Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality (JAAUTH)
Vol. 20 No. 4, (2021), pp. 279-292.
journal homepage: http://jaauth.journals.ekb.eg

A Study of Age Discrimination at Hotel and Tourism Workplaces in Greater Cairo, Egypt.

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Discrimination;
Ageism;
Workplace.

(JAAUTH)
Vol. 20, No. 4, (2021),
PP.279-292.

ABSTRACT

Age discrimination seems to be more common than any other form of discrimination. Given that older workers are increasingly participating in the labor market in developed countries, it is important to understand the views of employers and employees on working age. However, the perception of older workers has changed dramatically in the past decade. In recent years, although the literature on age discrimination in employment has increased, there is a lack of research exploring age discrimination in hotels and tourism sectors.

Objective: The aim of this study is to identify the most important factors that help hotels and tourism companies to create an age-friendly working environment.

Method: This study was carried out by a quantitative method across ten hotels and ten tourism companies in Greater Cairo, Egypt. This study used self-administered and web-based questionnaires, developed based on previous research, resulting in 112 usable responses. Six factors emerged from the survey data after exploratory factor analysis, representing a shared view of an age-friendly workplace. Employees chose 'Fairness and equality' as the most significant factor to establish a working environment free from age discrimination.

Results: The study examined the differences in perceptions of these six factors. Finally, quantitative data have been organized into an age-friendly workplace factors that supports tourism and hospitality companies to establish working environment free from age-related discrimination between their employees.

Discussion and Implications: This study's scale may be useful to the researchers in the field of ageism at work. Moreover, the implications of using this concept in future empirical research on age-friendliness at work are considered.

1. Introduction

McKay and Middleton's report (1998) mentioned age discrimination is sometimes described as 'ageism' at workplaces, which involves unfairly treated or discriminated

workers based on their age group. Besides, not only younger but older employees also can be discriminated from others based on their ages. They also mentioned that 50 years old or higher is a suitable age to refer to older workers. While Vasconcelos (2012) agreed with Berger (2009) that older workers (i.e., 55 years of age or older) dealt with ageism-related problems when seeking employment, and it would be a significant challenge for senior employees to get employment offers (Vickerstaff et al., 2007). Therefore, avoiding certain age groups in the process of job selection is considered to be a concerning issue of age discrimination.

In 1987 Tepas and Monk (1987) referred to 'older workers' as workers over the age of 40. While, The UK Cabinet Office 'Winning the Era Game' report (2000) focused on people aged 50 years and over that they are considered to be elderly. Besides, Loretto et al., (2005) article on 'Older workers and options for flexible work' described a more experienced professional or mature age as 50 and over. Moreover, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) categorized older workers as all workers aged 50 and above, as mentioned by Kossen and Pederson (2008). Further, in Australia, older employees were 45 years old and over (Australian Institute of Management, 2013).

People over-generalize and look at old age stereotypically. This stereotypic construction is called 'ageism' with older people, aging, and old age. Ageism occurs everywhere: it is in our view of older people and our attitudes towards them. Perhaps, we also see ourselves as old-age workers. Usually, we do not understand our age-discriminatory concepts and behaviors. In many fields, ageism is common: at work, in public spaces, in stores, and doctor's clinics. In addition, age discrimination can be harmful and can affect older people because they will be affected by age-discriminatory attitudes, making them behave like stereotypical older people (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018).

2. Age Discrimination at Workplaces

Age discrimination in the workplace may occur at various stages, including the recruitment process, employee selection, performance evaluation, promotion decision-making, and training process in the form of biased decision-making or inappropriate behavior. Occupational age discrimination can lead to unfavorable effects for workers (e.g. poor job attitudes and performance), management (e.g. turnover rate and lawsuits), and employee-employer engagement (Posthuma and Campion, 2009). The negative behavior of workers from all age groups is the main predictor of age discrimination at work. In companies facing an aging and increasingly diverse workforce, age discrimination in the workplace is a major problem. Hence, future research to address age discrimination in the workplace are crucial.

For example, despite having the same capabilities as younger workers, older employees occasionally cannot conduct job interviews based on their age. At work, there is no fair opportunity for participation, training, and promotion for older workers. Moreover, when organizations deal with performance issues, senior staff are more likely to be reassigned rather than trained workers. Shore and Goldberg (2005)

reported that undesired job behaviors, turnover, reduced job efficiency, and underemployment of highly skilled workers are common results of age discrimination in the workplaces.

Posthuma et al. (2012) agreed with Daniels (2004) that age discrimination could be one of the following three forms in an organization: individual, structural, or organizational discrimination (Hollinshead et al., 2003). Individual discrimination regards prejudice shown by one person against another, and structural discrimination leads to the exclusion of certain groups due to certain activities (e.g., promotion requirements). Furthermore, organizational discrimination represents widespread perceptions, which suppose that certain age groups are suitable for specific work (Hollinshead et al., 2003). Moreover, discrimination can appear in a direct or indirect form. Direct discrimination occurs when a worker is treated less favorably based on his/her age, gender, ethnicity. Meanwhile, indirect discrimination occurs when an employer of different groups (for example, based on age, gender and race) practices an unjustifiable criterion that adversely affects one area, resulting in an individual from the disadvantaged group is unable to meet the criteria (Tomei, 2003).

2.1. Age discrimination in the Hotels and Tourism industry

Age discrimination or Ageism is a term that Butler used for the first time in 1969 as ‘a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against individuals because they are old, just as racism and sexism do with skin color and gender’ (Martin and Gardiner, 2007, p. 310). However, age discrimination no longer affects ‘elderly’ individuals only, but it also includes ‘younger’ employees in terms of biases and stereotypes. Therefore, Martin and Gardiner (2007, p. 310) describe age discrimination as ‘acts involving the person's age that used against him in an unjustified manner.’ They also reported that there is a lack of legislation regarding age discrimination. Despite a lack of awareness due to demographic changes, a stable labor market, and upcoming regulations, organizations have begun to recognize the need to consider age discrimination in recent years. In the hotel and tourism industries, the case of age discrimination in employment has not been sufficiently investigated, only examined as a part of a broader or in a limited way in exploratory studies (Loretto and White, 2006; Magd, 2003; Chiu et al., 2001).

Age discrimination includes two related dimensions, as mentioned by Macmullen and Marshall (2001): negative stereotypes of aging ideology, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as age discrimination that excludes and disadvantages certain groups of people purely based on their age. These two dimensions are closely related to the hospitality and tourism industries as previous researches have determined a critical approach to age and employment. Lucas (1993) stated that most firms were unwilling to assign older workers to work in public contact areas due to the negative influence on the hotels and tourism companies' image. Other research has proved that older workers in the hospitality industry sometimes experience negative attitudes from their employers (Taylor and Walker, 1997). Whereas Lucas (1993) mentioned that negative employment perceptions among hiring older persons could negatively affect the business due to: poor performance, including (slow, absent-minded, hesitant and resistant to changes, and declining motivation and ambition), health issues, as well as

mental performance, including (lack of intelligence, confidence and flexibility, and difficulty to train them).

Lucas (1993) concluded that hiring old-age workers and age discrimination are more common in the hospitality and tourism sectors than in other businesses. Moreover, she considered that the ageist attitude affects staff in their 30s, based on management's prejudices. On discrimination against age, several variables have contributed to the current debate. Some studies predicted that there might be more people over 80 years of age by 2021 than children under five. As the core of discrimination against the elderly issues is the demographic changes, markets will have to change their beliefs towards hiring and managing older workers if they want to use them during the labor market shortfall. On the other hand, some previous studies reported that hiring older people over younger employees can gain many advantages, including lower absenteeism rates, increased job satisfaction, and higher productivity levels (Lucas, 1993).

Moreover, the older employees seem to be more sensitive and productive than others; dealing with clients efficiently, have lower absenteeism and turnover rates, lower illness and accidents rates, more responsible, loyal, honest, and owns strong institutional memory (Brooke, 2003). In addition, they have higher rates of organizational commitment and reflect their positive attitude in the hotel and tourism industries. Magd (2003) added other positive attitudes and characteristics of older employees like self-motivation, loyalty, dependability, speed to learn, credibility, and communication skills. On the other hand, an employee's age is one of the most important factors, which may increase job turnover in the hotel and tourism industries industry. Further, there is a lack of research combining age with job turnover. Nevertheless, Iverson and Deery (2007) noted in a study of Australian hotels that ‘younger employees are more likely to leave work than older employees,’ highlighting a significant reason to investigate age discrimination.

The importance of age diversity

Employers and human resources experts, who understand the benefits of age diversity in businesses, have been a part of the pressure to outlaw age discrimination in jobs. Workforce diversity in both age and gender among workers could be a better style to adapt to rapidly changing conditions. Many companies have restrained themselves from increasing their employment by limiting job opportunities to so-called 'prime age' employees. Implementing age management best practices would push organizations to adjust to the inevitable old age personnel of their working environment, increase the competitiveness and effectiveness of mature workforces, enhance the employability of mature women and men, help extend working life, and ensure greater equal chances among employees of different ages. Consequently, there would be a strong economic imperative for age management as a workforce. Employers would no longer be able to rely on a sufficient supply of young employees, they would eventually have to face the aging of their current labor powers (Naegele and Walker, 2006).

However, there are significant concerns at the corporate level that employees are becoming more costly and less efficient as they mature. Besides, rising wages and non-wage charges are considered obstacles for older employee recruitment (OECD, 2006). Nevertheless, Naegele and Walker (2006) state that the practices of individual businesses indicated that:

- Trying to recruit older staff implies that the company gains additional skills and experience.
- When investing in skills and health promotion for an older worker, companies benefit by controlling costs.
- Keeping older employees prevents costly expertise losses and can improve market share.
- Job satisfaction and generation solidarity will increase by considering age diversity.

Industry's expertise, especially in the private sector, supposed a new strategy for applying age management at work through five golden keys explaining business's fundamental needs. Therefore, using two or more of these keys at work is considered an indication of implementing age management (Naegele and Walker, 2006).

a- Maintaining the skills base:
Many companies recognize that the skills of older workers are an advantage in the workplace. These skills and expertise are not fully matched by new younger staff. Furthermore, older workers are known for their unique characteristics, such as accuracy, reliability, and communication skills with customers and their colleagues.

b- Making a virtue of necessity
Sometimes, managers have no choice but to hire older workers as it may be better to hire them than younger employees. Hence, old employees need to realize the adjustment or growth of the organizational structure through age management.

c- Reducing age-related labor costs
Age management is applied in different situations to cut extra expenses and labor costs. Investments in employing older employees in the future, for example, compensating older employees' early retirement against the costs of obtaining and training new workers.

d- Reacting to changes in external labor market conditions
In order to organize age management, it is necessary to change the external labor market conditions for older workers. Age management at work can take the form of legislative or regulatory amendments, public and collectively agreed values, retirement age or pension laws, awareness plans, and job promotion for older workers (Naegele and Walker, 2006).

e- Resolving labor market bottlenecks
Good practices in age management can make a significant contribution to solving bottlenecks in the labor market. Companies that have employed older staff regularly

report that they have quickly recognized their worth due to their inspiration, trust and support.

2.2. Age-friendly practices within organizations

The term age-friendly in essence refers to practices, features, or factors that reinforce the WHO's active aging framework to enable the social inclusion and participation of older individuals in a community or organization. Active aging is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation, and security in order to enhance the quality of life as people age (World Health Organization, 2002). As with age-friendly communities, age-friendly organizations should seek to encourage and promote diversity, encourage and support the participation of older workers, build safe working environments and treat people of all ages with respect.

Furthermore, deciding what can be done to make a workplace more open to older employees requires assessing the organization's age-friendliness. The theoretical or discussion papers that describe age-friendly practices were mainly used in the literature that pertains to age-friendly organizations. (Reed, 2011; Žnidaršič and Demovski, 2009; Ziekemeyer, 2005; Jones, 2003). When considering the design of an age-friendly working environment, the literature related to age discrimination supposes many techniques to support workplaces transition to age-friendly organizations, such as health promotion, prevention of diseases, and job arrangements. This study aims to identify the most important factors that help hotels and tourism companies to create an age-friendly working environment free from discrimination between its workers based on their age.

3. Research method

The purpose of this research is to determine the perceptions and stereotypical views of managers, supervisors, and employees toward older employees in hotel and tourism workplaces in Greater Cairo. Also, it explores factors that may decrease the influence of age stereotypes on discriminatory practices in the workplace. This study developed a measure of key factors influencing the nature of the age-friendly environment, which would create a perfect age-friendly environment, depending on Eppler-Hattab et al. (2020) theoretical framework of the Age-Friendly Workplace (AFW). Their study identifies five major factors for older workers and serves to reduce age discrimination within the workplace, as follows: recognition and respect of older workers, fairness and equal opportunities in human resource processes, awareness-raising, ease in managing and flexibility, as well as changing attitudes toward their companions and attitudes that represent supportive relationships in the workplace environment.

3.1. Research Design, Sample, and Procedure

The survey instrument was developed and administered to managers, supervisors, and personnel at hotels and tourism companies in Greater Cairo. The questionnaire was based on the Eppler-Hattab et al. (2020) survey's instrument, which was designed to develop and validate a scale to measure workplace age-friendliness. Remarkable changes have been made to their investigation. This process resulted in some items being discarded, while others were paraphrased to understand their meaning clearly.

At the end of the process, a total of 18 attributes were produced. Reducing items to a more controllable number will help reduce participant fatigue and response deviation.

The questionnaire form was divided into two parts. The first part included participants' demographic data, such as the working sector, employment status, gender, and age group. As mentioned earlier, the second part of the questionnaire was mainly based on Eppler-Hattab et al. (2020) five age-friendly dimensions. The questionnaire form contained 18 items. Each clause expressed some key points that limit discrimination based on age at work. The 5-point Likert scale was selected for each question from 1 (strongly dissatisfied) to 5 (strongly satisfied). Based on previous studies, these attributes were most important to create a perfect age-friendly environment away from discrimination.

A sample of ten hotels and ten tourism companies was randomly selected in the Greater Cairo area for conducting the research. The questionnaire form was distributed to all age groups in order to identify their perception regarding age discrimination. The responses were received during January to March 2021 via two methods, a web-based survey, and a self-administrated questionnaire. A total of 73 valid surveys were collected from 100 distributed forms, with a response rate of 73%, while only 39 surveys were received from the Internet. In total, all responses were merged and counted 112 valid forms.

3.2. RESUTLTS AND DISSCUSSION

3.2.1. Reliability Analysis

As shown in Table 1, the reliability statistics of the study's variables were checked by Cronbach's alpha reliability test. Cronbach's alpha value has given 0.811, which is greater than 0.60, and confirmed that the study is reliable.

Table 1

Reliability Statistics of the study's variables

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.811	.811	18

3.2.2. Demographic Characteristics

The results described in table 2 shows that the majority of respondents' working areas were Tourism 61.4% while Hotels 36.6%. The highest percentage of participants 76% were full time employees. The majority 34.8% of the employess, aged between 30 to 39 years, while the minority 17.9% of the employees aged 50 years or older. The results as well shows that the highest portion of gender was for males, 63.4%.

Table 2

Selected respondent profiles.

	n	Percent
Working area		
Tourism Companies	71	61.4
Hotels	41	36.6
Total	**112**	**100**
Employment status		

Continued

Full-time	85	76
Part-time	27	24
Total	**112**	**100**
Age group		
Under 30 years old	25	22.3
30 to 39 years	39	34.8
40 to 49 years	28	25
50 years or older	20	17.9
Total	**112**	**100**
Gender		
Female	41	36.6
Male	71	63.4
Total	**112**	**100**

3.2.3. The Analysis of AFW Factors

The aim of this research is to explore the underlying dimensions that affect age discrimination at workplaces and study how hotels and tourism companies could create a work environment free from discrimination based on age. Therefore, factor analysis was chosen to outline the major dimensions that achieve an age-friendly environment at work. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) results verify that 0.73 is considered an acceptable value for using factor analysis. Several researchers pointed out that factor loadings higher than 0.4 and eigenvalues greater than 1 are used in the factor analysis interpretation (Kim et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2008; and Mohammad and Mat Som, 2010).

Table 2 summarizes the outcomes of factor analysis of 18 Age-Friendly attributes, which did not match the previous criteria of the study of Eppler-Hattab et al. (2020). The resulting factor structure was classified into six factors with a total of 76.09% explained variance. The factors classes were labeled 'Fairness and equality,' 'Trust and respect,' 'Flexibility major,' 'Workload mentoring,' 'Motivation major,' and 'Awareness-raising.' Based on the previous results, 'Fairness and equality' was the most significant factor that affects the creation of a free-discrimination work environment based on age. It concluded 35.06% of the variance, with a total eigenvalue of 6.31.

Table 2

Factor Analysis of Age-Friendly Workplace

Factors	Loading	Comm-unality	Eigen value	Mean	Variance
Factor 1: Fairness and equality			**6.31**		**35.06**
Supposes older workers are very productive.	.865	.870		3.30	
Supposes older workers work well in teams.	.854	.768		3.46	
Supposes older workers have good interpersonal communication	.821	.773		3.79	

Continued

skills.					
Treats older workers fairly and equally.	.819	.808		3.85	
Has no age discrimination issues in recruitment, promotion, and dismissal processes.	.704	.704		3.44	
Recognizes and respects older workers the same way as younger workers.	.541	.521		3.79	
Factor 2: Trust and respect			**2.08**		**11.54**
Provides a positive environment for its older workers.	.926	.942		3.34	
Appreciates older workers' achievements.	.907	.919		3.32	
Benefits from older workers' experiences in training.	.882	.829		3.30	
Factor 3: Flexibility			**1.81**		**10.08**
Gives the right to choose the range of working hours for older workers.	.884	.857		2.62	
Understands that older workers are disliked working under younger supervisors.	.823	.714		3.37	
Helps to reduce or adjust physical or psychological works to the older workers' abilities and needs.	.546	.655		3.40	
Factor 4: Workload mentoring			**1.31**		**7.28**
Allows older workers to choose the job location.	.715	.842		2.71	
Makes the priority for older workers to vacate their positions or retire early.	.692	.738		2.78	
Factor 5: Motivation			**1.16**		**6.42**
Encourages age diversity in the organizational workforce.	.782	.758		3.26	
Supposes older workers are more confident.	.639	.610		3.49	
Factor 6: Awareness-raising			**1.03**		**5.71**
Assumes that older workers fail to keep up with new technologies at work.	.546	.768		3.18	
Increases employee awareness about health and wellbeing at work.	.738	.619		3.43	
Total Variance Explained					**76.09**

The following factor was 'Trust and respect,' it got a 2.08 eigenvalue, with an explained variance of 11.54%, followed by 'Flexibility,' 'Workload mentoring,' and 'Motivation' factors. However, the lowest important factor for the Age-friendly workplace was 'Awareness-raising,' which obtained a 1.03 eigenvalue and 5.71% of the explained variance.

3.2.4. Gender Differences in AFW's Factors

As shown in Table 3, mean and standard deviations for age-friendly workplace scores of all six factors were calculated for both men and women. The sample size was n=71 for males and n=41 for females. Then, the mean scores among both men and women were relatively similar, except for the workload mentoring. Based on mean scores, men perceived fairness and equality, trust and respect, flexibility, motivation, and awareness-raising as slightly satisfying as women, while they were slightly dissatisfied with the workload mentoring dimension. On the other hand, women considered workload mentoring as neither satisfying nor dissatisfying.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Six Age-Friendly Dimensions Based on Gender

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	*Sig.*	*R*
Fairness and equality			0.034	0.201*
Females	3.3	0.71		
Males	3.7	0.97		
Trust and respect			0.010	0.243**
Females	2.9	1.14		
Males	3.5	1.30		
Flexibility			0.409	0.079
Females	3.0	0.90		
Males	3.2	1.04		
Workload mentoring			0.004	-0.273**
Females	3.0	0.75		
Males	2.6	0.76		
Motivation			0.077	0.168
Females	3.2	0.90		
Males	3.5	1.04		
Awareness-raising			0.189	0.125
Females	3.2	0.95		
Males	3.4	0.84		

**. Correlation is significant at *p≤.01, (2- tailed)*

*. Correlation is significant at *p≤.05, (2- tailed)*

One-way between groups ANOVAs and Pearson correlation matrix were conducted to test whether any significant differences or relationships existed between the study variables and the gender of participants. The results in Table 3 shows significant differences, and positive correlations were found in fairness and equality scores based on their gender [p=. 0.034 and r= 0.201*]. Similarly, there are significant differences and positive correlations in trust and respect [p= 0.01 and r= 0.243**]. The results

show that there is a significant negative correlation between the workload mentoring factor and gender [p= 0.004 and r= -0.273**]. Hence, there is an inverse correlation between the gender variable and workload mentoring for the females employees despite being fewer than males. On the other hand, all other factors are not statistically significant.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to identify factors that affect age discrimination in the hotel and tourism industry by creating a new measure of age-friendly workplaces, which can help organizations create an age-friendly working environment free from ageism. In order to attain the factors of an age-friendly organization to assist with organizational change initiatives, the data from the survey were subjected to factor analysis test that was chosen as an analytical method because it served the study purpose of generating arguments about a general understanding of an age-friendly workplace and constructing an initial scale to measure how age-friendly the workplace is.

As shown in Table 2, the six AFW factors with strong loadings were extracted from the analysis, which were 'Fairness and equality,' 'Trust and respect,' 'Flexibility major,' 'Workload mentoring,' 'Motivation major,' and 'Awareness-raising.' Out of the six AFW factors, employees chose 'Fairness and equality' as the most important factor that encourages organizations to establish a working environment free from age discrimination. This factor accounted for most of the variance explained in the survey (35 percent), which contained six items that summarized the way the aged workers were treated equally and fairly in the tourism and hotel establishments, regardless of their age. However, the lowest significant factor was 'Awareness-raising,' that contained two items related to how the elderly employees are in line with modern technology and health awareness standards. It accounted for (5.7 percent) of the variance in the study.

Then, no statistically significant differences were found between the responses received from both the tourism and hotel sectors, which indicates the similarity of their characteristics. However, to examine if there any statistical differences or correlations between male and female employees in the six AFW factors, one-way between groups ANOVAs and Pearson correlation matrix were conducted. The results showed in Table 3 illustrate that there was a statistical significance for one factor for females, which was 'Workload mentoring.' While the results showed two significant factors for males that were 'Fairness and equality' and 'Trust and respect,' this means that male workers are more affected than females in terms of fairness and equality as well as trust and respect at work. Moreover, there were correlations with statistical significances between male workers in 'Fairness and equality, and Trust and respect.' While there was an inverse correlation for female workers in terms of 'Workload mentoring.'

In summary, this research fills the gap between research evidence and field research by helping organizations become age-friendly places, thus contributing to this research area in several ways. Firstly, the study has developed a compliant and

comprehensive model of an age-friendly workplace that would be beneficial for future research. Secondly, the study provides valuable information that help the decision makers of tourism and hotel sectors to keep their work areas free from age discrimination.

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المجلد 20، العدد 4، (2021)، ص 279-292.
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دراسة التمييز على أساس السن في أماكن العمل الفندقية والسياحية في القاهرة الكبرى، مصر.

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معلومات المقالة

الكلمات المفتاحية
التمييز؛ التمييز ضد كبار السن؛ مكان العمل.

(JAAUTH)
المجلد 20، العدد 4، (2021)، ص 279-292.

الملخص

يعتبر التمييز على أساس العمر من أكثر أشكال التمييز التي يعاني منها الناس في معظم أنحاء العالم، ومع تزايد عدد كبار السن الذين يشاركون في سوق العمل، أصبح من المهم فهم آراء أصحاب العمل والموظفين حول سن العمل. وبرغم وجود العديد من الأبحاث عن التمييز على أساس السن في التوظيف، إلا أنه يوجد نقص في الأبحاث عن هذا الموضوع وخاصة في قطاعي السياحة والفنادق. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على أهم العوامل التي تساعد الفنادق وشركات السياحة على خلق بيئة عمل مناسبة لكبار السن عن طريق توزيع استبيان في ٢٠ مؤسسة في القطاع السياحي والفندقي، وبعد تحليل العوامل الاستكشافية للعينة ظهرت ستة عوامل وهي "العدل والمساواة"، "الثقة والاحترام"، "المرونة"، "توجيه عبء العمل"، "التحفيز"، و"زيادة الوعي". وجاء عامل "العدل والمساواة" كأهم عامل لتهيئة بيئة عمل خالية من التمييز على أساس العمر. وأوصت الدراسة أن تطبيق هذه العوامل أو جزء منها يساعد على توفير بيئة العمل المناسبة لكبار السن وهذا يساعد الشركات السياحية والفندقية في خلق بيئة عمل خالية من التمييز على أساس العمر.