

# Middle-Aged Resiliency and Resistance Study (MARRS): Aging Across the Lifespan

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## 1. Background

- Ageist beliefs influence how different generations interact with each other, in some cases leading to negative health outcomes (North & Fiske, 2012)
- Younger adults tend to hold negative stereotypes and attitudes toward older adults (Bonnesen & Hummert, 2002)
- Intergroup contact generally reduces intergroup anxiety (Zhang et al., 2018)

## 3. Methods

- Participants (N=59)
  - 25 to 44 years old -> classified as "younger" -> (N=27, Mean= 32.4 )
  - 45 to 64 years old -> classified as "middle-aged" (N=20, Mean= 54.9)
  - 65 years+ -> classified as "older" (N=12, Mean= 69.1)
- Participants completed a set of online questions, equally randomized so that one of the age groups (i.e., younger, middle-aged, or older) would answer questions on their thoughts regarding one of the other two age groups.
- The questionnaires measured aging semantics, intergroup anxiety, and prevalence of ageism

## 2. Objective

This study aimed to investigate and conduct an in-depth analysis of aging misconceptions and ageist notions experienced by adults across their lifespan

## 4. Preliminary Findings

Recruitment is still ongoing, therefore we are still collecting data!

Aging Semantic Differential Scale	Younger Adults	Middle-Aged Adults	Older Adults
Who is more novice?	Sample Size Too Small	Younger Adults	Younger Adults
Who is faster?	Sample Size Too Small	Younger Adults	Younger Adults
Who is healthier?	Sample Size Too Small	Younger Adults	Younger Adults
Who is more disreputable ?	Sample Size Too Small	Younger Adults	Younger Adults
Who is more foolish?	Sample Size Too Small	Younger Adults	Younger Adults
Who is more vulnerable?	Older Adults	Sample Size Too Small	Younger Adults
Who is more dependent?	Older Adults	Sample Size Too Small	Younger Adults

Vignettes	
Vignettes	Significant Findings
If you were to go on vacation, how comfortable would you be to ask them to water your plants?	Younger adults trust older adults more than middle-aged adults, to water their plants while they are away on vacation.
What is the probability that you would borrow a work tool in the case that you would need one?	Older adults are more likely to ask a younger adult to borrow a work tool compared to a middle-aged adult

Intergroup Anxiety Scale	
Defensive	
Younger adults reported that if they were the only one of their age group in a room, they would feel more defensive towards middle-aged adults compared to older adults	

## 5. Impact

- The results from this study will allow us to develop an awareness campaign that challenges the negative representations of aging and promote societal resistance to ageism.
- Future studies should consider ways to address the discomfort between younger and older adults.

**07. References**  
 Bonnesen, J. L., & Hummert, M. L. (2002). Painful self-disclosures of older adults in relation to aging stereotypes and perceived motivations. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 21*(3), 275-301. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261927X02021003004>  
 North, M. S., & Fiske, S. T. (2012). An inconvenienced youth? ageism and its potential intergenerational roots. *Psychological Bulletin, 138*(5), 982-997. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027843>  
 Zhang, Y. B., Paik, S., Xing, C., & Harwood, J. (2018). Young adults' contact experiences and attitudes toward aging: Age salience and intergroup anxiety in south korea. *Asian Journal of Communication, 28*(5), 468-488. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2018.1453848>