%	2.4%	56.1%	34.1%

SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; A = agree;
SA = strongly agree. Item = survey questions 1. a. b. c.
8. a. b. c.

Multivariate Analysis

A Multivariate analysis was run to get 3 new variables to compare and this was done by recoding the values given to the survey responses into the variables awareness, experience and assertion. This was done by grouping all the 1's = SD, 2's = D, 3's = A and 4's = SA together, which are the values from SD (1), D (2), A (3), and SA (4) (see Table 2). Multivariate analysis was run after the survey questions were recoded into groups'

titled awareness, experience, and assertion to establish

a relationship between them (see Table 2).

Table 2. Multivariate Analysis of Recoded Variables

N = 41	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Awareness of Ageism	2.4%	14.6%	70.7%	12.2%
Experienced Ageism		39%	53.7%	7.3%
Assertion		2.4%	78%	19.5%

The same recoded variables created for the

multivariate analysis were used to run the ANOVA. The

recoded variables were run by using awareness as the

factor and experience and assertion as dependent

variables. An ANOVA was run to compare the distribution

between dependent variables experience and assertion, and

the factor awareness (see Table 3).

Table 3. ANOVA

N = 41		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean	Sig.
Experience					
	Between Groups	7.471	3	12.440	.000
	Within Groups	7.407	37	.200	
	Total	14.878	40		
Assertion					
	Between Groups	2.323	3	.774	.004
	Within Groups	5.482	37	.148	
	Total	7.805	40		

Awareness is the factor; Experience and Assertion are dependent

Data Interpretation

The hypothesis was that ageism would measure high and assertiveness would measure low for the aging women of color. The study asked these questions, "Do aging women of color 60-years of age and older experience ageism? If yes, "How do they respond to it?" The research found that the women did experience ageism and that awareness had an impact on the experience and the level of assertiveness.

There were 41 participants in this study. The participants were all women of color ranging from age 60 to 85 years of age. The responses to the questions varied

35

with the degree of awareness, which affects experience, and assertiveness. It appears that 70.7% of the participants are aware of ageism, 53.7% have experienced ageism, and 78% would assert themselves (see Table 2).

Further evidence of awareness affecting experience and assertion is Table 3. Table 3 shows a relationship between awareness, experience, and assertion. A significance of .000 is shown for experience and .004 for assertion. This shows with awareness, experience is significantly affected and assertion is as well at .004 significance.

The experience of the between groups 7.471 is higher compared to the assertion between group 5.482. The experience of the within group of the experience 7.407 is higher compared to the within assertion group at 7.805. There is a definite significance regarding the experience in addition, assertiveness by the awareness of the participant. The ANOVA was run with experience and assertion being the independent variables and awareness the dependent variable (see Table 3). Table 3 shows experience high at 7.471 between groups and within groups of experience and assertion by awareness. Assertion

between groups is 2.323 and 5.482 within groups of experience and assertion by awareness.

The data shows a correlation between awareness, experience, and assertiveness. The original hypothesis was that ageism would measure high and assertiveness low. This is true if there is no awareness of ageism to begin with. Do aging women of color respond to ageism? The answer is yes, if awareness is apparent. To conclude, awareness is the key factor for the aging women of color to experience ageism and act assertively. Becoming aware of ageist experiences and using assertive behaviors will assist in making a healthier aging woman of color.

Implications of Findings for Micro and Macro Practice

Ageism is a real phenomenon experienced by aging women of color. Looking at the results of the analyzed data, the women will assert themselves if there is awareness of ageism. Table 2 shows that a vast majority agrees that they had awareness of ageism and over half agreed about their experiences with ageism and a large number agreed they would assert themselves.

The implications of the findings for micro practice are awareness that women of color are experiencing this

37

kind of discrimination. The knowledge may assist social workers with engaging these women a little differently. Macro practice will have awareness of ageism, and this can affect the way agencies and human service organizations assess and engage women of color. Organizations and large agencies can start an ageism awareness campaign to bring awareness to the problem of ageism.

The literature mentions older adults benefiting from being assertive and that it is a learnable skill. Perhaps both micro and macro can use groups for assertiveness training. The research shows that ageism is being experienced and when there is awareness, these women will assert themselves against it.

Summary

This chapter discussed the method used to analyze the data. Interpretation of the data with statistical information and tables was discussed. Lastly, the chapter discussed the implications the analyzed information will have for micro and macro social work practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

TERMINATION AND FOLLOW UP

Introduction

This chapter discussed the way the relationship ended with the study site. It explains the communication method used to convey the study participants. There is a discussion of what the study achieved for the study participants and of future research on this subject. The dissemination plan for the study findings is presented.

Termination of Study

Morris (in press) says, "For the positivist researcher, termination and follow up is not a protracted process" (para. 1). Positivist researchers do not continue an ongoing engagement with study participants. The researcher arranged to report back to the study participants and to the research site the findings of the study. The Pastor was contacted via e-mail and an appointment date and time was set.

Communicating Findings to Study Site and Study Participants

The findings of the study were communicated by using a poster at the study site and to the study participants.

Key points such as new insights gained about the participants and helpful interventions. A discussion of the meaning of the data collected took place at the study site. The address of California San University, San Bernardino library where the study is located was given at the study site.

Ongoing Relationship with Study Participants

There were no further relationships with the study participants. However, when the findings were communicated, the researcher engaged the participants and answered any questions they had about the study findings.

Dissemination Plan

Dissemination of the study information to the participants was by using a poster and presenting to the study site. The poster displays key elements of the research project. The poster was easy to see and large for it to be seen by several people at once. It was a creative way to display key elements of the project, and elicited conversation about the content. The poster makes presenting the information interesting and fun.

Communicating Findings

A PowerPoint presentation highlighting key points and handouts summarizing information, with the name, and address of the university where the study is located will communicate the study findings. To disseminate findings to social work individuals and organizations, permission to set up an informational session with managers and supervisors is the plan.

Termination

Morris (in press) says, "For the positivist researcher, termination and follow up is not a protracted process" (para. 1). An ongoing engagement with the study participants is not the way of a positivist researcher. Of course, the researcher will arrange to report back to the study participants and to the research site the findings of the study. Communication with the Pastor to set an appointment time is the plan.

Summary

This last chapter discussed the steps taken to terminate the study and the relationship with the study participants. There was a discussion of how the study findings will be communicated to the participants and the

study site. **The** question was answered as to an ongoing relationship with the study site. The chapter talked about the dissemination plan to be used to convey the findings to the social work community.

APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

For each question, please circle either, Strongly Agree or Agree or Disagree or Strongly Disagree

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. a. Younger people tend to speak louder to older adults.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    b. Younger people tend to speak louder to me because of my age.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    c. If a younger person starts speaking loudly to me, I stop them.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

2. a. I am frequently told that, I am too old to do certain things.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    b. I am too old to do certain things.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    c. When I am told that I am too old to do certain things, I explain that this is not true.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

3. a. Doctors ignore or brush off complaints of pain from older patients.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    b. I have felt ignore or brushed off, when I have complained about a pain to my doctor.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    c. I speak up for myself, if my doctor ignores or brushes off my complaint of pain.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

4. a. Older adults are mistreated because of their age.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    b. I have felt mistreated because of my age.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    c. I speak up, if I feel mistreated.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

5. a. The opinions of older adults re frequently disregarded by younger people.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    b. My opinions are disregarded by people younger than I am.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    c. I do not express my opinions anymore.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

6. a. Salespeople ignore older adults when they are shopping with younger people.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    b. I am frequently ignored by salespeople while shopping with younger people.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    c. If I feel ignored, I do something to make sure the salesperson dies not ignore me.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

7. a. Older adults are discriminated against because of their age.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    b. I have been discriminated against because of my age.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    c. I usually do not speak up when I am being discriminated against because of my age.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

8. a. Older adults are treated with less respect because of their age.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    b. I have felt less respected because of my age.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

    c. I speak out when, I feel disrespected.
        Strongly Agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

Age ☐ Ethnicity _____

Developed by Tina M. Doss-Collins

45

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate ageism and measure the assertiveness of aging women of color. This study is being conducted by Tina Doss-Collins under the supervision of Dr. Teresa Morris, Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

In this study, the participants will be asked to complete a self-administered survey. The survey will ask a series of questions about their experiences with ageism and assertiveness. The survey should take 10 to 15 minutes to complete and the survey responses will remain anonymous.

The participants will be asked to take a self-administered survey. The survey is voluntary and refusal to participate involves no penalties. The duration of the study is January 2013 to January 2014. There are no foreseeable risks of participation in this survey.

Should there be any questions or concerns please feel free to contact Dr. Teresa Morris, Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino, at 909-537-3839. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please refer to the California State University, San Bernardino, John M. Pfau Library after June 2013.

I have been fully informed about the study and am taking part in it voluntarily.

Mark _____   Date _____

APPENDIX C

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The study you have just completed was designed to investigate your experiences with ageism and assertiveness. In this study you were surveyed about your experiences. The investigator will report your responses after the survey, and your name is not required. If you would like to speak with a counselor about any feelings or reactions that you may have after completing this study, please contact: South Bay Medical Services in Hawthorne, California (323) 241-6730.

Thank you for your participations in this study and for not discussing the content of the survey with others. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Professor Teresa Morris at (909) 537-3839. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please refer to the California State University, San Bernardino, John M. Pfau Library after June 2013.

REFERENCES

Butler, R. N. (2005). Ageism: Looking back over my
shoulder. *Generations, 29*(3), 84-86.

Butler, R. N. (1969). Ageism: Another form of bigotry.
The Gerontologist, 9(4, pt. 1), 243-246.

Butler, R. N. (1989). Dispelling ageism: The
cross-cutting intervention. *The Annals of the
American Academy of Political and Social Science,*
138-147.

Calasanti, T. (2005). Ageism, gravity, and gender:
experiences of aging bodies. *Generations, 29*(3),
8-12.

Cohen, H. L., Sandel, M. H., Thomas, C. L., & Barton, T.
R. (2004). Using focus groups as an educational
methodology: Deconstructing stereotypes and social
work practice misconceptions concerning aging and
older adults. *Educational Gerontology, 30*(4),
329-34.

Dowd, J. J., & Bengtson, V. L. (1978). Aging in minority
populations: An examination of the double jeopardy
hypothesis. *Journal of Gerontology, 33*(3), 427-436.

Furnham, A. (1983). The assessment of social skills
deficits in the elderly. *The International Journal
of Aging & Human Development, 17*(1), 29-38.

Hatch, L. R. (2005). Gender and ageism. *Generations,
29*(3), 19-24.

Hopkins, T. J. (1980). A conceptual framework for
understanding the three 'isms'—racism, ageism,
sexism. *Journal of Education for Social Work, 16*(2),
63-70.

Kelchner, E. S. (2000). Ageism's impact and effect on
society: Not just a concern for the aging. *Journal
of Gerontological Social Work, 32*(4) 85-100.

50

Kilkus, S. P. (1993). Assertiveness among professional nurses. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 18*(8), 1324-1330.

Lee, J. A. B. (2001). *The empowerment approach to social work practice: Building the beloved community.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Morris, T. (in press). *Practice informed research methods for social workers.* Boston: Pearson.

Nelson, T. (2005). Ageism: Prejudice against our feared future self. *Journal of Social Issues, 61*(2), 207.

Nolan, L. C. (2011). Dimension of aging and belonging for the older person and the effects of ageism. *BYU Journal of Public Law, 25*(2), 317-339.

Ory, M., Hoffman, M. K., Hawkins, M., Sanner, B., & Mockenhaupt, R. (2003). Challenging aging stereotypes: Strategies for creating a more active society. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 25*(3Sii), 164-170.

Palmore, E. (2005). Three decades of research on ageism. *Generations, 29*(3), 87-90.

Parsons, R. J. (2002). Guidelines for empowerment-based social work practice. *Social Workers' Desk Reference,* 396-401.

Pitt, A., & Roth, B. A. (1978). A model for assertive training: Integration of feelings and behavior. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 6*(4), 274-292.

Turner, F. J. (2011). *Social work treatment: Interlocking theoretical approaches.* New York: Oxford University Press.

U.S. Department of Commerce, United States Census Bureau. (2013). *2010 Hawthorne California.* Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0632548.html

Williams, J. M., & Stout, J. K. (1985). The effect of high and low assertiveness on locus of control and health problems. *Journal Of Psychology, 119*(2), 169.

Yang, F. M., & Levkoff, S. E. (2005). Ageism and minority populations: Strengths in the face of challenge. *Generations, American Society on Aging, 29*(3), 42-48.

.

.

.

.