INTRODUCTION

The demographic phenomenon of intense population ageing and an increase in the proportion of older people is becoming a new historical experience of mankind. This creates new challenges, including the perception of old age and ageing and the expectations of older people. This new experience can cause negative attitudes towards older people, and stereotypes and biases associated with old age can lead to age discrimination (gerontological ageism). Old age in gerontopsychology is usually analysed in the aspect of problems of ontogenesis but increasingly attention is drawn to its cross-cultural and socio-psychological aspects, primarily in the context of the analysis of old age as the most important social marker that plays an important role in the processes of interaction of people and, in particular, acts as the basis for one of the types of social discrimination – age discrimination against the elderly [1].

Discriminatory practices against the elderly as a social phenomenon have emerged in most countries of the world as a result of powerful social and technological transformations that have considerably changed the role
and place of older people in society [2]. In modern Western countries, old age is often perceived as a period of negative age-related transformations, diseases, dependence, limitation of life, uselessness, isolation [3-4], loss of autonomy and various types of deficits [5]. As noted by the French sociologist A. Langevin, old age as the age of life has a certain profile from one social class to another and from one gender to another but an ability to discriminate remains constant [6, p. 50]. The image of an elderly (and even more old) person is associated with particularly aggravating stereotypes and prejudice [7]. Therewith, it is often referred not to a clear violation of the rights of older people but an insult to their self-esteem (jokes about age, compliments about good appearance, surprise when voicing the actual age of the interlocutor, obsessive questions about health, pretentious congratulations on anniversaries, etc.) [8]. Even in the context of modern normative models of ageing (for example, the theory of successful/active ageing), the problem of discrimination against older people arises [9] since these models often do not consider the different reality of ageing, its heterochrony and heterogeneity [10]. They often tend to reduce ageing to a person’s “individual responsibility”, denying various social living conditions of older people related to gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation [9; 10].

According to the results of modern Russian [11-13] and Ukrainian [14-16] studies, it can be stated that in post-Soviet societies, and Ukraine in particular, mostly negative images of old age and ageing predominate. In the eyes of young, older people are often associated with poor health, helplessness and social isolation, are perceived as unnecessary ballast, as a burden, as infirm and unnecessary members of society, there is a negative stereotyping of difficulties associated with old age as a period of loneliness, poverty, low social mobility, insolvency, and the need for care and support from state institutions. Distorted ideas, negative emotions, and beliefs of young people concerning elderly gradually develop into discriminatory actions [17]. For example, in a study by O.O. Berezina, 94.5% of respondents of pre-retirement and retirement age answered positively to the question about the signs of ageism on the part of society, of which more than 40% admitted that they often experience a negative attitude from the environment [14].

According to the study of N.M. Pecheritsa, gerontogeism of Ukrainian students can manifest itself in direct and indirect images of elderly people, in personal aversion to them, ridicule, hostility, biased attitude, disrespect, negative judgments, unwillingness to listen and cooperate, intolerance, indifference, avoidance of contacts (visual, tactile), in an aggressive attitude towards them [17]. As M.O. Ekimova notes, age discrimination “...permeates our lives more tightly than it seems at first glance” [18, p. 217]. A person may not get a chance to acquire a certain status and fulfill their role because their biological age is considered “inappropriate” in society. It is precisely this absolutisation of age stereotypes that is a social problem since it causes infringement of people’s rights, increasing inequality, dysfunctions of social organisations and institutions [18, p. 223]. Notably, age and gender are the most frequently mentioned causes of discrimination in the EU [19].

In view of the above, the problem of cultural and historical manifestations and cross-cultural features of discriminatory practices against older people is extremely relevant both in terms of studying their causes and consequences. Ignoring the cross-cultural perspective in this issue leads to the fact that the scientific discussion of the problems of age discrimination against older people is limited to local research problems and does not form a logically consistent and internally structured scientific field. Scientific discussions and searches related to either societal or personal aspects of ageism problems do not contribute to an integrated generalisation of existing research. Accordingly, there are complications associated with systemic prevention of ageism in different countries and at different levels of social life. This raises the problem of determining the specific features of discriminatory attitudes towards old age, the ageing process, and the elderly as representatives of the age group in different cultural and socio-economic conditions.

The purpose of the study is a theoretical analysis of the problem of gerontostereotypes and gerontological ageism as forms of age discrimination of older people, in particular its cross-cultural factors, features, and consequences. The study sets out the following objectives: to identify the main trends associated with the ageing of the population around the world; to analyse the terminological field of the concept of ageism and gerontological ageism; to consider the problem of age discrimination based on old age in different cultures as a key issue, as well as the main international theoretical models of ageism research; to carry out a comparative analysis of the cross-cultural features of gerontological ageism in eastern and western, collectivist and individualistic countries, as well as to determine the causes of its occurrence and forms of its manifestation in different cultures.

**GERONTOLOGICAL AGEISM AS A FORM OF AGE DISCRIMINATION, ITS MANIFESTATIONS AND CAUSES**

Ageism as a phenomenon of age discrimination and an interdisciplinary concept attracted attention only in the mid-1960s, when age discrimination became the object of scientific interest of sociologists and psychologists of the 20th century. Prior to this, the main focus was on racism (mainly in the United States) and sexism [2; 20]. By analogy with racism and sexism in 1969, the American sociologist R.N. Butler suggested using the concept of ageism to denote age discrimination [21]. They defined the content of ageism as a combination of three interrelated elements: negative stereotypes of old age and ageing, discriminatory practices against the elderly in interpersonal interaction of people, as well as at the level of functioning of various public institutions [21, p. 243]. Later, A.J. Traxler considered ageism as any attitude, behaviour, or social institution that subordinates people based on age, as well as the process of assigning...
Age discrimination, gerontostereotypes, and gerontological ageism...

... without malicious intent perpetuate stereotypical ideas about older people, reduce their opportunities for a satisfactory life and undermine their personal dignity” [30].

Gradually, various methodologies and scales were used to study gerontoageism. Some of the most common are semantic differential scales that contain bipolar personality traits. They usually require the participant to indicate a trait that is more representative of the elderly person [31; 32]. However, the authors of the analytical review note the variability and inconsistency of the results obtained using this method [33]. Finally, in modern research, gerontological ageism is defined as discrimination, neglect, or the practice of humiliating human dignity, implemented based on negative age stereotyping, as well as negative age stereotypes themselves [34].

Manifestations of gerontoageism are diverse. Most often, ageism in society occurs in the form of negative personal interactions between representatives of other age groups and elderly people (lack of respect for old people, abusive behaviour towards them, manifestations of ill-will and aggression); in the form of disparaging statements about old age and old people (proverbs, sayings) and existing beliefs in society, based on outdated concepts of the period of late adulthood exclusively as a time of regression and decline (stereotyping, perception of people of post-retirement age as public ballast, etc.); in the indifferent attitude of medical personnel in polyclinics, sanatoriums, and hospitals for the elderly [35]. The older a person looks, the more manifestations of negative attitude on the part of others he has to meet. A manifestation of gerontoageism is also a type of discrimination such as social isolation, which often affects older people [36; 37]. A manifestation of a discriminatory attitude towards old age is also the lack of a tolerant attitude towards old age, the existence of stereotypes of old age, through the prism of which older people are perceived. Ageism aimed at the elderly is based on the belief that people older than a certain age have a lower status and role in society [38, p. 4].

At the same time, it is noted that simultaneously with negative stereotypes, old age is endowed with positive traits [35; 39; 40]. In other words, the phenomenon of ageism can represent not only a negative but also a positive view of the problem of old age. The concept of positive and negative ageism was first introduced by E. Palmore in 1999 [20]. The author identified nine main stereotypes that reflect negative biases towards older people and eight main positive stereotypes that, in their opinion, are much less common [20] (Fig. 1).
Cross-cultural studies of ageism are also aimed at identifying factors and causes of stereotyping and ageism among young people and adults in different countries. It is assumed that young people in all countries of the world acquire ageist habits and distance themselves from older people due to the fact that they associate old age with death and incompetence. Age, for example, is the biggest risk factor for the onset and development of dementia, so a large number of young people may be “afraid” of ADRD (Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias) because aging is inevitable and older people are often associated with negativity and reduced cognitive function. In a study conducted in Ireland, P. McParland et al [41] identified negative attitudes towards people with dementia among adults of all ages. There was also a considerable likelihood of exacerbation of DRA (dementia-related anxiety), which can occur based on strong latent negative biases against older people [26], age-related cultural stereotypes [36], and dementia-related stigma [42; 43]. According to the micro-level theory of Terror Management Theory (TMT), older people serve young people as a reminder of their own vulnerability and mortality, respectively, in this way young people try to create a buffer that will mitigate and reduce their anxiety associated with death [2]. Thus, a large part of the negative attitude of young people to old age in many Western countries is associated with the cognitive abilities of older people, although this negative attitude can occur even with no signs of cognitive decline [26; 36; 44].

Another reason for age discrimination is that contacts between people over the age of 65 and young people or children in all countries of the world are becoming less frequent and less intense compared to the past [45]. The spatial and cultural distribution between these age groups leads to the emergence of intergroup negative emotions or ignoring, which contributes to the development of stereotypes and bias. Ageism aimed at the elderly also reinforces the belief that people over a certain age cause a higher economic burden on society, especially the working population, due to their increased consumption of medical and social services [38; 46; 47]. Based on cross-national surveys, L. Jurek traced the dynamics of ageism and negative attitudes towards older people in different European countries due to an increase in public spending on their maintenance (medical services, pension payments, long-term care,) [47]. In particular, the author identified that an increase in the number of hospital beds occupied by older people and medical consultations provided to them positively correlates with ageism [47]. The implementation of various pension programmes aimed at economic protection and improving the standard of older people’s living increases the perception of older people as inappropriate, outdated, unnecessary, and unimportant [46].

CROSS-CULTURAL FEATURES OF AGEISM IN WESTERN AND EASTERN, INDIVIDUALISTIC AND COLLECTIVIST CULTURES

Studies have shown that persistent age stereotypes are common among different groups of people [26] and that ageism is characteristic of different countries and cultures [48-50]. Xue Bai states that when compared with older people, young and middle-aged people in all countries of the world, for the most part, have simpler, vague, and more negative stereotypes about older people [50]. However, their intensity in different countries (with some exceptions, for example, [51; 52]) remains uncertain [48; 53]. There are separate empirical studies of narrow issues, for example, cross-cultural comparison of views, attitudes, and preferences regarding elderly care among Australian and Chinese nursing students [54]. However, as the authors note, there are practically no systematic empirical comparisons between countries, which explains certain discrepancies in the obtained empirical results [49].

Studies of different age groups have documented conflicting results regarding differences in the level of ageism in different countries [49; 53; 55]. For example, most studies have reported that attitudes towards older people
in individualistic countries (for example, the United States, Australia), as a rule, were more negative than in collectivist countries (for example, China, Malaysia, India) [48; 54]. This discovery was consistent with the idea that individualistic societies care less about older people, which can lead to neglect of them. Moreover, individualistic societies pay special attention to productivity in the workplace, which is less likely to be inherent in older people and can cause negative attitudes towards them [55]. However, a number of other studies have not found considerable differences in the level of ageism between individualistic and collectivist cultures [53].

Ageism has been studied in various cultural contexts, particularly in the United States [56], Europe [2; 49], and East Asia [36; 57]. These studies have shown that contrary to expectations, age-related stereotypes and discrimination spread not only outside the United States but also outside individualistic cultures in general, and are also widespread in collectivist countries in East Asia [36]. In the last quarter of the 20th century, separate comparative studies were conducted in which respondents from the countries of the Asia-Pacific region showed an even more negative attitude towards older people than their American counterparts, in particular, this refers to studies conducted in China [58], Thailand [59], Japan [60], etc.

The study [39] analysed cultural differences in the age stereotypes of young and older people in American and Chinese cultures in two areas: socio-emotional and mental-physical. Both young and elderly Chinese and American participants described “typical” young and “typical” older people. Then all responses were encoded by valency (positive-negative-neutral) and content (mental-physical, social-emotional, etc.). It occurred that in both cultures, stereotypes reflected a dynamic from more positive to more negative views on mental and physical qualities as a function of ageing. In the social and emotional spheres, stereotypes about older people were relatively neutral. The results showed that age perceptions of typical older adults are similar in East Asian and Western cultures, and that there is no global positive bias towards old age in East Asia. However, some differences were also found between Asian countries. The study [61] examined the differences between Japanese and Korean students’ perceptions of older people (Japan and South Korea are the oldest societies in the world but Japan has a more developed social security system for older people than Korea). The five most common images among Korean students were mostly negative, while the most common images of Japanese participants were mostly neutral or positive. The results have also shown that young people’s living with grandparents can lead to the development of a negative image of older people. According to the researchers, stereotypes of older people seem to be very stable, as well as cross-cultural, with equally negative views of older people in both individualistic and collectivist societies [36]. Therefore, the authors of some studies claim that stereotypes about older people are universal [36; 50].

Among the largest European projects to study cross-cultural aspects of ageism, the results of the fourth round of the European Social Study (ESS) (2008-2009), which aimed to study ageism, the experience of age discrimination and attitudes towards different age groups in 29 European countries, were indicative [49]. The authors concluded that ageism is a phenomenon that is present in both more and less individualistic societies and in different European countries. Age discrimination was highest in Eastern European countries (for example, the Czech Republic, Romania, Russia, Smination was recorded in the countries of Southern, Northern, and Central Europe (for example, Portugal, Cyprus, Denmark, Norway, and Switzerland) [49].

Another study of ageism in older people in 25 EU countries was implemented based on data from the Special Eurobarometer N 437 survey conducted in 2015 as part of the European Eurobarometer programme (Eurobarometer – the most up-to-date international database that includes information about ageism, as well as attitudes to sexism, racism, LGBT, etc. [62]). Ageism is considered by a Polish researcher who analysed the results of the Special Eurobarometer N 437 survey from three standpoints: a) perception of discrimination in general; b) age discrimination in difficult economic times; c) bias against high-level elderly officials [63]. Two-level regression allowed the author to simultaneously model the impact at both the individual and country levels to understand to what extent the variability of ageist statements is conditioned upon the socio-cultural characteristics of the country, and to what extent it can be explained by individual differences. As a conclusion, personal characteristics influence ageism more than the context of the country. Women perceive ageism much more strongly than men. Most of all, people experience manifestations of ageism in pre-retirement age and in situations that reflect stereotypes about lower labour productivity of older people [63]. In terms of cross-cultural characteristics, the increase in age discrimination, according to Special Eurobarometer N 437, is most noticeable in all former socialist countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Slovakia, Slovenia), except Poland. Among Western countries, the highest level of ageism was recorded in France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands [63].

Most social psychologists recognise the primacy of social stereotypes regarding prejudice and discriminatory behaviour [64; 65], so age stereotypes are often analysed as the psychological core of age discrimination. In particular, many studies are based on the SCM (Stereotype Content Model) [56; 66; 67] as a means of studying ageism. This stereotypical content model (SCM), proposed in 2002 [36; 66], presents a combination of negative and positive stereotypes. It is based on two parameters: warmth and competence. In a stratified society, competence as a personal trait (property) is usually attributed to people with a higher social position to justify their dominant status; the parameter “warmth” reflects such personal characteristics as softness,
Proponents of the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) [36; 66] position these parameters (warmth and competence) as precursors of attitude and behavioural responses to members of an external group [68]. Any group can be stereotyped “positively” by one parameter, “negatively” (unfavourably) – by another [66]. Based on this Stereotype Content Model (SCM), several cross-cultural studies have been implemented to study cultural stereotypes of older people’s perception in modern societies [36; 49; 66]. For Example, A.J. Cuddy et al [23] diagnosed older people and other age and social groups by measuring warmth and competence, status, and competition in six countries (Belgium, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Japan, Israel, and South Korea). They found that in all samples, including East Asians, older people were considered low-status and uncompetitive. Israelis had a lower ageist attitude compared to respondents from other Western European cultures but their attitudes were similar to those found in Northern Europe. Another American study also showed the prevalence and generality of ageism in different cultures [53]. Young Americans stereotype older people as warm and incompetent, perceiving them as uncompetitive and low-status people [36]. Numerous cross-cultural data show that older people are perceived in the warmth-competence spectrum as people with a high level of warmth (i.e. socially sensitive and moral) but with a low level of competence [56; 67; 69]. Classical meta-analysis by Kite et al. has shown that when compared with younger people, older people are considered not only less competent but also cause more negative behavioural intentions and assessments [65]. The Stereotype Content Model (SCM) was also one of the two methodological concepts of the mentioned fourth round of European Social Research (ESS) (2008-2009) [49]. This study measured two indicators: (1) competence and cordiality; (2) experience of age discrimination. The authors generally confirmed that older people are perceived as lower in status [49].

Based on a theoretical and empirical analysis of the most common cross-cultural stereotypes about older people, which contains a mixture of “incompetent but warm”, A.J. Cuddy and co-authors suggested that negative images of older people are a general cultural phenomenon. Based on large-scale cross-cultural data, the authors showed the cross-cultural nature of strong negative biases usually associated with older people [36]. Regarding the impact of stereotypes on older people, researchers note that the combination of low competence with high warmth (the “pity” model) corresponds to the “pseudo-positive” habits of older people [70] and, therefore, creates a paternalistic stereotype that does not allow them to take responsibility for their lives [36; 66].

CONCLUSIONS

The study has established that in global trends that are closely related to the ageing of the population, there are emerging problems of gerontological ageism, age discrimination against the elderly, the perception of old age as a period of negative age transformations, etc. It has been substantiated that since the middle of the 20th century, ageism and related phenomena (age stereotypes, discriminatory practices) have been the subject of study at the interpersonal, intergroup, institutional, cultural levels but the terminological field of the concept of “gerontosaicism” is still blurred, in modern science there is no clear conceptual basis for this phenomenon, therefore, it is important to
check and compare research results. Analysis of cross-cultural studies that have been conducted in western and eastern, individualistic and collectivist cultures has shown conflicting results. On the one hand, the attitude towards older people in individualistic countries is more negative than in collectivist ones, on the other hand, there are facts of the absence of considerable differences in the level of gerontosozialism between individualistic and collectivist cultures. In both Western and Eastern countries, respondents stereotype older people as “warm” and “incompetent”, perceiving them as uncompetitively capable and people of low status. According to most researchers, gerontological ageism and negative orientation towards older people are pan-cultural and persistent. Gerontoageism as a form of age discrimination seems to be a universal phenomenon and in most countries of the world manifests itself in an intolerant attitude towards the elderly by representatives of other age groups, in discriminatory practices in interpersonal interaction, in negative age stereotypes of old age and ageing, etc. Ageism as discrimination based on age can affect social relations, health and well-being of the population of all countries of the world, and, in particular, Ukrainian society in various ways. The results and conclusions obtained in the study are designed to identify opportunities for changing negative perceptions or stigmatising ageing, which will eventually affect everyone.

REFERENCES


Age discrimination, gerontostereotypes, and gerontological ageism...


Анотація. Інтенсивне старіння населення у всіх країнах світу породжує проблеми ейджизму, вікової дискримінації й упередженого ставлення до людей похилого віку, які провокують значні негативні наслідки як для представників цього віку, так і для суспільства загалом. Дослідження крос-культурних аспектів цих явищ суттєво збагачує їхнє розуміння та безпосередньо пов’язане з пошуком шляхів їхнього попередження в різних культурних і соціально-економічних умовах. Мета дослідження полягала в теоретичному аналізі проблеми ейджизму як форми вікової дискримінації людей похилого віку, зокрема її крос-культурних чинників, особливостей і наслідків. Використано методи теоретичного та метатеоретичного рівня (діалектичний метод і метод системного аналізу). У дослідженні визначено ключові тенденції, пов’язані з процесом старіння всього населення. З’ясовано поняття «ейджизм» і його зміст, визначено специфіку поняття «геронтологічний ейджизм», його складові, чинники та форми прояву. Розглянуто крос-культурні особливості проявів ейджизму як форми вікової дискримінації людей похилого віку в західних і східних, індивідуалістичних та колективістичних культурах. Для цього проаналізовано міжнародні теоретичні й емпіричні моделі та програми, а також міжкультурні дослідження ейджизму, реалізовані в різних культурних контекстах (у США, Західній і Східній Європі, Східній Азії, країнах Азіатсько-Тихоокеанського регіону тощо). Отримані в дослідженні результати мають практичне значення, оскільки позначають можливості превенції геронтостерепоти в різних країнах і на різних рівнях соціального життя, й насамперед перспективи зміни негативних уявлень та стигматизації старіння в українському суспільстві

Ключові слова: геронтопсихологія, крос-культурна психологія, стереотипи, ейджизм, старість, вікова дискримінація, модель змісту стереотипів, причини героантомездцістав