

Age Discrimination at Workplace: A Study of Service Sector Organizations in Nepal

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Abstract

Background: Workplace age discrimination has been recognized globally as a significant issue, leading to negative outcomes for employees, employers, and their relationships. While management practices and positive organizational cultures can mitigate ageism, it remains an under-researched area in Nepal. Unlike gender or caste-based discrimination, ageism in Nepalese workplaces is rarely acknowledged, with limited understanding of its prevalence, forms, and impacts.

Objectives: The primary purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between selected factors (inter-generational contact, worker bias, job-age stereotypes and attitude towards elderly) and age discrimination in Nepalese service sector organization context.

Methods: The study uses a quantitative approach with descriptive, correlational, and causal-comparative methods to analyze factors influencing age discrimination in Nepal's service sector. Convenience sampling was used to collect 200 samples from service sector organizations within Kathmandu valley. Structured questionnaires were used to collect study data. The data collection period was September to November 2024.

Results: The regression analysis revealed an R^2 value of 0.267, indicating that 26.7% of variation in age discrimination is explained by the independent variables taken in the study. The model's statistical significance ($p < 0.01$) confirms that at least one beta coefficient is non-zero. Additionally, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all independent variables are below 2, confirming the absence of multicollinearity and validating the suitability of these variables for regression analysis.

Conclusion: The result of the study revealed that worker bias and job-age stereotypes have significant influence on age discrimination. Therefore, organizations have to provide more emphasis on these two variables in order to reduce age discrimination problems.

Keywords: Age discrimination, inter-generational contact, job-age stereotype, workplace bias

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Introduction

Age discrimination refers to the act of making judgments and treating individuals or groups unfairly based on their age. It can occur in various settings, such as workplaces, shopping, and medical procedures. Age prejudice or ageism is a negative attitude or disposition toward aging and older people based on the belief that aging makes people unattractive, unintelligent, asexual, unemployable, mentally incompetent, which are more exaggerations about the older person (Atchley, 1997). Ageism is a set of beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values used to justify prejudice and subordination, particularly felt by seniors. Workplace age discrimination, also referred to as ageism, involves employees being disadvantaged or treated unfairly on the basis of their age or membership in a certain age group (Posthuma et al., 2012). Workplace age discrimination is comparable to other types of workplace discrimination, such as sexism and racism, in that it is largely based on people's prejudices and perceptions of particular social groups (such as younger or older employees). Unlike racism and sexism, age discrimination affects almost everyone at some phase in their lives, but other social aspects are less permeable. Surprisingly, researchers have paid less attention to workplace age discrimination than sexism and racism so far.

Research shows that younger employees tend to have fewer positive beliefs about older employees than older employees (Hassell & Perrewé, 1995). As a result, favorable perceptions of older workers appear to grow with employee age. Interestingly, the same research found that older supervisors tend to hold more negative views of older employees compared to their younger counterparts. This observation is linked to the older supervisors' desire to distinguish themselves from the group of "older employees.". A meta-analysis of studies using simulated employment contexts found that younger raters gave less favorable ratings to older employees when they did not receive job relevant information and had to rate older and younger employees at the same time (Finkelstein et al., 1995). Negative age stereotypes are one of the main causes of age discrimination in the workplace. Age stereotypes are unfounded judgments and generalizations about workers based on their age, without credible evidence to support them.

A considerable amount of empirical research has shown that unfounded negative stereotypes about older employees are highly prevalent in many work situations, and that they tend to be similar among women and men (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). For example, older employees are mostly seen as less motivated and flexible than younger employees. Even though the most salient stereotypes about older employees are negative, research has also shown that attitudes and beliefs about older employees are multidimensional, such that older employees are perceived negatively about some characteristics and positively about other characteristics (Bal et al., 2011). Workplace age discrimination can result in negative outcomes for both employee and their employers, as well as the employee–employer relationship (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Finally, research has shown that certain management practices and a positive organizational age culture may reduce the occurrence of age discrimination in work settings to some extent (Zacher & Gielnik, 2014). Thus, there is a nexus between the work environment and the retention of employees (Dhakal et al., 2024).

In the context of Nepal, age discrimination has not yet been widely recognized or addressed as a significant discriminatory factor, particularly in workplace settings. Unlike more prominently discussed issues such as gender or caste-based discrimination, ageism remains an under-researched and overlooked area in Nepalese society. There is a lack of awareness and acknowledgment of how age-based stereotypes and prejudices impact individuals, especially in professional environments. Despite the global recognition of age discrimination as a critical issue, Nepal has seen minimal academic or policy-focused research on this topic. As a result, there is limited understanding of the prevalence, forms, and consequences of ageism in Nepalese workplaces, highlighting a critical gap that needs to be explored to foster inclusivity and equity in the country's service sector and beyond. In this scenario, the statement of the problem of this study was: Does the relationship between selected factors (inter-generational contact, worker bias,

job-age stereotypes and attitude towards elderly) and age discrimination in Nepalese service sector organization context?

This study focuses on identifying the major factors contributing to age discrimination in Nepal's service sector workplaces. It aims to explore the current state of ageism, understand employees' experiences of perceived discrimination, and analyze the impact of specific factors such as organizational policies and cultural attitudes. Additionally, the study seeks to determine the most significant factors driving age discrimination and establish their relationship with workplace practices. In this connection, the primary purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between selected factors (inter-generational contact, worker bias, job-age stereotypes and attitude towards elderly) and age discrimination in Nepalese service sector organization context.

The study found that worker bias and job-age stereotypes have significant influence on age discrimination. Therefore, organizations have to provide more emphasis on these two variables in order to reduce age discrimination problems.

This study is organized into five sections. The first section outlines the background, objectives, problem statement, rationale, and significance of the study. The second section presents a review of relevant literature, identifying gaps that inform the study's hypotheses. The third section describes the research methodology, including population, sample size, and procedures. The fourth section presents and discusses the findings. Finally, the fifth section provides the conclusion and recommendations.

Review of Literature

Age bias in the workplace is a critical area of research in organizational studies. Numerous theories have been developed to explain the underlying motivations for age-based discrimination in employment settings. To strengthen the theoretical foundation of this study, the first section examines key conceptual frameworks, followed by a review of empirical research.

Several major theories proposed by scholars across different regions provide insight into this phenomenon. These are discussed below.

Terror Management Theory (TMT) by Greenberg et al. (1986), posits that the fear of death leads individuals to uphold cultural beliefs and self-esteem as a defense mechanism. Older adults often serve as reminders of mortality, triggering unconscious anxiety and resulting in age-based biases. This can be seen in workplace preferences for younger employees, media glorification of youth, and broader social distancing from aging populations.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), explains how group membership shapes self-concept and intergroup behavior. People divide themselves and others into groups (e.g., age, gender), favor their own group, and may discriminate against out-groups. SIT helps explain age discrimination by showing how society categorizes people as "young" or "old," with younger individuals often viewed as more capable, leading to discrimination against older individuals. These stereotypes are reinforced by media and workplace policies, marginalizing older people.

Implicit Bias Theory developed by Greenwald et al. (1998), explains how unconscious attitudes and stereotypes affect decisions and behavior. These automatic biases, shaped by cultural and personal factors, influence areas like hiring, healthcare, and social interactions. For example, managers may unconsciously favor younger workers, and doctors may underestimate older patients' recovery potential. Implicit biases can be measured through tools like the Implicit Association Test and can be addressed through awareness, blind hiring practices, and inter-generational interactions (Nelson, 2024).

The empirical studies have been continued by different scholars in different parts of the world to date

2025. Some major studies related to the study have been explained as follows.

Iverson and Pullman (2000) conducted a study on older hospital employees to determine why they were being let go of the hospital. The study found that older employees who worked full-time were the most likely to be downsized. The main reason for their elimination was not their work performance, but rather the cost and the belief that older workers have a negative impact on the organization's finances. Given the increasing number of older individuals still working, it is important to recognize the discrimination against these workers in our society.

Kunze et al. (2010) analyzed that the emergence of perceived age discrimination climate on the company level and its performance consequences. This study examines the effects of age diversity in organizations using data from 8,651 employees across 128 companies. The analysis with Structural Equation Modeling showed that more age diversity is linked to higher perceptions of age discrimination. This sense of discrimination was found to harm company performance, with employee commitment acting as a mediating factor.

Furunes et al. (2010) explored that the age discrimination at workplace and his report shows an increase in perceived age discrimination among older employees. A self-report questionnaire was given to a random sample of 2,653 primary and secondary school teachers in Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Responses were measured using a Likert scale to assess agreement levels. Correlation analyses were done to examine the relationships between variables. The study showed that age discrimination continues to be a common problem in the workplace, affecting various stages of employment, such as recruitment and professional development.

James et al. (2012) conducted a study to explore how employee perceptions of unfair treatment towards older workers relate to their level of engagement at work. The study aimed to understand the impact of job quality on employee engagement in different groups of workers at a retail organization called "Citi Sales". The relationship between perception that older workers are likely to be promoted was tested among samples of 4,500 workers ranging from 18 to 94 years, employed in retail sector across three regions in the USA. They used linear regression, and participants were requested to rate on a five-point Likert scale. The data was analyzed using standard regression techniques, mean values, and standard deviations. Result shows that negative age-related perceptions can lead to lower levels of commitment to the organization, which is one aspect of employee engagement.

Solem (2015) asserted that ageism and age discrimination in working life. The author explores the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of ageism in working life in Norway. The study has used correlation and logistic regression analysis with various study variables. The study reveals that managerial views of workers over 50 are mostly positive. Many see their performance as similar to or even better than that of younger employees. However, bias still exists. Hiring managers often hesitate to interview applicants in their late fifties. This shows a gap between what they say and how they actually recruit.

Bodunrin (2018) analyzed that the discouraging ageism at workplace. This study looks at how age discrimination impacts job demotions and perceptions of ability among older adults. Using questionnaire data from elderly residents in Lagos, Nigeria, including veterans and retirees in senior care facilities, the research found that 95% of respondents felt marginalized and lost dignity because of age-related discrimination in various areas of life, even after retirement.

Yeung et al. (2021) conducted a study to examine how perceived age discrimination (PAD) affects work-related outcomes through job resources and demands. Using an online survey of 333 Chinese employees, the researchers measured workplace age discrimination, job resources and demands, work engagement, intention to stay, and work strain, followed by mediation analysis. The results indicated that PAD was associated with fewer job resources and greater job demands. Importantly, the study found that support

from supervisors and coworkers helped mitigate the negative effects of PAD on both work engagement and employees' intention to remain with the organization. These findings emphasize the importance of social support in the workplace to lessen the harmful effects of age discrimination.

Beier (2022) reviewed the psychological literature on age stereotypes and their effects in the workplace. Both implicit and explicit biases against older workers were shown to limit access to training and advancement. These biases contribute to turnover and lower productivity. The review also highlighted successful inclusion strategies, such as intergenerational mentoring. The findings offer a framework for reducing ageism through organizational policy.

Lagace et al. (2023) analyzed that inter-generational relationships and knowledge-sharing initiatives can lessen ageism in the workplace and age-based prejudice against members of one's own group. Survey was done among 500 Canadian younger and older workers. The model suggests that knowledge sharing practices mediate the relationship between intergroup contacts, older worker perceptions, and age-based discrimination, thereby enhancing employees' intentions and work engagement.

Batinovic et al. (2023) found that older candidates received significantly fewer interview callbacks than younger ones. This trend was consistent across various countries and industries. The study highlights that even well-qualified older applicants are disadvantaged. It calls for interventions to reduce bias during recruitment processes.

Waligóra (2024) investigated how age diversity climate affects employees' connection to their organization. Employees who felt valued regardless of age were more loyal and motivated. In contrast, those who perceived age discrimination were more likely to feel alienated. This study emphasizes the importance of inclusive leadership and HR practices. Promoting fair treatment enhances organizational identification and reduces turnover.

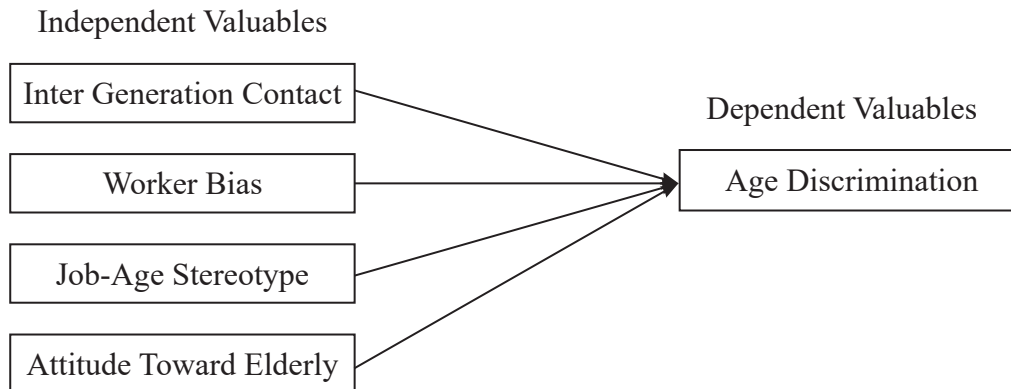
Wu et al. (2025) reviewed research on how ageism and intergenerational relationships shape workplace environments. They found that organizations with supportive intergenerational climates experienced lower levels of age-based bias. Ageism often intersects gender and other factors, worsening discrimination. Promoting collaboration between age groups helps reduce stereotypes. Their study supports inclusive HR practices to enhance sustainability and fairness.

While there is a growing body of literature on age discrimination in various global contexts, limited research has specifically addressed the factors contributing to ageism within Nepal's service sector workplaces. The current understanding of the relationship between organizational policies, cultural attitudes, and age-related discrimination remains under-explored in the context of Nepal. Additionally, while studies have focused on age discrimination in general, few have examined the lived experiences of employees within Nepalese organizations, particularly how perceived discrimination influences workplace dynamics and practices. This study seeks to fill this gap by identifying the specific factors contributing to age discrimination in Nepal's service sector and exploring their impact on workplace culture and practices, thereby providing actionable insights for fostering inclusivity.

Based on various past empirical literature, the conceptual framework on age discrimination in service sector organization in Nepal consists of four independent variables i.e., inter-generational contact, older worker bias, attitude toward elderly and Job-age stereotype.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Materials and Methods

This study includes 20 service sector organizations operating in Nepal, which were purposively selected as the target sample. Only service sector organizations were included to ensure alignment with the study's objective of analyzing age discrimination in professional service environments. The respondents comprised employees from various organizational levels, including junior staff, assistants, officers, managers, senior managers, managing directors, and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs).

For data collection, a non-probability sampling technique - convenience sampling was employed due to its practical advantages and accessibility. This study was conducted over a period of three months. The data were collected from September to November 2024.

The research applied a combination of descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and causal-comparative research design to explore the relationships among factors influencing age discrimination in Nepalese service organizations.

A structured questionnaire was developed to gather information on various factors contributing to workplace ageism. The questionnaire was adopted from the research of Tuckman and Lorge (1953), Iweins et al. (2013), Posthuma et al. (2012), and Wise and Uzel (2021). The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. The first section collected demographic information, including respondents' age, education level, and corporate position. These data were primarily used for descriptive analysis. The second section focused on the key study variables. The dependent variable, age discrimination, was measured using 6 statements. The independent variables included inter-generational contact (measured by 5 statements), worker bias (8 statements), job-age stereotypes (7 statements) and attitude toward the elderly (8 statements). Each item was measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Participants' agreement levels with these statements reflected their perceptions of each measured concept (Lagace et al., 2023).

The Model

The following model has been employed to determine the age discrimination in context of service sector organization in Kathmandu valley.

$$AD = \beta_0 + \beta_1IC + \beta_2WB + \beta_3JA + \beta_4ATE + et$$

Where,

AD = Age Discrimination

β_0 = Constant term

β_1 to β_4 = Coefficient of Variables

IC= Inter-generation Contact

WB = Worker Bias

JA = Job-Age Stereotypes

ATE = Attitude Toward Elderly

et = error terms

Variables and Hypothesis

Study has selected age discrimination as the dependent variable and has taken inter-generational contact, worker bias, job-age stereotypes and attitude toward elderly as independent variables. The following sections provide explanations of the study's measurements and hypotheses.

Dependent Variable

Age Discrimination

Age discrimination is the act of treating someone unfavorably because of their age, and it is a significant problem that affects the self-esteem and overall well-being of individuals. It is essential for society to work towards eliminating age discrimination and changing our negative perceptions of aging. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, including Iverson and Pullman (2000), Kunze et al. (2010), Posthuma et al. (2012), Fineman (2014), and Legace et al. (2023).

Independent Variables

The study also has been taken Inter-generational contact, worker bias, job-age stereotype, attitude toward elderly as independent variables. Independent variables of the study have been described as follows.

Inter-generational Contact

Inter-generational contact is commonly referred to as positive social interactions between younger and older adults. Extensive research has examined how high-quality intergenerational contact influences workplace relations and employee attitudes across age groups. Lagace et al. (2023) proposed a model demonstrating that inter-generational relationships and knowledge-sharing can reduce workplace ageism. The result suggests that knowledge sharing practices can mitigate the impact of age-based discrimination on older workers, thereby boosting their intentions and work engagement. Other studies in support are Brubaker(1999), Wise et al. (2021).

H1: There is a negative relationship between inter-generational contact and age discrimination

Worker Bias

Worker bias presents a significant challenge, often hindering employees from achieving their professional aspirations or forcing them out of the workforce prematurely. Consequently, organizations deprive themselves of accessing skilled and experienced professionals. Such bias frequently manifests in assumptions like employers believing mature workers will demand excessive compensation. "If you are an employer who won't interview older people because you don't think they will accept the pay, then you don't change your view," says Cappelli. Axelrad et al. (2023) explores the prevalence of negative and ambivalent age-based stereotypes in organizations. It finds that managers often hold ambivalent stereotypes about older workers, with positive perceptions of their personal attributes and negative perceptions of their employability. However, these stereotypes decline with increased intergroup contact and accountability triggers. Supporting studies include those by Cappelli and Novelli (2010) and Bidwell et al. (2013).

H2: *There is a positive relationship between worker bias and age discrimination.*

Job-Age Stereotype

Job-age stereotype is an assumption in which particular age group is related to the particular job. Generally, people assume that an entry level job is appropriate for the young age group employees, and a decision level job is appropriate to older employees. In many countries especially in developing countries like Nepal and India, there is age norm that governs the job type. For example, in banking sector of Nepal, vacancy announcement for junior assistant is given with age limit (age not exceeding 28 can apply). Rosen et al. (1976) examines the impact of age stereotypes on 142 business undergraduates' managerial decisions, finding that these stereotypes lead to discrimination against older employees. The findings suggest organizational changes to accommodate the unique needs of older workers. Other supporting studies include Finkelstein et al. (2015), Posthuma et al. (2009), and Posthuma et al. (2012).

H3: *There is a positive relationship between Job-age stereotype and age discrimination.*

Attitude Toward Elderly

People's attitude toward elderly people also determines their level of discrimination on the basis of age. If people are good toward the elderly, love to talk with them and help them across street, it is perceived that their attitude is good toward elderly and does not contribute to age discrimination. On the contrary, if people avoid old people assuming they are cranky and worthless, assume older people have bad health and less potential for development, such people may contribute to the age discrimination at workplace. Schwartz et al. (2001) investigated the relationship between young adults' contact with older adults and their attitudes towards the elderly. It hypothesized that self-reported quality of contact with older individuals was related to attitudes, while frequency of contact had no effect. Results showed that favorable quality of contact significantly influenced attitudes. Other supporting studies include Drury (Ed., 1993) and Murphy-Russell (1986).

H4: *There is a positive relationship between a bad attitude toward elderly and age discrimination.*

Results and Discussion

The profile of respondents is presented in Table 1. The majority of respondents (i.e.55%) are male, with 110 males and 90 females. Most respondents (i.e. 49.5%) are aged 26-35, followed by under 25, 36-45 (i.e.16%), and above 45 (i.e.10%). In terms of education, 55.5% hold a master's or PhD, 37.5 percent have a bachelor's degree, and 7 percent are intermediate graduates. Regarding work experience, 38.5% have 2-5 years, 28% have under 2 years, 17.5% have 5-10 years, and 16% have over 10 years. By position, 40% are officers, 30% are teachers/professors, 17.5% are managers, and 12.5% are executives.

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents

Respondents Character	No. of Responses	Percentage
Gender		
Male	110	55
Female	90	45
Total	200	100
Education		
Undergraduate	14	7
Graduate	75	37.5

Master's and above	111	55.5
Total	200	100
Experience		
Below 2 years	56	28
2 to 5 years	77	38.5
5 to 10 years	35	17.5
Above 10 years	32	16
Total	200	100
Designation		
Officers	80	40
Managers	35	17.5
Executive	25	12.5
Others	60	30
Total	200	100

The descriptive statistics summary has been presented in Table 1. The study sought to determine the average score of all independent and dependent variables and to identify the deviation in the opinion of respondent with relation to each statement.

Table 2 depicts the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha for all the variables. Cronbach's alpha was employed to measure the reliability and internal consistency of the survey items across all constructs, ensuring the validity of the results drawn from the data.

Table 2

Coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
Age Discrimination	0.709	6
Intergenerational Contact	0.640	4
Worker Bias	0.765	8
Job-Age Stereotype	0.707	7
Attitude Toward Elderly	0.643	7
Overall	0.822	33

The reliability and validity result in table 2 shows that the instrument was both reliable and valid with Cronbach's alpha of 0.822 percent. There is no restriction to go further test.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD
IC	1.750	5.000	3.946	0.571
WB	1.750	4.630	3.092	0.650
JA	2.290	4.710	3.596	0.468
ATE	1.860	4.430	3.198	0.536
AD	1.500	4.830	3.736	0.540

Note. Field survey, 2024.

The mean scores of these variables were calculated using 5-point likert scale of 1 to 5 for which 1

represents Strongly Disagree and 5 represent Strongly Agree. The highest mean score was 3.946 for inter-generational contact and likewise, the lowest was 3.092 for worker bias. The variable Job- age stereotype has the lowest value of standard deviation of 0.468 and at the same time, variable worker bias has the highest standard deviation with the value 0.650. The findings in Table 3 indicate that inter-generational contact has greater impact on age discrimination followed by Job-age stereotypes, attitude toward elderly, and worker bias respectively.

The Pearson correlation coefficient of study variable is presented in Table 4. Age discrimination was dependent variable inter-generational contact, worker bias, job-age stereotype and attitude towards elderly were independent variables.

Table 4

Person's Correlation among Study Variables

Variables	IC	WB	JA	ATE	AD
IC	1				
WB	0.061	1			
JA	0.005	0.323**	1		
ATE	0.301**	0.389**	0.131	1	
AD	0.132	0.279**	0.344**	0.157*	1

N=200; Correlation is significant at ** $p < 0.01$ and * $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed)

Table 4 depicts the correlation matrix among the variables used in this study. The above correlation matrix shows that age discrimination is positively associated with inter-generational contact, worker bias, job-age stereotypes and attitude toward elderly as the p-value of all the independent variables is less than 0.05 (i.e. $p < 0.05$). Generally, for absolute Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r), 0-0.39 is regarded as weak correlation, 0.4-0.59 is regarded as moderate correlation and 0.6-1 is regarded as strong correlation (Cohen, 1988). The output as above clarifies that there exists a moderate and weak correlation between the mentioned variables for this study. The attitude toward elderly and age discrimination has a weak magnitude of association with their respective correlation value being 0.301.

Table 5 has been presented with regression analysis of study variables. The regression model coefficients results show the significance of each independent variable on the respective dependent variables.

The R-squared value of 0.267 indicates that approximately 26.7% of the variation in the dependent variable, i.e., age discrimination is explained by the independent variables included in the model. The F-statistics of 9.576 with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) implies that the overall regression model is statistically significant, which means combination of independent variables significantly predicts the dependent variable.

According to the results shown in the table, two independent variables i.e., worker bias and job-age stereotypes have significant impact on age discrimination because the p-value of those independent variables is below 0.05. While the p-value of inter-generational contact and attitude toward the elderly is greater than 0.05, indicating that it does not significantly affect dependent variable i.e. age discrimination.

Table 5*Regression Coefficients of Study Variables*

Variables	Coefficients	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Collinearity Statistics	
					Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	1.646	0.391	4.208	0.000		
IC	0.127	0.077	1.661	0.098	0.906	1.104
WB	0.163	0.070	2.324	0.021	0.772	1.296
JA	0.288	0.070	4.118	0.000	0.896	1.117
ATE	0.018	0.075	0.242	0.809	0.772	1.296
R-Squared = 0.267, Adjusted R-Squared = 0.247, F-Statistics = 9.576, P-value = 0.000						

In addition to that, all the independent variables in this study have positive relationship with dependent variable which can be observed by looking at “Unstandardized Coefficient (B)” where all the values are positive and VIF of all independent variable is near to 1 which means there is no significant multicollinearity among the independent variables. Therefore, each independent variable provides unique and non-redundant information in explaining the dependent variable. Job-age stereotypes have the highest positive impact on age discrimination having the value equal to 0.288 followed by worker bias (0.163), attitude toward elderly (0.018) and inter-generational contact (0.127).

From the results of the study hypothesis summarized in Table 6, it reveals that hypothesis H2 and H3 were supported while hypothesis H1 and H4 were not supported. This Indicates that the two variables, worker bias and Job-age stereotype were more influential in age discrimination in the Nepalese service industry.

Table 6*Results of hypotheses*

Hypothesis	Expected Sign	Actual Sign	p-value	Measurements	Results
H1	-	+	.098	P-value > 0.05	Not Supported
H2	+	+	.021	P-value < 0.05	Supported
H3	+	+	.000	P-value < 0.05	Supported
H4	+	+	.809	P-value > 0.05	Not Supported

The results of the study are aligned with previous research, particularly regarding the impact of worker bias and job-age stereotypes on age discrimination. Iverson and Pullman (2000) highlighted that older workers are often downsized due to perceptions about their negative impact on the organization, which resonates with the significant effect of worker bias found in the study results. The findings from Rupp et al. (2006) suggest that managerial ageism leads to more severe recommendations for older employees, which parallels the influence of job-age stereotypes on age discrimination in study.

The weak impact of inter-generational contact and attitude toward the elderly in the study is also consistent with findings from Kunze et al. (2010), who showed that organizational-level perceptions of age discrimination negatively affect performance outcomes but may not directly relate to personal inter-generational relationships or attitudes. The moderate R-squared value in the study (26.7%) suggests that while these factors contribute to age discrimination, there are likely additional elements that influence the phenomenon, supporting the notion that age discrimination is complex and multifaceted, as highlighted in previous study of Wood et al. (2008).

Conclusion and Suggestions

Age discrimination in the workplace refers to unfair treatment in employment decisions based on a person's age. It typically affects older workers but can also impact younger employees, leading to biased outcomes in hiring, promotion, or termination.

The main purpose of the study is to identify major factors contributing to age discrimination at workplace in service sector organization. The study uses a quantitative approach with descriptive, correlational, and causal-comparative methods to analyze factors influencing age discrimination in service sector 200 organization within Kathmandu valley. Structured questionnaires were used to collect study data. The data collection period is September to November 2024. The findings indicate that all the independent variables (inter-generational contact, worker bias, job-age stereotypes and attitude toward the elderly) are positively associated with age discrimination. This is supported by the fact that all variables have positive unstandardized coefficients in the regression analysis, suggesting that increases in these factors are associated with increased levels of perceived age discrimination at the workplace. Job-age stereotypes have the highest impact on age discrimination, having the highest value of unstandardized coefficients which implies that it has the strongest impact on age discrimination compared to the other variables.

Since job-age stereotypes strongly influence age discrimination, organizations should implement training programs to challenge these biases and promote age diversity. Further, encouraging inter-generational contact can help reduce age bias, making it important to design team structures and roles that support age-diverse collaboration.

The result of the study revealed that worker bias and job-age stereotypes have significant influence on age discrimination. Therefore, organizations have to provide more emphasis on these two variables in order to reduce age discrimination problems.

Based on the conclusion of the study, policy makers and HR professionals in Nepal should take active steps to reduce age discrimination in the workplace. Policy makers should enforce clear anti-age discrimination laws, promote age-inclusive workforce policies, and mandate awareness training on age bias. HR professionals should ensure fair and age-neutral recruitment, provide equal development opportunities for all age groups, and regularly conduct sensitization programs to challenge job-age stereotypes and worker bias. Encouraging inter-generational collaboration and monitoring workplace attitudes can further support an inclusive environment where individuals are valued for their skills, not age.

Furthermore, this study is limited to service sector organizations with a small sample size. Future research can explore other sectors, including different variables, and use qualitative methods or advanced tools for further study.

Author contribution statement

Durga Sapkota: Data curation, review of literature, methodology, writing – original draft. **Bishnu Prasad Bhattarai:** Conceptualization, data analysis, writing, review and editing. All author(s) involved in addressing the comments, revision of the paper and finalization of manuscript.

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Declaration statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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