Older adults' everyday perceptions of ageism:

The role of television and social media

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International Journal of Behavioral Development, in press

Abstract

While ageism experiences are associated with reduced well-being among older adults, the contexts in which they encounter ageism remain underexamined. This study investigated everyday contexts of perceived ageism among older adults in Canada, with a particular focus on TV and social media usage. We analyzed up to 14 days of evening diaries from 111 individuals aged 50 and above living in Canada (Age: M = 71.27 years, SD = 9.02; 75% female). Participants reported their daily TV viewing, social media screen time, purposes of social media usage and perceived ageism each evening. Multilevel models were employed to account for the nested data structure. As hypothesized, older adults reported higher levels of perceived ageism on days when they watched more TV than usual. Additionally, those who spent more time on social media on average reported more perceived ageism. Moreover, using social media to connect with new people was linked to higher levels of perceived ageism at the between-person level, whereas using it to post content or to pass time was associated with lower perceived ageism at the within-person level. Findings suggest that TV and social media can be key contexts in which older adults perceive everyday ageism.

Key Words: Ageism; Social Media; Television; Older Adults; Daily diary

Introduction

Ageism is an increasingly common experience among adults aged 50 and beyond (Allen et al., 2022). Ageism is defined by age-based stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination against aging individuals (Iversen et al., 2009), which is perceived more socially acceptable than sexism and racism (Martin & North, 2022). Ageism is associated with several adverse health outcomes among older adults, including lower psychological well-being, more chronic conditions, and poorer self-reported mental and physical health (Allen et al., 2022; Kang & Kim, 2022).

Importantly, everyday ageism, such as jokes, unwanted help or judgement, can occur across various life domains, including work, family, or health care (Chasteen et al., 2021; Kornadt et al., 2022; Palmore, 2004; Rothermund & de Paulo Couto, 2024). However, the media environment, such as TV and social media, remains underexamined, even though older adults today may frequently encounter explicit ageism. For instance, older adults are often portrayed as undesirable villainous characters or used as sources of humor in television comedy shows (Donlon et al., 2005; Meyer & Conroy, 2023). On social media, content that ridicules older adults based on their age, appearance, abilities, and relationships is produced and shared, some expressing plain hostility (Fraser et al., 2024; Jimenez-Sotomayor et al., 2020; Lee & Hoh, 2023; Levy et al., 2014; Sipocz et al., 2021; Xiang et al., 2021).

Experiencing ageism through the media is problematic for several reasons. First, media serves as an influential agent of socialization that may shape and reinforce ageist stereotypes in society (Camacho-Markina & Santos-Díez, 2025; Donlon et al., 2005). Second, perceived discrimination in the media, such as racism and sexism, has been linked to poorer well-being outcomes, including higher depressive symptoms and lower life satisfaction (Madriaza et al., 2025), and despite the limited number of studies, emerging evidence suggests that ageism in the

media may also be associated with poorer well-being among older adults (Levy et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important to examine whether TV and social media serve as sources of perceived ageism in the daily lives of older adults. The purpose of the present study is to examine the association between TV watching and social media use and perceived ageism using daily diary data from a Canadian sample aged 50 and above.

Sources of Perceived Ageism: TV

TV is one of the most popular media among older adults in Canada. According to a 2015 time use survey of Canadian older adults, participants reported spending more time watching TV than any other activity aside from working and sleeping (Arriagada, 2018). Average TV viewing time increases with age: the reported mean TV watching time was 3.3 hours for individuals aged 55 to 64, 3.9 hours for those aged 65 to 74, and 4.3 hours for those aged 75 and older (Arriagada, 2018). Moreover, 88% of Canadian adults aged 55 years and older preferred TV as their main source of news (Statistics Canada, 2023). Hence, most individuals above age 50 spend a significant amount of time watching TV.

Notably, TV can portray aging in problematic ways. An analysis of film and television content produced in British Columbia, Canada, found that characters aged 50 or older tended to be portrayed as villains, antagonists, or undesirable compared to those aged 50 and under (Meyer & Conroy, 2023). Moreover, an analysis of 1.1 billion words from popular media in the UK and US, including TV, fiction, magazines, and newspapers, reveals that negative age stereotypes appeared six times more often than positive ones (Ng, 2021). Older adults are frequently described as frail, infirm, disabled, or hoarders, and spoken genres such as TV were identified as the second most common media type containing such ageist descriptions (Ng, 2021). When older adults were asked to evaluate the portrayal of older TV characters, they reported seeing few older

adults in TV programs and, if so, being represented in negative ways, particularly in comedies including ageist jokes (Donlon et al., 2005). Moreover, older adults who spent more time watching TV over their lifetime have been shown to hold more negative views of aging (Donlon et al., 2005). It is therefore conceivable that TV consumption can be positively associated with perceived ageism such as ageist jokes in adults aged 50 and above.

Sources of Perceived Ageism: Social Media

According to 2022 data, 94% of Canadian adults were estimated to have at least one social media account (Mai & Gruzd, 2022). In particular, 72% of respondents aged 55 and above reported having a Facebook account, and 67% of them reported using it at least once a month (Mai & Gruzd, 2022); these numbers have increased to 77% and 73%, respectively by 2025 (Mai & Gruzd, 2025). Hence, there is a clear trend that older adults are active on social media in Canada.

There is increasing evidence that older adults are portrayed negatively on social media. An analysis of the description of 84 Facebook open groups related to older adults revealed that older adults are often described as unproductive, a burden to society, frail and dependent, and unfit to be involved in public activities (Levy et al., 2014). An analysis of Reddit posts discussing a reality dating show for older adults, *The Golden Bachelor*, revealed numerous ageist comments (Fraser et al., 2024). Users depreciated older contestants' age, appearance, or physical capabilities, also engaging in implicit ageism by pointing out that they looked younger than their actual age, and infantilizing them by describing their romantic relationships as cute (Fraser et al., 2024). Negative portrays of older adults on social media have intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. An analysis of tweets posted at the beginning of the pandemic revealed jokes and ridicule targeting older adults, including hateful hashtags such as #BoomerRemover (Jimenez-

Sotomayor et al., 2020; Sipocz et al., 2021; Xiang et al., 2021). Tweets painted older adults as the cause of climate change and blamed them for bankrupting the social system, implying that their death from COVID-19 would not be a loss (Xiang et al., 2021). People who were offended by such tweets were described as overly sensitive old people who take jokes too seriously (Sipocz et al., 2021). While the emotional tone toward older adults in tweets appears to have somewhat improved relative to the height of the pandemic, overall sentiments remain negative (Ng et al., 2022).

A relatively new source of ageism on social media are memes. An analysis of 98 images related to keywords such as 'old', 'senior', and 'retiree', produced by five meme factories on Facebook, found that most of these memes infantilize and barbarize older adults in cynical ways (Lee & Hoh, 2023). Another analysis of a corpus of 47 internet memes about older adults showed that most ridicule older adults by linking them to diseases, malfunction, immobility, dependency, lack of autonomy, and asexuality (Pochintesta & Baglione, 2023). These memes are often produced and spread indiscriminately and without awareness, under the guise of humor (Lee & Hoh, 2023). We therefore expected that social media consumption is positively associated with perceived ageism including ageist jokes.

Purposes of Social Media Use and Perceived Ageism

Unlike TV, which is a traditional medium where users are passive consumers, social media can serve various purposes involving complex interactions between users, as well as between users and content. To better understand the mechanisms underlying social media usage and everyday perceived ageism, it is therefore important to address not only the quantitative aspect of social media use (screen time) but also the qualitative aspect (purposes of use).

Older adults may use social media for several different purposes, including social connection, information seeking, self-expression, and leisure (Ractham et al., 2022). Interestingly, older adults tend to use social media in ways consistent with Socioemotional Selectivity Theory, prioritizing connections with close others over expanding their social networks (Carstensen, 2021; Chang et al., 2015). A systematic review of older adults' social media usage revealed that the primary purpose of using social media in old age is to connect with close others, such as family and friends (Newman et al., 2021); using social media to form new relationships is less common (Newman et al., 2021). Older adults often post content about family events, travel or places they have visited, and personal interests on their Facebook feeds (Hutto et al., 2015). Some older adults, who do not wish to disclose their identities but still seek a sense of connection with others, use social media to passively observe others' updates while avoiding direct communication and content sharing (Jung et al., 2017).

Based on different social media usage emanating from previous studies we expected that social media could be positively or negatively associated with perceived ageism depending on purpose of use. Although not focused specifically on perceived ageism, prior research has shown that the impact of social media on older adults' well-being similarly varies by purpose of use. For instance, while using social media for social connection has been associated with a greater sense of belonging and higher life satisfaction in old age, using it for entertainment has been linked to a lower sense of belonging among older adults (Zhao, 2023). Active use (e.g., posting content, creating events, and updating status) has been associated with greater depressive symptoms, whereas passive use (e.g., viewing posts, photos, and videos) has been related to fewer depressive symptoms among older adults (Lewin et al., 2023). Therefore, as an

exploratory analysis, we also examined how different purposes of social media use are differentially associated with perceived ageism.

Current Study

Using up to 14 consecutive daily diaries from a sample of 111 individuals, this study examined the context of everyday perceptions of ageism among Canadian older adults aged 50 and above. Specifically, everyday associations between daily TV viewing, daily social media use, and daily perceived ageism were investigated. Since we aimed to examine external sources of perceived ageism among older adults, we used the two-item exposure to ageist messages subscale of the Everyday Ageism Scale (Allen et al., 2021). These items assess the extent to which older adults are exposed to environmental and societal cues reaffirming common stereotypes about aging (e.g., unattractiveness and jokes). Because ageist content is often reproduced and shared in the media under the guise of humor (Donlon et al., 2005; Lee & Hoh, 2023), these items seemed uniquely suited to assess perceived ageism through media. In further exploratory analyses, we also examined whether different purposes of social media use (i.e., connecting with close others, meeting new people, seeking knowledge and information, posting content, and passing the time) would be associated with perceived ageism in unique ways by focusing on the subset of participants who were active social media users. These items were selected given that they represent common purposes of social media use among older adults (Ractham et al., 2022; Schimmele et al., 2021), and allow us to examine theoretically meaningful differences in social media use patterns in light of Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (Carstensen, 2021; Chang et al., 2015). We took into account basic demographic variables including sex, age, education, cultural background, and self-rated health as covariates. The following hypotheses were preregistered (https://osf.io/j5gnh):

H1. On days when older adults spend more time watching TV or using social media, they report higher levels of perceived ageism compared to days with less TV and social media use (within-person effects).

H2. Older adults who spend more time watching TV or using social media on average report higher levels of overall perceived ageism than those who engaged less in such activities (between-person effects).

Method

Participants and Procedure

The sample consisted of 111 individuals aged 50 or older, residing in Canada (M_{age} = 71.27, SD = 9.02, range = 50-94, 75% female, 54% European) who provided information on the core study variables. One hundred and thirteen participants started the study. One participant who did not meet the age eligibility criterion (50 plus) was excluded, as was another participant who dropped out and completed only a single evening questionnaire. Exploratory analyses focused on the subgroup of active social media users (N = 93; M_{age} = 71.09, SD = 9.10, range = 50–94; 76% female, 52% European); eighteen participants were excluded who did not use social media at all during the study period. The study was ethics approved (Anonymized for peer review) and all participants provided informed consent.

Data collection took place between October 2024 and March 2025. The design involved an initial baseline questionnaire, followed by a 14-day consecutive evening questionnaire phase. Based on the rules of thumb for two-level mixed models proposed by Arend and Schäfer (2019), the present sample of 111 individuals with up to 14 daily observations is sufficient to detect small-to-moderate Level 1 effects and moderate Level 2 effects. Participants' background and sociodemographic characteristics were assessed at baseline, and their everyday context,

experiences and activities were assessed over the following 14 consecutive evenings. On average, participants completed 12.34 out of 14 evening surveys (*SD* = 2.36, range = 4–14). As a token of appreciation, participants were provided with a $50 online gift card.

Measures

Everyday TV Viewing. Each evening, TV viewing time was measured in hours and minutes by asking, '*Over the past 24 hours, how much time did you spend watching television or using streaming platforms (e.g., Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video)*?' Television viewing time was converted into hours and daily means were calculated, with higher scores indicating greater daily television consumption (*Mean* = 2.21 hours, $SD_{between}$ = 1.77, SD_{within} = 1.19). On days when participants reported not watching TV, time was coded as 0 (hour), and six participants were identified as non-viewers.

Everyday Social Media Usage*.* Each evening, social media screentime was measured in hours and minutes by asking, *'Over the past 24 hours, how much time did you spend using social media?*'. Social media was described as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and other social networking services and instant messaging apps, frequently used by Canadian adults (Mai & Gruzd, 2025). Social media screen time was converted into hours, with higher scores indicating greater social media usage (*Mean* = 1.25 hours, $SD_{between}$ = 1.17, SD_{within} = 0.93). On days when participants reported not using social media, screen time was coded as 0 (hours), and eighteen participants were identified as non-users.

Purposes of Social Media Usage*.* Each evening, participants who used social media were asked to report several different purposes for which they might have used it that day, including: (1) connecting with people they already knew and care about (*Mean* = 0.70, $SD_{between}$ = 0.39, SD_{within} = 0.26), (2) connecting with new people (*Mean* = 0.11, $SD_{between}$ = 0.21, SD_{within} = 0.24),

(3) posting content related to their interests and experiences (*Mean* = 0.21, $SD_{between}$ = 0.30, SD_{within} = 0.30), (4) seeking knowledge and information (*Mean* = 0.70, $SD_{between}$ = 0.33, SD_{within} = 0.33), (5) passing the time (*Mean* = 0.47, $SD_{between}$ = 0.39, SD_{within} = 0.32), and other (*Mean* = 0.05, $SD_{between}$ = 0.13, SD_{within} = 0.19). Each item was dichotomized, with 1 indicating that the participant used social media for that purpose and 0 indicating that they did not.

Everyday Perceptions of Ageism. Each evening, everyday perceptions of ageism was measured using two items from the Everyday Ageism Scale (Allen et al., 2021). Participants were asked to rate the following statements on a scale from 0 (never) to 3 (often): '*Over the past 24 hours, I heard, saw, and/or read jokes about old age, aging, or older people*,' and '*Over the past 24 hours, I heard, saw, and/or read things suggesting that older adults and aging are unattractive*.' A composite score was calculated by taking the mean of the two items, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived ageism in daily life (*Mean* = 0.22, $SD_{between}$ = 0.39, SD_{within} = 0.31). The multilevel generalizability coefficients of these measures was 0.97 at the between-person level and 0.48 at the within-person level.

Covariates. Sex (1 = *female*, 0 = *male*), age (in years), education (1 = *less than 12 years of schooling* – 6 = *doctoral degree*; *Mean* = 3.86, *SD* = 1.23), cultural background (1 = *European*, 0 = *non-European*), and self-rated health (1 = *poor* – 5 = *excellent*; *Mean* = 3.50, *SD* = 0.97) were included as covariates in the analytic model.

Analysis

Multilevel models with random intercepts and slopes were employed after adjusting for covariates. Given the nested data structure (i.e., daily assessments nested within participants), data were modeled at two levels. Intraclass correlations indicated that 58% of the variance in perceived ageism was attributable to between-person variability and 42% to within-person

variability; for TV viewing, 66% was between-person and 34% was within-person; for social media use, 58% was between-person and 42% was within-person. However, within-person variability should be interpreted with caution because the residual variance at the within-person level includes measurement error. Continuous variables were grand-mean centered, and binary variables were dichotomized. Daily assessed predictors were person-mean centered to examine within-person effects and grand-mean centered for between-person effects. Missing data regarding education (n = 2) and cultural background (n =1) were imputed using their respective mode values. In the preliminary analysis, everyday perceived ageism showed substantial skewness toward zero (1,070 of 1,370 observations were zero). Therefore, to assess robustness, we also conducted analyses using Poisson multilevel models. In addition to the preregistered analyses, we conducted multilevel models for exploratory purposes to examine whether different purposes of social media use were associated with everyday perceived ageism. Multilevel models were conducted using the *lme4* package (version 1.1–35.5; Bates et al., 2015) and *lmerTest* package (version 3.1–3; Kuznetsova et al., 2017) in R (version 4.4.1; R Core Team, 2024).

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

Table 1 summarizes descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations. Age was positively correlated with TV viewing time ($r = .28$, $p < .01$), whereas education was negatively correlated with TV viewing time ($r = –.25$, $p < .01$). Higher education was correlated with lower perceived ageism ($r = –.28$, $p < .01$). Longer time of social media usage was correlated with higher levels of perceived ageism ($r = .26$, $p < .01$). At the within-person level, no significant correlations were found among the key variables.

Everyday Contexts of Perceived Ageism

Table 2 presents the multilevel regression results after adjusting for covariates. Everyday TV viewing was not associated with perceived ageism at the between-person level. However, at the within-person level, older adults reported higher levels of perceived ageism on days when they spent more time watching TV than usual. In contrast, social media use was associated with perceived ageism at the between-person level but not at the within-person level. Specifically, older adults who spent more time using social media reported more perceived ageism than those who spent less time using it. The Poisson multilevel model, which was conducted to accommodate for a high proportion of zero responses of perceived ageism, yielded similar results for social media use. However, the association between TV watching and perceived ageism was no longer significant (see Supplementary Table 1).

Given that the extent to which individuals perceive ageism may vary across demographic groups (Giasson et al., 2017), we additionally explored whether the associations between everyday TV watching, social media use, and perceived ageism differed by sex, age, and education. We did not find any significant moderations (see Supplementary Tables 4 and 5). We also explored lagged associations to test whether perceived ageism on the previous day was associated with TV watching and social media use on the following day, and vice versa. Results showed that none of these additional analyses yielded significant results. However, we found significant autoregressive associations, with higher levels of perceived ageism, TV viewing, and social media use on the previous day associated with higher levels on the following day (see Supplementary Tables 6 and 7). Finally, given the well-established associations between ageism and well-being in old age (Allen et al., 2022; Kang & Kim, 2022; Levy et al., 2021), we examined whether daily perceived ageism was associated with daily stress and loneliness.

Although bivariate correlations indicated a positive association between perceived ageism and loneliness at the within-person level, multilevel models adjusting for covariates showed no significant associations with stress or loneliness (see Supplementary Tables 8 and 9). These null associations may reflect insufficient sensitivity of the items, which were measured on 5-point scales, to capture within-person variability in daily stress and loneliness, or the limited 14-day study period during which strong associations between the variables may not have emerged.

Exploratory Analyses: Purposes of Social Media Use and Perceived Ageism

Results from exploratory analyses are reported in Table 3 and Supplementary Table 2. First, using social media to connect with new people was significantly associated with higher levels of perceived ageism at the between-person level, indicating that older adults who more frequently used social media for this purpose reported higher levels of perceived ageism on average than those who used it less frequently. Second, using social media to post content related to one's interests and experiences or to pass the time was associated with lower perceived ageism at the within-person level. Specifically, on days when older adults used social media for these purposes, they reported lower perceived ageism compared to days when they did not use it for those purposes. Using social media to connect with people they already knew and care about or to seek knowledge and information was not significantly associated with perceived ageism at either the between-person or within-person level. In the Poisson multilevel models, the associations for connecting with new people and passing time were replicated, whereas the association for posting content remained in the same direction but did not reach statistical significance (see Supplementary Table 3).

Discussion

The current study examined everyday contexts in which older adults might encounter ageism, with a particular focus on TV and social media, using repeated daily life assessments from a sample of 111 older adults. By incorporating both TV viewing and social media use into a single model, we examined how screen time for each type of media was associated with perceived ageism net of one another. We found that older adults were more likely to report higher levels of perceived ageism on days when they more watched TV than usual (within-person level). Moreover, we found that older adults who spent more time on social media were more likely to report perceived ageism (between-person level). Notably, purposes of social media use appear to matter: lower perceived ageism was reported on days when older adults used social media to post content or to pass the time (within-person level); higher perceived ageism was reported among those who used social media more frequently to connect with new people compared to those who used it for this purpose less frequently (between-person level).

Sources of Perceived Ageism: TV and Social Media

Consistent with our hypothesis, greater time spent watching TV on a given day (within-person level) and higher average social media use (between-person level) were each associated with higher levels of perceived ageism. These findings dovetail with previous research documenting the prevalence of ageist content across both TV (Donlon et al., 2005; Meyer & Conroy, 2023; Ng, 2021) and social media (Fraser et al., 2024; Jimenez-Sotomayor et al., 2020; Lee & Hoh, 2023; Levy et al., 2014; Sipocz et al., 2021; Xiang et al., 2021). Our findings suggest that both media can serve as key external sources of perceived ageism in older adults' daily lives. However, the results should be interpreted with caution, as the Poisson model yielded consistent results for social media but not for TV.

Of note, the effect of TV viewing time was significant only at the within-person level, whereas social media use was significant only at the between-person level. This indicates that the mechanisms underlying perceptions of ageism through media may differ by media type among older adults. Consistent with previous research (Wang et al., 2021), watching TV appears to be more common than using social media among older adults, with our participants spending more time watching TV (2.21 hours) than using social media (1.25 hours) on average. Additionally, only six participants reported never watching TV during the study period, whereas eighteen reported never using social media. This suggests that individuals differences in social media use may matter more than day to day variation, whereas differences in TV viewing may reflect more what distinguishes different days than differences between people. Thus, we speculate that although both TV and social media may serve as sources of perceived ageism, they may operate at different levels.

Purposes of Social Media Use and Perceived Ageism

Although different purposes may expose older adults to different social media content on a day-to-day basis, screen time alone does not provide sufficient contextual information about how social media was used on a given day. Thus, findings from this study suggest that overall perceived ageism may have been better captured at the overall level than at the daily level. To address day-to-day variability in perceived ageism on social media, we examined the relationship between the daily purposes underlying social media use and everyday perceived ageism among older adults. Our findings show that using social media to connect with new people was associated with higher levels of perceived ageism at the between-person level. Socioemotional Selectivity Theory posits that older adults prioritize emotionally meaningful and close relationships to optimize their well-being rather than expanding their social network (Carstensen,

2021), and similar patterns are observed in their social media usage (Chang et al., 2015; Newman et al., 2021). Consistent with this model, older adults in the present sample rarely used social media to connect with new people, but instead to stay in touch with close others. It therefore makes sense that connecting with new people on social media could expose older adults to more unpleasant social interactions, as this does not align with common socioemotional strategies for well-being in later life.

Using social media to post content and to pass time was associated with lower perceived ageism at the within-person level in the present sample. This can also be explained by older adults' tendency to use social media in socioemotionally meaningful ways. Older adults often post personally meaningful content about family events, travel, and topics aligned with their interests (Hutto et al., 2015). In addition, unlike younger individuals, older adults' passive use of social media to pass time (e.g., viewing photos and videos) tends to be positively associated with well-being, possibly because the content they consume or the interactions they encounter are socioemotionally meaningful (Lewin et al., 2023). However, since our study did not assess specifically what kind of content participants viewed or with whom they interacted via social media, future research should use a more detailed media diary to explore the mechanisms we suggest here. Furthermore, the Poisson multilevel models did not replicate the association for post the content, indicating that these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Strengths, Limitations and Future Directions

Building on previous studies that document the prevalence of ageist content on TV and social media, this study provides empirical evidence on how older adults themselves perceive everyday ageism via their daily use of TV and social media. Furthermore, by utilizing daily diary reports

on both screen time and purposes of social media use, our findings identify more specific everyday contexts in which older adults encounter ageism on social media.

Nevertheless, some limitations of the study need to be acknowledged. First, given that 75% of our sample is female, the generalizability of our findings may be limited. Second, we adapted two items from a previously validated measure (Allen et al., 2021), omitting other items from this scale. This was done to limit the length of our daily questionnaire and it may be insufficient to capture other relevant forms of perceived ageism. The items used in the current study primarily focused on the perception of explicit ageist messages (e.g., age-related jokes). However, there might be more subtle forms of ageism such as the underrepresentation of older adults in TV content (Kessler et al., 2004; Markov & Yoon, 2021). Similarly, the interactive nature of social media may also generate unique forms of perceived ageism specific to these platforms. For instance, older adults often encounter assumptions about their physical or cognitive abilities, as well as demeaning language, in everyday social interactions (Allen et al., 2021), yet empirical evidence on these phenomena with regards to social media contexts remains limited. Moreover, the level-specific reliability of everyday perceived ageism showed relatively low within-person reliability (.48), which may be due to our use of a measure originally developed to capture between-person differences. Therefore, future research should develop measures that adequately capture day-to-day variability across a wider range of perceived ageism specific to media environments.

While this study addressed both quantitative and qualitative aspects of social media use, it remains unclear on which specific platforms (e.g., Facebook, X, or Reddit) or content (e.g., image, video, or text) older adults encounter ageism. In addition, older adults' perceived experiences of ageism can vary depending on the interaction partner's age and the level of

intimacy in the relationship (Nussbaum et al., 2005). It should also be noted that we did not directly assess the specific TV content older adults watched or the purposes for watching it. TV viewing may also involve various purposes, such as compensating for reduced social interactions, substituting for hobbies individuals previously engaged in, or helping structure their day (Hofer et al., 2024; Hofer & Eden, 2020). Thus, future research should capture more detailed contexts of media activities that older adults engage in. Beyond this, while we conducted additional analyses examining individual differences in the associations between media use and perceived ageism, future research should consider other individual difference variables (e.g., stigma consciousness) that may influence sensitivity to perceptions of ageism (Voss et al., 2018). Moreover, while this study focused on daily- and individual-level variables, structural factors within social media (e.g., algorithms) that may perpetuate ageism should not be overlooked either (Crockett, 2017; Levy et al., 2014). Findings from future studies incorporating these considerations would be insightful in guiding how intervention efforts should be framed to foster age-friendly environment on social media.

Conclusion

While the negative implications of (internalized) ageism have been widely documented (Levy, 2009), the contexts in which older adults initially encounter ageism is underexamined (Allen et al., 2021). Addressing this gap, this study demonstrates that both TV and social media can be a key source of perceived ageism in older adults' daily lives. We also found that daily perceived ageism can vary depending on older adults' purposes for using social media. Our findings highlight the socioenvironmental contexts (e.g., media use) in which ageism is experienced by older adults. We believe that this direction will enhance our understanding of ageism as a sociocultural product. Future studies should utilize media diary data that captures

more specific contexts of media activities to reveal the underlying mechanisms of perceived ageism in older adults' everyday media use.

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Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and correlations among key variables *(N = 111)*

Variable	*M*	$SD_{between}$	SD_{within}	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Female	0.75	0.44									
2. Age	71.27	9.02		-.05							
3. Education	3.86	1.23		-.13	-.15						
4. European	0.54	0.50		-.04	.30**	-.09					
5. Self-rated health	3.50	0.97		-.09	-.11	.17	.14				
6. TV viewing	2.21	1.77	1.19	.08	.28**	-.25*	.09	-.11		-.00	.04
7. Social media usage	1.25	1.17	0.93	.03	-.11	-.16	-.11	-.11	-.01		.02
8. Perceived ageism	0.22	0.39	0.31	.02	.07	-.28**	-.05	-.14	.07	.26**	

Note. M and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Below the diagonal are between-person correlations, and above the diagonal are the within-person correlations. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$

Table 2 Results from multilevel modeling *(N = 111)*

	Everyday Perceived Ageism		
Predictors	*Estimates*	*std. Error*	*p*
(Intercept)	0.253	0.083	**0.002**
Female	-0.017	0.083	0.841
Age	0.003	0.004	0.454
Education	-0.077	0.031	**0.013**
European	-0.042	0.076	0.577
Self-rated health	-0.019	0.038	0.618
BP TV viewing	-0.002	0.021	0.923
WP TV viewing	0.018	0.009	**0.038**
BP social media usage	0.071	0.031	**0.024**
WP social media usage	-0.003	0.015	0.856
Random Effects			
$\sigma^2_{\text{residual}}$	0.09		
$\tau_{00\ \text{random intercept}}$	0.13		
$\tau_{11\ \text{random slope (social media)}}$	0.01		
$\tau_{22\ \text{random slope (TV)}}$	0.00		
$\rho_{01\ \text{intercept-slope correlation (social media)}}$	-0.02		
$\rho_{02\ \text{intercept-slope correlation (TV)}}$	-0.06		
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.078 / 0.626		

Note. BP and WP represent between-person and within-person, respectively.

Table 3 Results from multilevel modeling *(N = 93)*

	Everyday Perceived Ageism														
Predictors	*Estimates*	*std. Error*	*p*	*Estimates*	*std. Error*	*p*	*Estimates*	*std. Error*	*p*	*Estimates*	*std. Error*	*p*	*Estimates*	*std. Error*	*p*
(Intercept)	0.222	0.095	**0.020**	0.231	0.092	**0.012**	0.230	0.094	**0.015**	0.227	0.094	**0.016**	0.229	0.094	**0.015**
Female	-0.011	0.098	0.914	-0.027	0.093	0.771	-0.025	0.096	0.793	-0.024	0.096	0.801	-0.025	0.096	0.797
Age	0.004	0.005	0.377	0.005	0.005	0.269	0.003	0.005	0.494	0.003	0.005	0.485	0.003	0.005	0.493
Education	-0.060	0.035	0.081	-0.066	0.034	0.051	-0.061	0.035	0.077	-0.062	0.035	0.073	-0.060	0.035	0.086
European	-0.043	0.085	0.610	-0.028	0.083	0.734	-0.038	0.085	0.657	-0.034	0.085	0.693	-0.039	0.085	0.647
Self-rated health	-0.017	0.045	0.702	-0.004	0.044	0.929	-0.017	0.045	0.702	-0.024	0.045	0.601	-0.019	0.045	0.670
BP social media usage	0.103	0.037	**0.006**	0.096	0.036	**0.009**	0.097	0.039	**0.013**	0.096	0.038	**0.011**	0.102	0.039	**0.010**
WP social media usage	-0.004	0.016	0.793	-0.005	0.016	0.778	-0.002	0.016	0.905	-0.005	0.016	0.774	0.001	0.016	0.961
BP connecting with close others	-0.084	0.113	0.458												
WP connecting with close others	0.021	0.042	0.616												
BP connecting with new people				0.554	0.204	**0.007**									
WP connecting with new people				-0.002	0.045	0.957									

BP posting content				0.048	0.146	0.744					
WP posting content				-0.070	0.036	**0.047**					
BP seeking information							0.106	0.129	0.412		
WP seeking information							0.028	0.033	0.397		
BP passing the time										0.004	0.119	0.976
WP passing the time										-0.088	0.033	**0.008**
Random Effects												
$\sigma^2_{\text{residual}}$	0.10		0.10		0.10			0.10			0.10	
$\tau_{00\ \text{random intercept}}$	0.14		0.13		0.14			0.14			0.14	
$\tau_{11\ \text{random slope}}$	0.0		0.01		0.01			0.01			0.01	
$\rho_{01\ \text{intercept-slope correlation}}$	-0.14		-0.14		-0.13			-0.14			-0.14	
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.084 / 0.622		0.120 / 0.625		0.083 / 0.622			0.085 / 0.622			0.084 / 0.624	

Note. BP and WP represent between-person and within-person, respectively.