



Students' Thoughts and Attitudes Regarding Seniors (STARS)

Jessica Damanski, TCNJ Biology Major 2024; Connie Kartoz, RN, PhD, Associate Professor
The College of New Jersey

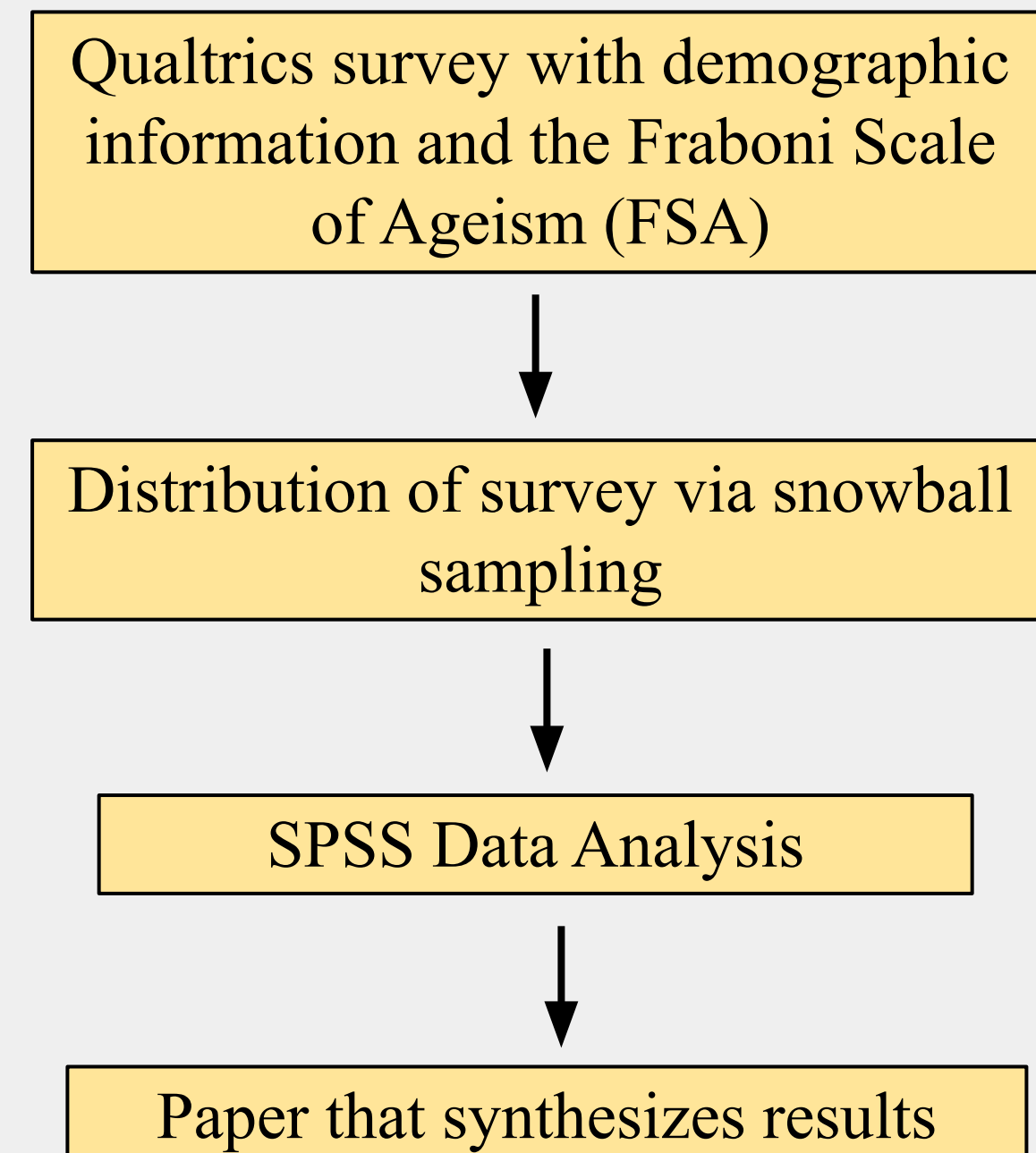
Introduction

- The United Nations reports that nearly every country globally is experiencing growth in the size and proportion of the population of older adults. By 2050, the global population of adults over the age of 65 will double from the current 703 million to 1.5 billion (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2019).
- With the population of older adults growing at an unprecedented rate, challenges are emerging, including ageism. A term coined in 1968, scholars define ageism in several different ways. The World Health Organization describes the phenomenon as “the stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age” (World Health Organization). Like racism and sexism, ageist attitudes can exist unconsciously and afflict both the young and old (Lesser 2012).
- Despite the wealth of literature on ageism in undergraduate students, there is not much known about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their attitudes towards older adults.

Objectives

1. Assess attitudes of undergraduate students towards older adults
2. Analyze correlations between participants' degree of ageism and their race, gender, and level of contact with older adults
3. Use results to better understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted undergraduate students' attitudes towards seniors

Methods



Results

- Average respondent: Caucasian 19-year old female who had regular contact with two or three of her grandparents during her childhood

Variable	Mean FSA Score*
Gender	Female: 55.94 Male: 54.33
Race	Caucasian: 54.80 Non-Caucasian: 57.12
Grandparents (ages 5-13)	Low contact ¹ : 55.86 High contact ² : 55.55
Grandparents (ages 14-18)	Low contact ¹ : 55.78 High contact ² : 55.57
Current contact with older adults	Low contact ³ : 56.31 High contact ⁴ : 54.50

*Mean values reported, p values and t test values not reported because the sample was nonrandom

¹Contact with 0-2 grandparents 4+ times per year

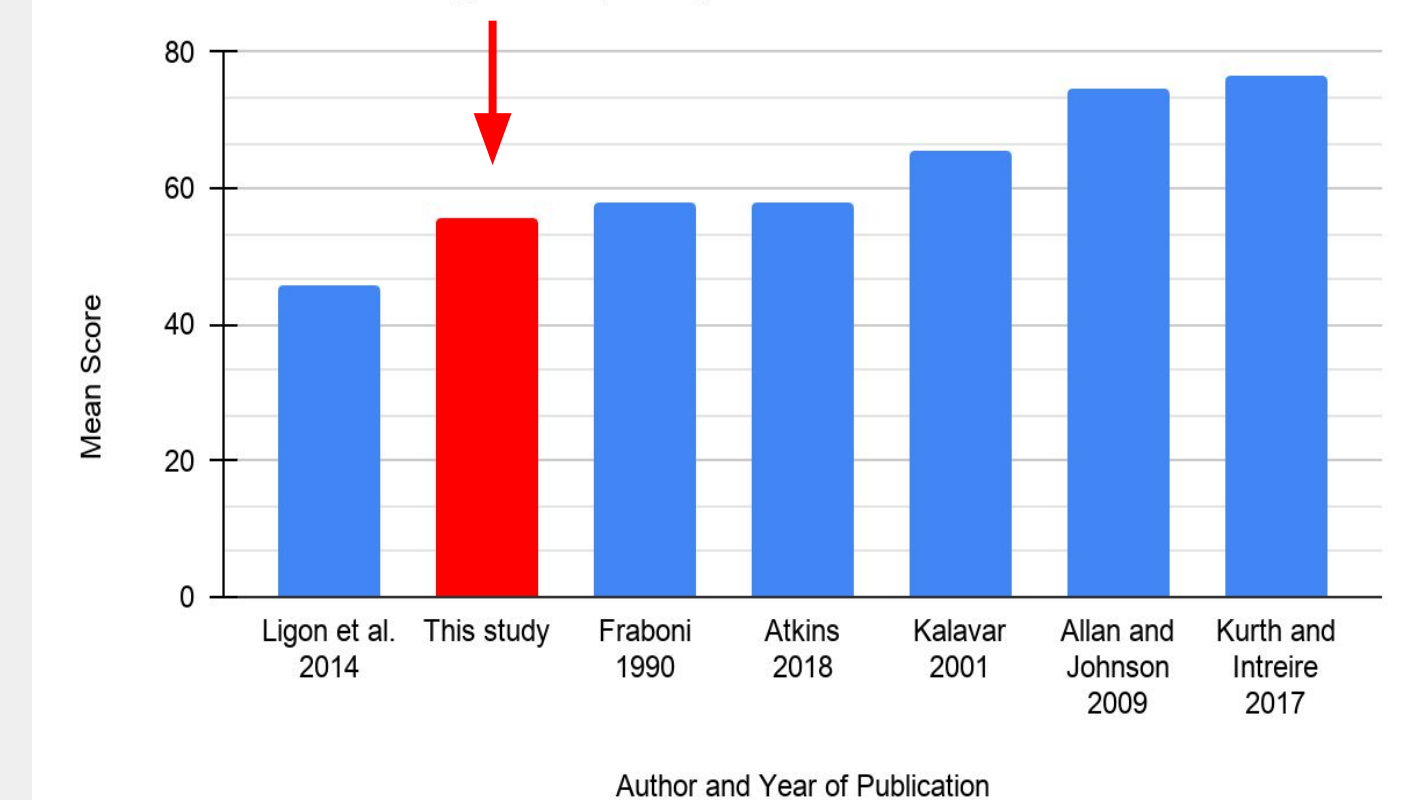
²Contact with 3-5+ grandparents 4+ times per year

³Contact with 0-3 older adults 4+ times per year

⁴Contact with 4+ older adults 4+ times per year

- Correlation between what age students consider adults to be old and FSA score ($r=-0.305$)

Fraboni Scale of Ageism (FSA) Scores



Discussion

- Lack of correlation between demographic information and FSA score contradicts published literature
- Low mean score does not support suspicion that the pandemic has caused a surge in ageism
 - Limitations
 - Nonrandom sample
 - FSA does not account for benevolent ageism
- Future studies could repeat the study with a larger and randomized sample and use a scale that assesses both types of ageism

References

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