

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Alfred University

A Quiet Friday Night:
Understanding what is socially
acceptable for the Friday night of older adults

by
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Thesis Introduction:

The decision to complete my thesis on a topic involving gerontology was an easy choice, as many of my most recent classes fulfilled the requirements for my gerontology minor, and focused on the behavior of older adults. A substantial amount of what I have learned in my gerontology courses is about how there is a strong age bias in our society. While some of our culture favors older adults (e.g., senior discounts at Arby's), some of our culture discriminates against (e.g., technology designed by and for young adults). Personally, my biggest goal for this thesis was to spread awareness about a potential way older adults are disadvantaged. This sparked the idea of researching whether people believe that the expectations for older adults' social lives might vary from the rest of the population.

There is a relatively pervasive stereotype that older adults live tame lives. My interpretation of this is that many people are under the impression that older adults are confined to their homes. There is this image portrayed of elderly folks sitting in their comfortable chairs and reading a book before going to bed early; this picture essentially portrays an older adult having a pretty limited social life. I figured I probably was not the only one who had this image of older adults in their head. However, due to the classes I have taken in gerontology, I suspect that is a misconception and I want to challenge this widespread belief. That is when I decided to dedicate my thesis to improving the awareness of potential underlying ageist beliefs that involve expecting older adults to not go out and do something social.

I was interested in researching whether college students perceive that there is a difference in what is appropriate for a 21 or 70 year old for a Friday night. Specifically, I hypothesized that an older adult would be expected to stay at home on a Friday night, while a college-aged student would be expected to go out. Going out was defined in my study as any social event that requires

a person to leave his or her home. The idea that older adults do not have a social life is an outdated way of thinking, because the older adult population is living longer and stay active longer a whole. The better health they are in, the more likely they are going to want to continue to live their lives and the longer they will be able to maintain close friendships.

College-aged students may be expected to go out more than older adults because of all of the demands they endure during the week. Both older adults and college students have substantial amounts of stress for different reasons. College-aged people often have to worry about completing multiple assignments during a week, on top of figuring out what they will do for the rest of their lives after they graduate. This kind of intense workweek could certainly drive students to want to escape the pressures of school and go out during the weekend. Although older adults do not have the immediate pressure of assignments to do, they may have concerns over financial, relationship, and vocational changes. There is this perception that older adults lose the capability to do many things just because they reach a certain age. While both college-aged people and older adults are under a substantial amount of stress, only college students are expected to release that tension by going out, attending social events, and “partying.”

My main goal for the study was to raise awareness about potential ageist beliefs, so if I was able to do that, then I am happy with the results. The specific area of ageism the following research investigates is the perception that older adults have less active social lives the college-aged people. This study aims to find out if the expectations of an older adult are to stay at home and have a tame Friday night. Does that mean that older adults refrain from engaging in social activities and knowingly make maintaining friendships more difficult?

Abstract

The researcher explored the social acceptability for going out on a Friday night, in the eyes of college students, for a college-aged person and an older adult. This particular area of research is growing in importance, because the older adult population is rapidly increasing in size. As a society, the way older adults are viewed needs to be changed, because they are staying active and healthy longer than in the past. This means that they are more active later into life than in previous decades. I investigated how this change is affecting the perception of older adults' social lives for college students. My hypothesis was that participants would say a college-aged person would be expected to go out on a Friday night, whereas an older adult would be expected to stay at home. The study was conducted online through eSurveyspro. The participants read a passage about a Friday night of either a college-aged person or an older adult, where the person stayed home. Following the passage, the participants were asked social acceptability questions about the fact that the person in the passage decided not to go do something social outside of the house. The results from the two conditions were analyzed using a One-way ANOVA. The analysis revealed non-significant results, and so the hypothesis that behaviors related to actively socializing would be different for the younger or older adults was not supported. In conclusion, social acceptability is similar for the Friday night of an older adult and a college-aged person. Limitations of the study and implications for aging research are discussed.

A Quiet Friday Night

Although older adults are living longer and are more active than their counterparts were decades ago, there is still a stereotype that older adults spend evenings at home with a book, while college aged adults go out and “party.” This study investigated whether a person’s age affects what college students believe is socially acceptable. The findings of this study are not going to be able to stop ageist ideation, but the results have the potential to demonstrate whether the bias does exist.

In order to combat an ageist way of thinking, it is important to understand the ageist beliefs involving socializing that may exist. One of the potential barriers for an older adult to leave the house may be the actual transportation from place to place (Weeks, Stadnyk, Begley, & MacDonald, 2015). Due to slower reaction times and declining senses, many people believe that older adults are dangerous on the road (Keskinen, Ota, & Katila, 1998). If older adults are believed to be a danger on the road, and they stop driving as much, that leaves this population with a couple of options. Public transportation is a possibility; however, the times might not always line up and it also costs money. The second option is to rely on family or friends to drive them to their destination. That could leave older adults feeling like a burden to the ones they love, and might just not go out to avoid asking. However, older adults may not stop driving as soon as expected. Researchers found that the majority of adults did not plan to stop driving until they were at least 90 years old (Naumann, West, & Sauber-Schatz, 2014). This suggests that transportation difficulties may not affect those who continue to drive. However, for people who rely on others, transportation may be a variable in influencing the extent of one’s social life.

There are other complications that could prevent an older adult from leaving their home. For example, opportunities for social events on a Friday often start later in the night. People are

typically only ready to do something leisurely after they have come home from school or work, and have finished their daily errands. There has also been support found for the idea that older adults need more sleep than younger adults because the sleep they get is less restful and restorative (Cirelli, 2012). Going to sleep early to get that extra sleep could be an impediment to older adults having an active social life. Some researchers have found a relationship between loneliness and sleep quality (McHugh & Lawlor, 2013). McHugh and Lawlor specifically found correlational data that supports that the lonelier people are, the lower quality of sleep they reported, and vice versa. This relationship has potential to be a vicious cycle for older adults. If they are lonely, they might have worse quality of sleep. Then, that worse quality of sleep means that they need to get extra sleep to make up for it. The need for more sleep can result in going to bed early and missing out on opportunities to socialize. With this in mind, the need for more sleep is a legitimate reason why people may expect an older adult to stay at home, at the expense of having fewer opportunities to keep friendships.

The isolation that an older adult may experience could impact the health of older adults as well. These negative effects include social recognition memory, which is the ability to recall past events and the people at the events (Leser & Wagner, 2015). This potential health implication made it even more important to run the study. Not only is it essential to change the way people view the social life of older adults, but it is actually imperative for keeping older citizens healthy over the long-term. This is only possible if we stop promoting their isolation as normal.

By changing people's minds about how older adults should spend their time, more social opportunities might be created for older adults as a result. For example, if a person is known to not enjoy movies, he or she will most likely not be asked by a friend to go to a movie theater.

The friend would most likely ask people who enjoy movies to go. That is the type of situation older adults are currently facing; they do not have as many opportunities to do something outside of the house because people do not expect them to want to do so.

It is necessary to note that I do not expect any two of my participants to view older adults in exactly the same light. I have made a few claims about how the general public may view older adults, but the variation in opinions is probably substantial. No two people have had the same experiences with older adults, so they are going to have differing viewpoints based on their life experiences. One person may have all four of their grandparents alive, so that person may have a certain perception of older adults, based on what they see from their grandparents. Another person might have not have grandparents that they can see, so they have an opinion based off of the older adults in their community.

In a parallel example, differences in perception were highlighted by research on how college faculty and staff view the drinking habits of students differently (Lear, Weinstein, Smallwood, Satterfield, & Propsom, 2014). Although their research does not include older adults, it shows how different people can have very different ideas about a group, based on their different experiences. Both the faculty and staff spend substantial amounts of time around the students; however, what the faculty saw the students doing was different from what the staff saw the students doing. The faculty mostly saw the students in tame public settings, such as class. The staff would sometimes see the aftermath of a night out, or disoriented students walking down the street. That led to the difference in viewpoints on the students' drinking habits. A difference in experiences leading to a difference in perceptions is a phenomenon that can be applied to the current study.

The variance will also play a role in what I expect my participants to expect a college-aged person to do on a Friday night. All of my participants will be labeled as “college students,” but I am positive college has been a unique experience for each of them. In order to find a significant difference in what is socially acceptable between older adults and college-aged students, then my participants will need to need to view college-aged adults in a similar way. If the participants had the perception that the 21-year-old in the passage is a college student, they might have expected a college student to go out and socialize whenever given the opportunity. Similarly, if they had internalized the “homebound” stereotype for older adults, then the participants would have expected the older adult in the passage to pass on the opportunities to go out. These stereotypes only mattered if the majority of my participants had similar perceptions, between themselves, of the two age groups presented in the passage.

There has also been research done to see if the current existing social norms significantly impact older adults in a negative way (Vauclair, Lima, Abrams, Swift, & Bratt). Researchers were able to find support for the idea that the current social norms are impacting our older adults in an unfavorable way. The negative perceptions that the older population faces in social contexts really does negatively affect their perceptions of themselves. The negative perceptions also make older adults more likely to believe that it is due to ageism. The researchers brought social biases having to do with age to the attention of the public (VonDraus & Lor-Vang, 2004). The researchers had participants take an online test about implicit attitudes. This study was performed in a pretest-posttest format and found that the participants become more aware of attitudes towards older adults in general. They also took this study a step further by find support that having proper motivation to change a bias and interacting with a group that the bias exists

for, results in weaker biases (VonDraus & Lor-Vang, 2004). This means that a bias can be mitigated if people are aware of the bias and interact with the people who represent the bias.

Whereas these researchers looked at ageism in general, the current study is looking at one particular aspect within ageism. Specifically, I hypothesized that an individual who fell into the “older adult” category (aged 70) would be expected to conform to age-related stereotypes and stay at home on a Friday night. However, a “younger adult” of traditional college age (aged 21) would be expected to conform to age-related social norms and go out and socialize when given the opportunity.

Method

Design

A one-way quasi-experimental between-subjects design was conducted. The independent variable was the Age of the person in the passage (either 21-year-old or 70-year-old), and the dependent variable was the participants’ total scores on social acceptability questions.

Participants

Forty-one college students were recruited from Introduction to Psychology courses via sign-up sheets or through word of mouth. This was a sample of convenience, with students responding to requests for research participants, and they were either compensated with course credit or thanked for their participation. Students ranged from first year to fourth year college students. My study was open to all college students who attended the university where the research was conducted. Overall, students were of traditional college age.

Materials & Procedure

The current study was completed entirely electronically through the online survey tool eSurveyPro. Participants were recruited through a sign up sheet and through hearing about the

study from others. At the time of recruitment, the participants were told that my study was looking at passage memory in order to disguise the real purpose of my study. The materials for this study included a passage and a questionnaire. Both of these materials were created specifically for this study. With that being the case, my materials do not have any established validity or reliability data. However, the materials were presented to a group of knowledgeable peers and faculty who examined the materials, and as a whole, the measures appeared to be measure what they were designed to assess. This provided some face validity for the passage and questionnaire.

All participants read a passage that described a Friday night for a gender-neutral person and was written from the viewpoint of a narrator. The passage showed this person actively choosing to stay in and relax on a Friday night. For example, the person in the passage received an offer to attend a social event, and heard enjoyable music from a band close by, but decided to enjoy the night at home alone. Depending on the condition in which the participant was assigned, the person named in the passage was either 21 or 70 years old. Twenty-four participants saw the condition with the 21 year-old and sixteen participants saw the condition with the 70 year-old. (See Appendix B). The passage took participants roughly five to eight minutes to read, and participants were under the assumption that their memory of the passage was going to be tested after they finished reading it. For this reason, participants took more time than needed to read the passage in order to remember as much as possible.

The questionnaire started off with four comprehension questions that were directly related to what happened in the passage. These questions were answered in multiple-choice format, and included items such as: “what was the person in the passage was invited to do?” and “what beverage was the person drinking?” To check that the age manipulation worked, I

asked about the age of the person in the passage. Following those questions, the questionnaire had social acceptability statements. An example is a statement saying the person in the passage was being anti-social. These types of statements were answered in the form of a Likert-type scale, where participants were asked to state how much they agree with each statement (See Appendix C). In order to have accurate scores, I needed to reverse score one of the questions. These scores were added together in order to create a total social acceptability score for each participant. The total social acceptability score was what was used as the dependent variable in the One-way ANOVA.

As the purpose of these questions was to see if a participant perceived the character's actions differently based on the age of the character, the participants were not told that there were social acceptability questions in order to keep the study's deception intact. The deception was important because without it, the participants might have questioned why they were randomly being told the age of the person in the passage. After those four social acceptability questions, there were three demographic questions. One participant's data was excluded because the participant only answered the demographic questions. The only demographic criterion that was required to participate was being either an undergraduate or graduate college student. The demographic questions involved gender identity and how often they attend social events outside of school. This information was not analyzed, but it was mostly used to extend the questionnaire length in order to maintain deception of the study being about passage memory. The questionnaire took another 5 to 10 minutes if the participants truly thought about their answers carefully.

Results

This study explored whether there was a difference in what is socially acceptable for a 21-year-old and a 70-year-old to do on a Friday night. I hypothesized that participants would be more likely to expect a 70-year-old person to stay in on a Friday night than they would a 21-year-old. In other words, the participants who were answering social acceptability questions about the 21-year-old had total scores ($M=10.94$, $SD=2.03$; Range 5 to 15) similar to the participants who answered social acceptability questions about the 70-year-old ($M=10.97$, $SD=2.05$; Range 7 to 15). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated and the analysis revealed non-significant results, $F(1,38) = .002$, $p=.962$. The ANOVA showed that my data did not support my hypothesis. No support was found for the theory that the age of the person in the passage would highlight whether it is socially acceptable for the person to stay in on a Friday night.

Discussion

A one-way, between subjects ANOVA uncovered nonsignificant results for the difference in social acceptability for going out on a Friday night, between a twenty-one-year-old and a seventy-year-old. This suggests that college students believe it is equally acceptable for an older adult and a college-aged person to stay in on a Friday night.

It is difficult to compare the results of this study to the results of the previous literature because there are no other studies that looked at the same potential ageist belief that I studied. One way in which the present results match previous research is that differences in perceptions affected the participants' reports. The participants most likely had very different perceptions of how an older adult should act based on their individual involvement with this population of people. While this was not measured, no two people are going to have identical experiences with

older adults. In the past, support was found for the idea that differences in experiences with superficially similar people affected people's perceptions of those who are in the same superficial category of people (Lear et al., 2014). For example, if a person had a miserable customer service experience at a grocery store, their perception of the workers at that grocery store would be very different from someone who had a worker at that same grocery store help them find exactly what they wanted.

The participants in the current study highlighted this difference in prior experiences by how they answered my questionnaire. Specifically, the range of total social acceptability scores in my study for each condition was large, but the mean scores for both conditions were just below 11. If you selected the neutral option for every question your score would have been 12, so it is possible that the extreme experiences on both sides could have negated one another to result in nearly neutral means from both conditions. This certainly may have played a role in why my conditions were not significantly different. This is most likely due to the fact that everyone has a different perception of what a seventy-year-old and a twenty-one-year-old should be like. These differences in past experiences could have contributed to the total scores of the two conditions being so close together.

It is also possible that the total scores of the two conditions were similar because the participants wanted to stay neutral. I had five options on my Likert scale, which middle option that was neutral. Participants may not have wanted to make a decision either way and decided to just go with the option that did not make them commit to a side. They could have also not felt strongly enough about the questions as well. If they felt this way, it is likely because of the way I phrased the questions in the questionnaire. For example, the participants were asked what Taylor should do, and the participants might not have felt like Taylor had to do something either way.

Future research should consider using a 4-point Likert scale that forces participants to commit to one side or the other.

In contrast to previous literature that indicates that older adults could be affected by the negative perception that other people have of the older population (Vauclair, Lima, Abrams, Swift, & Bratt, 2016), the present results bring a little bit of good news for the image of older adults. This study's findings indicate that there is a nonsignificant difference for what is a socially acceptable Friday night between a young adult and an older adult. If this is true, it suggests that there are no social expectations based on age. This is an important finding because it could mean that ageism is becoming slightly less of a factor in today's society.

The exploration of age-related bias is important; anyone who keeps up with the news should know that there is an increased focus on social justice, but this seems to be focused on race and skin color (which separate groups will experience differently), whereas aging will affect everyone. Increasing awareness of ageism, even if it is just a little, is the biggest implication of this study. Older adults are potentially the most discriminated against category of people, because it is the form of discrimination that people are the least aware.

The initial purpose of this study was that revealing the true purpose of my study to participants during the debriefing made them think about the ways that we unknowingly put older adults at a disadvantage. The participants might have even self-reflected after being told what my study was truly about. They might have thought about how they answered the social acceptability questions and realized some underlying biases. However, what is encouraging is that participants did not see a difference for what is an acceptable way to spend a Friday night, regardless of age, to begin with. While this does not show that the participants did not have ageist beliefs overall, certainly is a promising start.

I personally believe that there is a perception that college students are *party animals*. There hasn't been any research done to find support for this theory, but the media often portrays college students as heavy partiers in movies and television shows. With this in mind, the average score for the college aged person condition was actually slightly higher than the average score for the older adult condition. This means that the participants found it slightly more socially acceptable for the 21-year-old to stay in on a Friday night, compared to older adults. Although this difference was not significant enough to be meaningful, this could be due to college students being students first, and only occasionally go out. This is potentially a result of the increasing difficulty of getting a good career. Because more schooling and experience is a requirement for most jobs, college students might focus more on their studies than in the past. The higher scores for the 21-year-old could also be due to the potentially changing way college students spend their Friday night. It is possible that college students just drink in a dorm room with a couple of friends instead of going out and partying.

This study was hindered by a number of limitations. The first limitation was that I was unable to find anyone else who had performed a similar study to mine in the past. While it is a good thing that I gathered information on an untouched subject, this meant that I did not have a source to advise me on how to avoid the same measurement or methodological errors they made. Since there was no inventory or scale that was already created regarding social acceptability based upon age, a unique passage and questionnaire was developed specifically for this study. Unfortunately, this measure only had face validity and therefore, cannot be assumed to be a true depiction of social acceptability. Within the design of this research, deception was used; participants were told that the study was about memory of a passage. In order to correspond with the deception, the age of the person was discretely embedded in the passage. It appears as though

the age was not obvious enough, as nearly a quarter of my participants incorrectly identified the person's age. If an age was not internalized, then it is possible that they answered the questions without reference to an age-related stereotype.

The final limitation my study had was a lack of participation. In order for this study to achieve adequate power, I included all participants in the current analysis, regardless of their answers on the questionnaire, and regardless of whether they correctly identified the age of the main character or not. Including all of the participants' data may have prevented this study from finding significant age-related differences.

A suggestion for future is to work the age of the person into the passage multiple times. The repetition of information will make the participants more likely to remember the age. By keeping the deception, participants should hopefully reread the passage, which would double the chances the participant has to see the age of the person in the passage. If something is mentioned twice, the participants might see it as important to remember for the future passage memory questions.

Additionally, a variation of this study should ideally open up the participant pool to all consenting adults. The present participant pool of college students could have had an impact on my results. Since they are currently close to or are age 21, they probably had their own biases of how they act, along with that of their friends. A way to hopefully counterbalance these biases is to include a broader range of participants. I would encourage other researchers to replicate or to do a similar study, because a modified version of this study could potentially find significant results. While significant results would indicate a disappointing view of older adults' social lives, identifying the problem is the first step of changing that perception. This particular study is not going to spike awareness substantially. That is why future researchers should continue to do

studies of this nature with a direct goal in mind. This could expose the biases that negatively impact older adults. If those biases are exposed, creating a better image of older adults will be an easier task.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

You are invited to be in a research study that looks at memory in college students. You have been selected as a possible participant because you are currently a college student pursuing a degree. We ask that you read this form before agreeing to be in this study.

This study is being conducted by Graeme Corrigan and supervised by Professor Amy Button. Alfred University, Alfred, NY 14802.

Background information

The current study will investigate memory of a passage. The passage will be about a person who is staying home on a Friday night.

Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, we ask that you fill out the following questionnaires in full and be forthright in your answers. On the pages that follow, you will find a passage about a person's Friday night and then a questionnaire that will ask questions about memory, and will also have questions about demographics and attitudes. Completion of the study is estimated to take approximately 15-20 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

While unlikely, it is possible that you may feel discomfort while reading the passage or answering some of the questions on the questionnaire. You are free to discontinue your participation at any time during the study simply by exiting the survey. In the unlikely event that this study causes mild distress, the researchers suggest that you consult with the Alfred University Wellness Center (607-871-2300) or another mental health service provider in your immediate vicinity. Participation in this study will help further research in memory and attitudes. Participants may also receive one credit for their introduction to psychology class.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. Records will be kept for at least three years after completion of the study, after which records may be destroyed at the discretion of the researcher.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Alfred University. If you decide to participate you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher conducting this study is Graeme Corrigan. If you have questions about your participation in this study that you would like to ask before participating, please exit this survey and contact the researcher electronically at gkc3@alfred.edu. You are also welcome to contact me after the completion of the study with any questions. You can also contact Professor Amy Button at button@alfred.edu. If you have any questions now, or later, related to the integrity of the research, (the rights of research subjects or research-related injuries, where applicable), you are encouraged to contact Dr. Steve Byrne, Chair of the Alfred University Human Subjects Research Committee, at (607) 871-2212 or electronically at HSRC@alfred.edu. In the case of significant distress, you are encouraged to contact the Alfred University Wellness Center at 607-871-2300 to set up a counseling appointment.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information. I consent to participate in the study.

Electronic Signature

Date

Completing for Introduction to psychology?

Please state the professor you're earning credit for:

Appendix B

Study Passage:

The timer goes off on the microwave. The hot water sits within, waiting to be made into hot chocolate. The crickets are chirping outside as the warm, sunny day gives way to a cool, breezy evening. Shuffling across the kitchen to tend to the hot chocolate, Taylor notices the date on the calendar and thinks, “Friday, July 17th already? I can’t believe it’s already been a full month since my 21st/70th birthday.” After pausing to reminisce, Taylor continues to prepare the hot chocolate, and then settles into the recliner with a book from a collection of untouched literature. After reading for about an hour, cheering from the window begins. Taylor assumes it is for the local artist, who is having a concert at the bar across the street. Taylor listens closer and proceeds to tap their foot to the beat and hum the lyrics. Being too distracted to continue reading, Taylor switches on the TV to a baseball game. Their favorite team isn’t playing tonight, but the close score keeps Taylor’s interest. Taylor’s phone starts ringing, so they take the call in a quieter room. The person calling is a friend, who wants Taylor to meet her at the movies with a couple of other friends. Taylor had decided to stay in, but thanks her for the offer. Taylor jokingly makes a comment about getting their life together and the conversation ends shortly after. Being pretty exhausted from the week, Taylor does a half-hearted attempt at some cleaning and then heads to bed. Taylor makes it through two episodes of a favorite show before falling asleep for the night.

Appendix C

Questionnaire:

Please answer these questions to the best of your memory.

1. What was the cheering about?
A. A baseball game B. A local music artist C. A birthday party D. Saturday night fun
2. How old is Taylor?
A. 16 B. 21 C. 30 D. 45 E. 59 F. 70
3. What kind of beverage did Taylor have?
A. Hot chocolate B. Coffee C. Beer D. Chai Tea E. Soda
4. What did Taylor's friend want to do?
A. Go to a local bar B. Go bowling C. Go to the movies D. Come over and watch a baseball game

Please indicate how much you agree with each statement: (1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Neutral 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree)

1. Taylor should have gone to the movies with friends:
1 2 3 4 5
2. Taylor was being anti-social:
1 2 3 4 5
3. Taylor would've enjoyed going to the local artist's concert:
1 2 3 4 5
4. Reading a book on a Friday night is a good activity for Taylor:
1 2 3 4 5

Please answer these demographic questions about yourself.

1. What year in school are you?
A. First Year B. Second Year C. Third Year D. Fourth Year
E. Graduate School

2. To which gender identity do you most identify with?
A. Male B. Female C. Transgender Female D. Transgender Male E. Gender Variant/Non-conforming F. Other: _____

3. How often do you go out? (Meaning: How often do you attend social events outside of your home?)
A. Almost Never B. Once a Month C. Twice a Month D. Once a Week
E. Twice a Week F. Three or more times a week

Appendix D

Debriefing for the study entitled A Quiet Friday Night

Thank you for your participation in this study. The goal of the experiment is to see if there is a difference in social acceptance for staying in on a Friday night based on age. I hypothesized that it would be less acceptable for a 21 year old to stay in, but that it would be expected that the 70 year old would stay in. In the study you read a passage about a person named Taylor. Depending on the condition of the study you were in, Taylor had either recently turned 21 or 70 years old. I wanted to see if there was a significant difference in the way people answered the social acceptability questions between the two conditions. In order to do this, I had to use some deception to make you believe that I was testing your memory of the passage.

Your participation is greatly appreciated, and your data could possibly help reveal the ageism we as a society have against older adults. Advances in technology and medicine have resulted in an increase of healthy older adults. The idea that older adults just sit home all the time is an outdated way of thinking. Older adults today, and specifically the young-old, are active. It is important to identify these biases we have, in order to create a more equal country for all ages to live in.

Names of participants will be deleted as soon as the data is entered and any identifying information will be filed in a password-protected computer. Due to the nature of the study, I do not expect there to be any negative impact greater than everyday life provides. Although this study is believed to be of minimal risk, we do urge you to contact us if you experienced any distress during the study, or if you have questions. You can reach me through email at gkc3@alfred.edu. You can also reach my faculty supervisor at button@alfred.edu. If you have any questions now, or later, related to the integrity of the research, (the rights of research subjects or research-related injuries, where applicable), you are encouraged to contact Dr. Steve Byrne, Chair of the Alfred University Human Subjects Research Committee, at (607) 871-2212 or electronically at HSRC@alfred.edu. Finally, if the study was significantly distressing, I urge you to contact the Alfred University Wellness Center at 607-871-2300 to set up a counseling appointment.

I ask that you do not discuss the study with anyone because they might be future participants. In order for the study to not be severely confounded, the participants cannot know the true purpose of the study prior to participating. In the case that you completed this study for your introduction to psychology class, I will contact your professor to make sure you receive 1 research credit. I would once again like to thank you for your cooperation and your participation!

Poster Presented at Undergraduate Research Forum:



A Quiet Friday Night

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Introduction

- Hypothesis: college-aged persons would expect a quiet Friday night, but research would find unexpected social lives.
- Alfred High Potential Institute is about to conduct a study:
 - Older adults should be viewed as positive and active in their lives.
 - Loi-Yang (2004)
 - 50% of older adults plan to travel in the year ahead (2 years old) (Nannam, J. V., & Sauter-Schatz, 2014)
- Difference in expectations could be due to obstacles:
 - Isolation and a lack of low equality of life for MCHG (Lay, 2013)
 - Lower equality could lead to a need for a social opportunity

Method

- 40 Undergraduate students ranging from 1st year to 4th year at Alfred University
- Recruited through sign-up sheets posted in the Science Center
- Participants read a passage about a person's Friday night, where the person decided to stay at home
- Memory of the passage was tested via reception
- Depending on the condition, the person in the passage was either 1st or 20 years old
- Social acceptability questions were asked to determine whether there was a difference in expectations for the Friday night of the 1 year old and the 20 year old

Passage (Memory will be tested, so make sure you read it completely)

The time got up on the morning. The hot water was running, waiting to be made into hot chocolate. The clothes were drying outside in the warm, sunny, dry grass way to good-bye evening. She was sitting on the bed, looking at the clock. Taylor had to get up for her 7th birthday. After reading to her, Taylor continued to prepare the hot chocolate, and then sat in the kitchen with a book from a collection of unwatched literature. After reading for about an hour, she got up from the window ledge. Taylor assumed it was for the local area, who is having a concert at the bar across the street. Taylor listens closer and proceeds to her foot to the beat and turn the music. Being too distracted to continue reading, Taylor switches on the TV to a baseball game. Their home team isn't playing tonight, but the score says Taylor's team. Taylor's parents were sitting at the movies with a couple of their friends. Taylor had decided to stay in but Taylor to meet her at the movies. Taylor plays a comment about getting their life together and the conversation ends stony after. Being pretty exhausted from the week, Taylor does a half-hearted attempt at some cleaning and her heads to bed. Taylor makes it through two episodes of a favorite show before being asleep for the night.

Please indicate how much you agree with each statement:
(1-Strongly Disagree 2-Disagree 3-Neutral 4-Agree 5-Strongly Agree)

Taylor should have gone to the movies with friends:	1	2	3	4	5
Taylor was being anti-social:	1	2	3	4	5
Taylor would've enjoyed going to the local artist's concert:	1	2	3	4	5
Reading a book on a Friday night is a good activity for Taylor:	1	2	3	4	5

Results

- Data was analyzed using a One-Way Between Subjects ANOVA
- Non-significant difference in social acceptability questions out between the college student and the older adult in the eyes of the college students ($F(1,38) = 0.002, p = .962$)

21 Year Old Condition



70 Year Old Condition



Discussion

- Findings did not support the hypothesis
- Total score in mean for social acceptability questions between conditions were within 10% of each other
- Not all participants correctly identified the age of the person in the passage
- Strengths:
 - Adequate power as a check over a short period of time
 - Research was able to be actively conducted
- Should not discount our research that attempts to increase awareness of potential ageists in the field
- Health of older adults means we have a lot to learn and change our way of thinking