

Senior Entrepreneurship and Ageism in Postdigital Communication

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Abstract

This research examines how age-related prejudices and stereotypes influence the public image of senior entrepreneurship, taking into account the current digital media environment. Considering demographic aging, the post-digital social reality, and the growing number of entrepreneurs over 50 years of age, the research presented here addresses significant gaps identified in previous studies. Consequently, two main objectives are established: to map how international academic research on age discrimination in digital spaces has evolved and to determine the principal theoretical frameworks that shape contemporary discussion of senior entrepreneurship in audiovisual media. The methodological approach to achieving these objectives combines two strategies: a bibliometric study and a systematic review of academic sources. The findings reveal a significant increase in scientific publications related to age discrimination and stereotypes. This is a clearly growing trend of exponential nature. Furthermore, a convergence of this topic with rising interest in issues such as social integration, empowerment of seniors' personal capabilities, and greater visibility of historically excluded groups has been confirmed. The fundamental importance of digital platforms and social networks in transforming the media representation of senior entrepreneurs is also highlighted. Collectively, these findings underscore the need for a paradigm shift in the media representation of older adults and in their social perception.

Keywords: Ageism; Stereotypes; Senior Entrepreneurship; Audiovisual Communication

Contribution/Originality:

This study contributes to the existing literature by exploring how stereotypes and ageism can condition the public identity of senior entrepreneurship. It offers new perspectives on audiovisual communication theories and enhances understanding of the current state in digital contexts, providing actionable insights for overcoming ageist stereotypes.

1. Introduction

In a context of population ageing and changes in labour market dynamics, senior entrepreneurship represents a significant pathway for economic inclusion and the utilisation of accumulated human capital. However, the media representation of this group has received limited academic attention, despite its crucial influence on public perception and business opportunities ([1], [2]). The 2020 pandemic exacerbated this problem in audiovisual communication, as media coverage during this profound global crisis started to portray older people negatively and uniformly, an unfavourable representation that contributes to an image perpetuating their social exclusion.

Entrepreneurship is a multifaceted phenomenon [3] encompassing any attempt to create a new initiative, such as self-employment, a new business or social organisation, or the expansion of an existing company or organisation, undertaken by an individual, a team of individuals or an established firm, beyond people officially registered as self-employed.

Entrepreneurial activity can also be viewed from a behavioural perspective, for example by identifying employees within organisations who behave entrepreneurially (also known as intrapreneurship or corporate entrepreneurship). Individuals with entrepreneurial attitudes – current or potential – are identified, as are individuals who participate as owner-managers in established initiatives. Psychological factors – cognitive, behavioural and emotional – are common to both social and business entrepreneurship. With regard to senior entrepreneurship, Kautonen et al. [4] argue that entrepreneurship among people over the age of 50 contributes to economic sustainability while also providing significant psychosocial benefits for individuals.

Meanwhile, the existing literature in the field of audiovisual communication has shown that the media play an essential role in shaping public perceptions and defining social norms [5]. In the academic field, the audiovisual identity of senior entrepreneurship reflects an ever-growing interest in the integration of older people into the digital ecosystem [6].

Audiovisual communication has a significant impact on public perception and can influence attitudes and behaviours towards senior entrepreneurs [7]. Platforms such as television, film and social media have the power to shape social and economic narratives. However, the lack of visibility of senior entrepreneurs in these media contributes to a biased public perception that underestimates their contribution to economic and social development.

In this context, it is therefore relevant to examine the role of media narratives both in the perpetuation and in the questioning of the barriers faced by senior entrepreneurs, particularly in digital settings. The choice of this approach responds to the need to

understand how stereotypes and ageism shape the identity and social perception of senior entrepreneurship, particularly in an era in which digital visibility and legitimacy are decisive for active participation in the economy in a broad sense.

The research problem addressed focuses on the visibility of senior entrepreneurs in Spanish audiovisual communication. Both professional and academic spheres are calling for research and debate in light of the need for media action in response to the profound sociodemographic and economic changes resulting from demographic evolution and, consequently, increased longevity. The research is based on the recognition that audiovisual representation does not merely reflect social images and expectations concerning older people, but actively constructs and perpetuates them, directly influencing their ability to participate in entrepreneurial activities and to be recognised as agents of change.

To address the relationship between the perception of audiovisual identity and senior entrepreneurship, the terms 'ageism' and 'stereotypes' have been selected as key concepts. Ageism [8] is understood as discrimination based on age, while stereotypes, according to the Royal Spanish Academy (the institution responsible for regulating the Spanish language), are defined as images or ideas commonly accepted by a group or society and considered immutable, forming the core from which the construction and transmission of prejudice in the media are analysed.

Despite the frequent use of synonymous terms, this study uses the concept of 'stereotype' to avoid confusion with related notions such as 'archetype' or 'cliché'. This decision is grounded in the academic consideration of stereotypes as simplified and preconceived mental representations that individuals use to interpret a complex social reality [9], or as an exaggerated belief associated with a category, whose function is to justify (rationalise) the behaviour in relation to that group [10]. This highlights its interpretative depth in relation to the concept of archetype.

Table 1 Comparison of concepts

Concept	Definition	Distinctive features	Areas
Archetype	Original model that serves as a pattern to be imitated or reproduced; ideal representation of something.	Foundational, exemplary, structuring	Psychology, anthropology, narrative studies

Stereotype	Image or idea widely accepted by a group or society and regarded as fixed or unchanging.	Social simplification, rigidity, generalisation	Communication, sociology, cultural studies
Cliché	Expression, idea or image that is repeated so often that it has lost originality or expressive force.	Repetition, overuse, trivialisation	Discourse analysis, media studies

Source: author's own work, based on definitions by the Royal Spanish Academy.

This perspective makes it possible to analyse how ageist stereotypes influence audiovisual communication and, by extension, the social perception of this entrepreneurial population. Understanding the elements that determine this relationship is essential for addressing the complexity of this group's communicative identity and for consolidating an inclusive and realistic image of senior entrepreneurship.

2. Methodology

2.1. General and specific objectives

Consequently, this research asks how stereotypes and ageism can condition the public identity of senior entrepreneurship, and what factors may determine its representation in postdigital media communication.

This project has been designed with a view to bridging significant gaps in existing knowledge regarding entrepreneurship among people over the age of 50. Two secondary objectives were defined to achieve this main objective: first, to map the evolution of research on ageism in digital contexts; second, to anchor the review in current research debates through the identification of the key theories shaping the current state of senior entrepreneurship in contemporary audiovisual communication.

2.2. Research design

Given the broad scope of the object of study, a mixed methodological approach to information management was adopted, combining qualitative and quantitative methods in order to reach more comprehensive conclusions from the literature collected. The design consists of two phases: bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review. These methodologies document the persistence of ageist stereotypes, identify vectors of progress, and highlight unresolved gaps and promising avenues for future research and

social innovation. This advanced mixed approach is used by leading researchers worldwide to identify emerging trends in specific fields of knowledge.

The choice of bibliometric analysis is based on its capacity to identify evolutionary trends and discern themed clusters in academic discourse. This methodological approach makes it possible to map academic networks through an integrated representation of the interrelationships among publications, including co-authorship, themed affinities and co-citations. Using fundamental bibliometric indicators, such as co-authorship and co-citation structures, the evolution of knowledge in the field under study is analysed, making it possible to identify the most influential authors and the collaborative dynamics characterising the field [11]. One limitation of this methodology is that much knowledge remains excluded from the system, given the large number of submissions of varying relevance and quality sent to scientific journals. Academic theories and practices that have not been included in indexed journals are discarded, marginalised and treated in a clearly different manner [12]. The study integrates quantitative mapping (semantic clusters and keyword analysis) with a qualitative synthesis to bridge this gap in the literature.

The systematic review of the academic literature is an ideal methodology given its purpose of developing an understanding of the different axes and factors that chronologically shape the reality of the audiovisual identity of senior entrepreneurs. The systematic literature review process is a rigorous and structured approach [13] that sets out to locate and synthesise the available knowledge on a specific topic, ensuring the comprehensiveness and quality of the information collected. This ensures that the selected literature is of high quality, relevant and directly linked to the object of study, and provides a solid basis for analysis and discussion useful for subsequent research, as well as an overview of the state of the art in the field [14]. A detailed and rigorous analysis of the selected literature provides a solid conceptual basis for appropriate theoretical contextualisation and for the development of new lines of research ([15]; [16]).

3.3. Execution of the bibliometric analysis

The bibliometric analysis begins with the identification phase, in which researchers conducted a comprehensive bibliographic evaluation of the two most academically reputable databases. The Web of Science database was chosen "for its international prestige, its multidisciplinary scope and its coverage of high-impact publications" [14, p.4]. The Scopus database was also selected for its coverage, indexing quality and standardisation of information. This standardisation facilitates the replicability and reliability of bibliometric analyses, as well as interoperability with tools such as VOSviewer, Bibliometrix or Excel [17]. This ensures the representativeness of the most influential scientific literature in the field under study. The initial search resulted

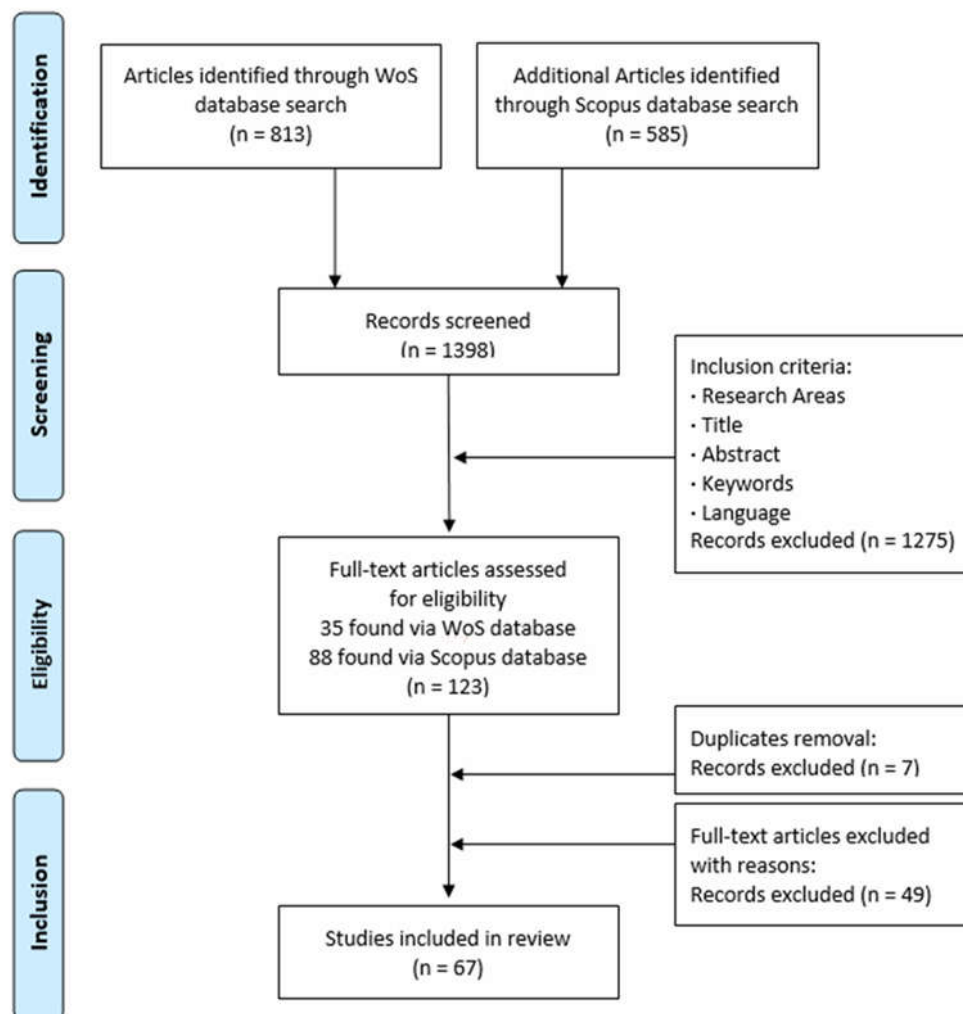
in the retrieval of 813 articles in Web of Science and 585 in Scopus, totalling 1,398 potentially relevant articles. In selecting both databases, consideration was given to their relevance and broad coverage in the social sciences and communication, although a minimal bias due to the possible exclusion of relevant studies not indexed in them must be acknowledged.

During the screening phase, strict inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied in order to refine the initial selection through a detailed examination of titles, abstracts, keywords and linguistic characteristics of the documents. To facilitate the replicability of this study, the Boolean equations used in the search across both databases are presented below:

Web of Science: ageism (All Fields) AND stereotypes (All Fields) AND Article OR Review Article (Document Types) AND Communication OR Film Radio Television OR Theater OR Humanities Multidisciplinary (Web of Science Categories).

Scopus: TITLE-ABS-KEY (ageism) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (stereotypes) AND PUBYEAR > 2003 AND PUBYEAR < 2025 AND LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA, "SOC") AND LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar") AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Ageism") OR LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Stereotypes")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English") OR LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "Spanish")) AND LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE, "final") AND LIMIT-TO (OA, "all").

Figure 1 Prism Diagram for SLR



Source: author's own work.

As a result of this process, 1,275 articles were excluded because they did not meet the established criteria, either because they belonged to irrelevant research areas or because they lacked a direct relationship with the object of study. This refinement resulted in a sample of 123 articles, of which 35 came from Web of Science and 88 from Scopus. In the eligibility phase, a database cleaning process was undertaken through the removal of duplicates, with seven cases identified. Subsequently, a more in-depth evaluation of the remaining 116 articles was conducted, with 49 excluded for focusing on areas outside the scope of the research, such as surgical applications, or for being limited to excessively specific case studies that were not representative of the national media context.

Following the PRISMA method (2020), the systematic analysis of the initial 1,398 publications resulted in a final corpus of 67 articles, which forms the empirical basis of this study. The review of these works reveals the predominant use of descriptive, exploratory and correlational methodologies.

3.4. Execution of the systematic literature review

This review covers literature published from January 1st 2008 to 1 January 1st 2024, thereby encompassing the period of generational transition in demography, conventionally recognised as an interval of between 15 and 20 years. The results presented here consist of a selection of the most relevant and recurrent theories and findings in the articles selected for the bibliometric analysis. It was also deemed appropriate to add some recent findings to the research corpus that follow or complement work published within this timeframe. As a preliminary step, it was verified that no other academic publication currently covers the approach and methodology adopted in this study.

In accordance with the criteria suggested by Iniesta-Alemán and Sidorenko-Bautista [18], priority was given to works with the greatest bibliometric impact. Recent contributions were also prioritised when, despite not yet accumulating a high number of citations for time reasons, they showed greater themed alignment and explicit correspondence in their titles with the object of study. As exclusion criteria, texts with content showing no clear connection to the central focus of the research on social audiences were discarded. The selection was conducted independently by each member of the research team, applying the previously agreed criteria, so that each researcher acted as a blind peer to the others. Divergences were subsequently resolved through a process of joint deliberation and agreement.

3.5. Tools for analysis

MS Office Excel was also used as a tool for analysing and processing information. In this case, this software was used to import, sort and structure large volumes of data. It also helped researchers detect duplicates, missing values or inconsistencies and normalise variables (authors, keywords, years, affiliations, etc.). Following this database cleaning, a necessary exploratory phase was undertaken prior to the relational or network analysis. The software was used to calculate frequencies, percentages, means and time trends, as well as to produce summary tables and graphs.

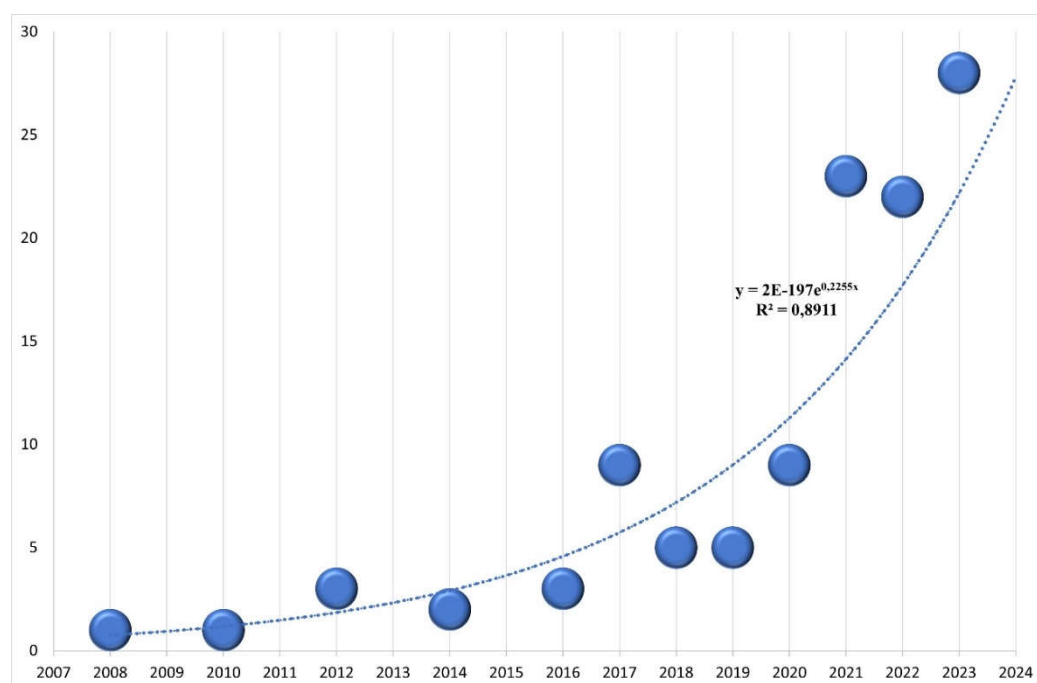
The VOSviewer software used in this study is a tool specifically designed to construct and visualise bibliometric networks [19] based on scientific data (citations, co-citations, co-authorships, term co-occurrences, etc.). It provides specialised visualisation for this type of data, handling a large number of items, and can be managed very intuitively when interpreting them (zoom, scroll, search). As a result, it helps identify trends and structures in the literature analysed, facilitating understanding of the dynamics of a topic.

3. Results

3.1. Results of the bibliometric analysis

According to the bibliometric analysis carried out, the first study linking ageism and stereotypes in the field of communication dates back to 2008. Scientific production related to these concepts has experienced particularly marked growth since 2021. It should be pointed out that data for 2024 is not included in the calculations shown in Figure 2, as data collection from the databases took place in May of that year. Considering full years, a clearly increasing exponential trend is confirmed, with a good coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.8911$).

Figure 2 Evolution of the publication of articles



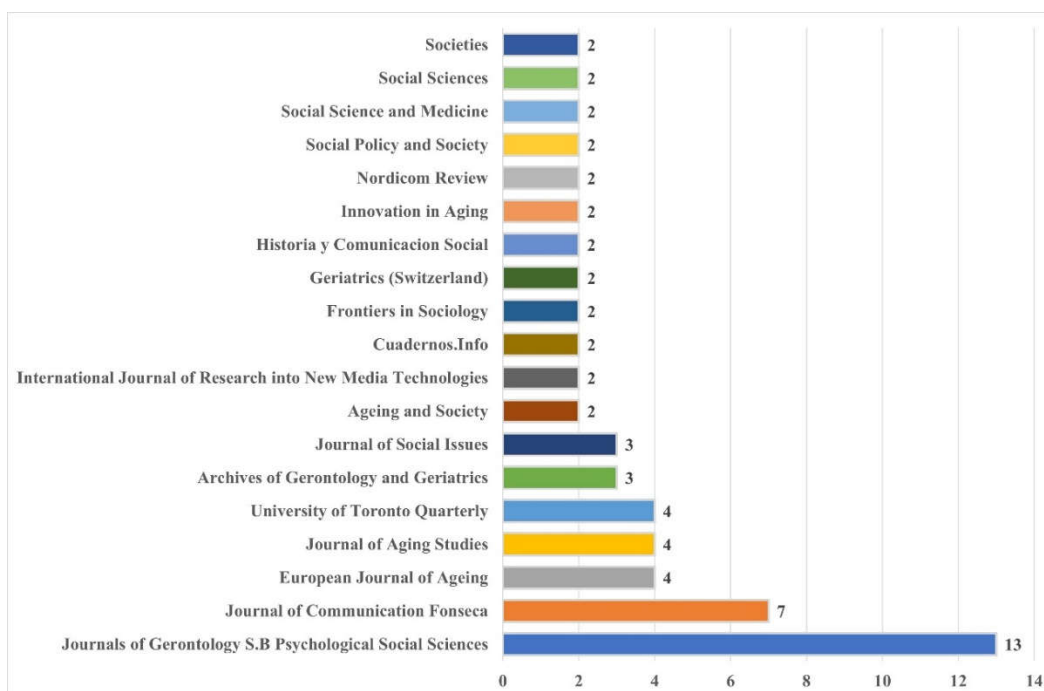
Source: author's own work.

The earliest reference identified corresponds to Bo G. Eriksson's study on the Swedish population, entitled "Ordinal dispersion of ratings of social participation as a function of age from 70 years of age among the H-70 panel". Among the most recent references are works such as "Age, ageing and ageism in Julieta (2016) by Pedro Almodóvar" (2024), as well as studies focused on media coverage of mortality risk during the COVID-19 pandemic, representations of old age in animation, workplace ageism and the social perception of ageing.

From a multidisciplinary perspective, the analysis of academic production shows that, although the initial search was oriented towards categories such as Social Sciences, Communication, Film, Radio, Television, Theatre and Humanities, the results also

include contributions from fields such as Gerontology, Sociology, Medicine, History and Technological Innovation. Among the journals with the highest number of publications on ageism and stereotypes (Figure 3) are Journals of Gerontology S.B Psychological Social Sciences, Fonseca Journal of Communication, European Journal of Ageing, Journal of Aging Studies and University of Toronto Quarterly, among various journals specialising in communication and social studies. The only two journals published in Spain in this ranking are the Fonseca Journal of Communication, from the University of Salamanca, and Historia y Comunicacion Social [History and Social Communication], from the Complutense University of Madrid.

Figure 3 Journals with the highest number of publications on ageism and stereotypes.



Source: author's own work.

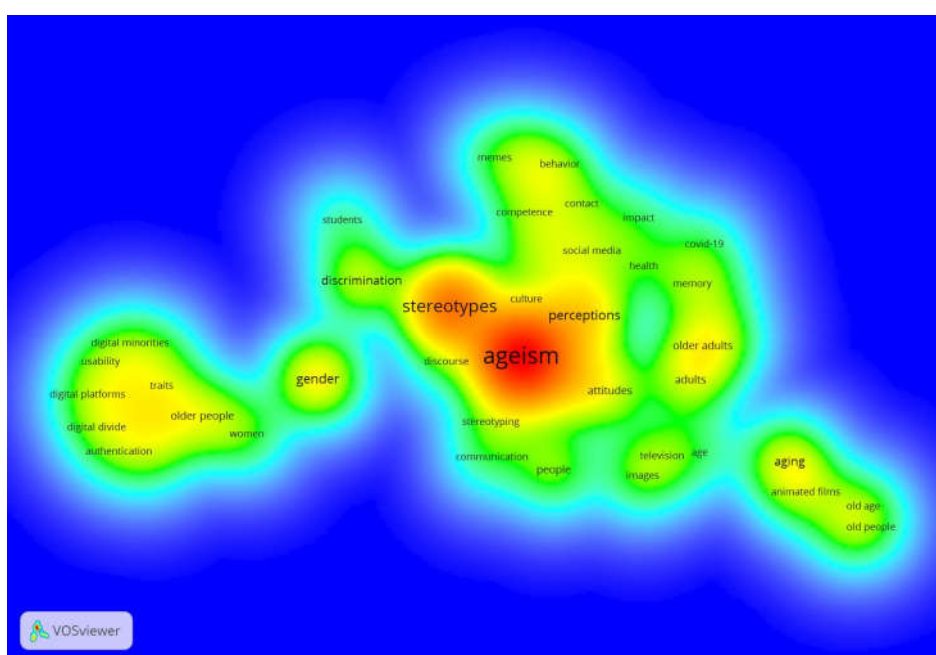
3.1.1. Density mapping in Scopus and Web of Science

It is pertinent to complement the bibliometric analysis with a scientometric study of the selected articles, using keywords as the unit of analysis. For this purpose, both the keywords provided by the authors themselves and the indexed keywords were considered.

By using the VOSviewer application and setting a minimum of three keywords per article, comparable density maps were obtained for both databases. In these maps, the terms 'ageism' and 'stereotypes' function as central axes around which the different semantic nodes are organised, producing a similar structure in Scopus and Web of Science.

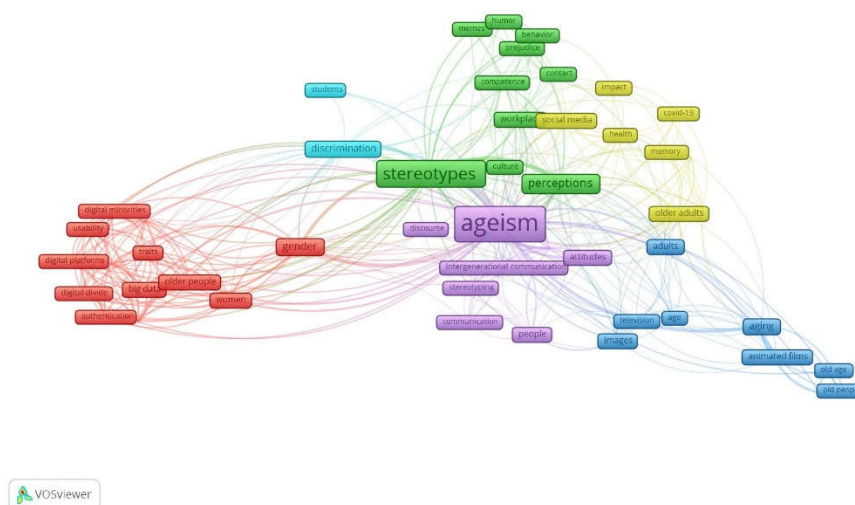
The identified semantic nodes can be grouped into six interrelated clusters, with a number of elements ranging from five to fourteen per cluster. The most important terms include 'perception', 'culture', 'gender', 'adult', 'male', 'female' and 'ageing', which underlines the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the phenomenon. The concept of ageism, linked to notions such as perception, discrimination, attitudes and prejudices, has strong connections with both the term 'ageism' and 'stereotypes', especially through first-level relationships. These interconnections reflect the complexity of the phenomenon and its insertion in multiple areas of analysis.

Figure 4 Visual map of keywords in WoS: density



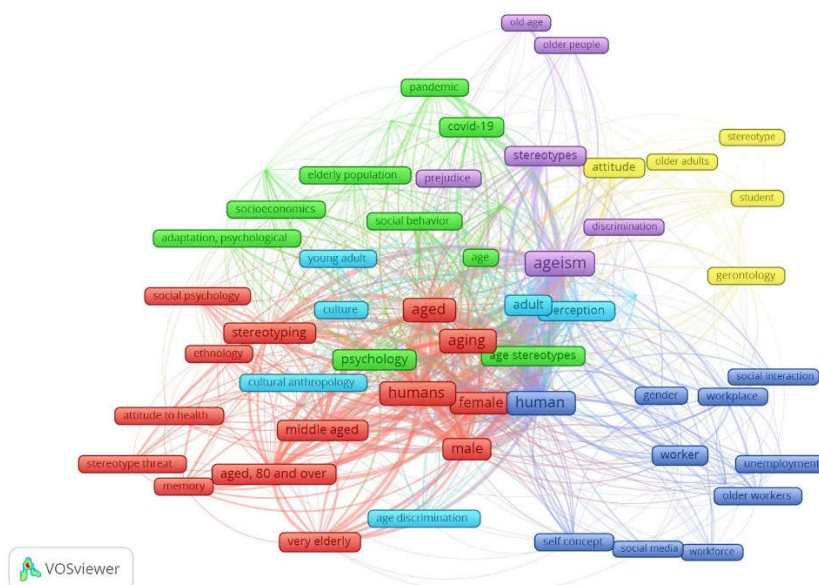
Source: author's own work.

Figure 6 Visual map of keywords in reviewed articles in WoS: networking



Source: author's own work.

Figure 7 Visual map of keywords in reviewed articles in Scopus: networking



Source: author's own work.

Figures 6 and 7 show the visual representations of the keywords identified in Web of Science and Scopus, respectively, according to semantic networks. Both figures show parallel patterns and are consistent with a division into six groups organised around the following semantic clusters:

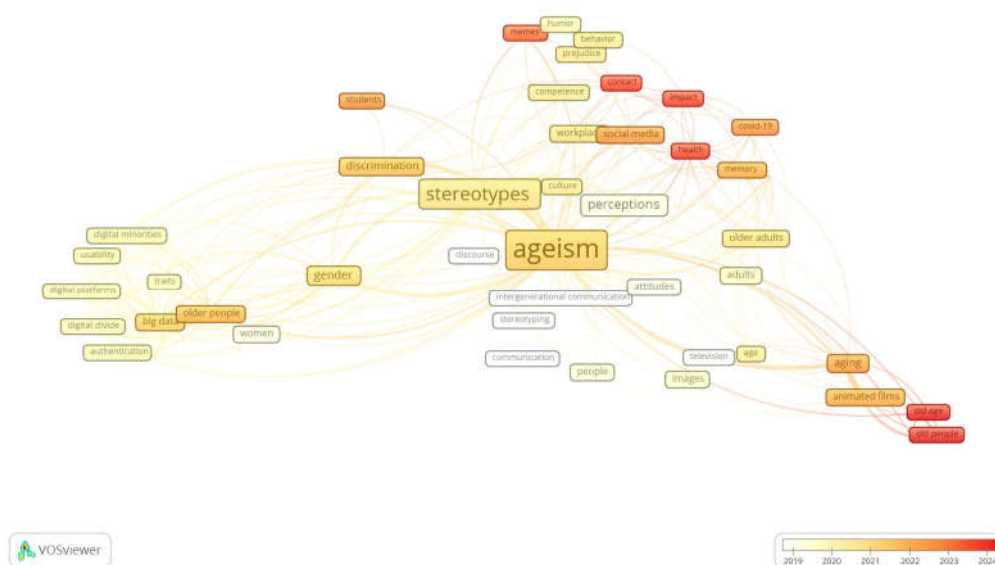
1. Ageism, a predominant term that appears connected to communication, images, attitude, television and stereotypes.

2. Stereotypes, central node linked to behaviour, gerontology, prejudice, health and socioeconomic factors.
3. Discrimination, which includes references to both gender and age and is associated with the terms longevity and threat.
4. Images and media, which appears in relation to social behaviour and self-concept.
5. Adaptation, semantically connected with the terms 'health' and 'skills'.
6. Social media and digital platforms, which show a significant impact on a range of factors, including employment, work, social interaction and unemployment. These factors are interconnected and interact with one another, influencing the overall dynamics of the labour environment.

3.1.3. Progression and interrelation of networks

After examining the factors identified through the semantic clusters, the following section analyses the chronological evolution of the terms found across the different networks identified.

Figure 8 Visual map of keywords in WoS: Overlap



Source: author's own work.

'older workers', 'workplace', 'headquarters', 'behaviour', 'prejudice' and 'studies'. This professional approach is addressed in this study.

As noted above, the introduction suggests that the literature on the subject is intuitive in nature. Nevertheless, a systematic review of the literature provides a graphic illustration of the milestone represented by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in academic production concerning the global media perception of ageism. As illustrated in Figure 9, positioned in 2019 – the year of the aforementioned pandemic – an imaginary vertical line can be drawn, showing this moment to be a turning point marked by a proliferation of articles on the topic under study. This indicates a clear concern for the issue and a new incorporation of semantic nodes explicitly oriented towards attitude, health and communication.

The global pandemic of 2020 marked a significant turning point in the visibility of ageism, bringing to light not only intergenerational tensions – as illustrated by the viral hashtag #BoomerRemover – but also new ways of portraying older people as victims. The role of social media and audiovisual productions in shaping these perceptions is particularly relevant. Various studies have documented the use of social media to organise youth-led protests against older people, as well as the tendency of the media to prioritise more sensationalist news at the expense of critical issues related to care homes for older people [20].

This bibliometric mapping highlights a recent increase in the study of workers' labour relations and a relative scarcity of research on the image of self-employment and its stereotypes in relation to the phenomenon of ageism. In this sense, the subsequent phases of the research envisage an in-depth examination of the phenomenon in question, with the aim of bridging existing gaps through the implementation of qualitative empirical methodologies.

3.2. Results of the literature review

The period considered (2008–2023) in the literature review presented here makes it possible to validate the progression of findings and illustrate the media's response to the profound crises that occurred during this time. The global health crisis of 2020 was the most significant of the last century. The systematic analysis of the selected articles reveals a notable persistence of ageist stereotypes in media representations of senior entrepreneurship. The results indicate that, despite the notable increase in academic publications on ageism and stereotypes in the field of communication, particularly since 2016, age-related prejudices continue to shape the social perception and visibility of older people in media narratives.

A growing academic interest has emerged in the field of senior entrepreneurship, particularly in the context of population ageing and changing social perceptions of longevity. The analysis of the articles showed that the concept of ageism, coined by Butler in 1969 [21], is still a key element in understanding perceptions of older people, including senior entrepreneurs, in the field of audiovisual communication.

3.2.1. Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT), formulated by Tajfel and Turner in 1979 [22], stands as an essential framework in the body of literature analysed. This theory posits that individuals develop part of their self-concept through their affiliation with different social groups, including age-based categories. This phenomenon helps explain how individuals categorise themselves and others according to age, which may lead to in-group favouritism and out-group discrimination.

From the perspective of SIT, Soto-Simeone and Kautonen [23] examined the influence of age identity on the entrepreneurial decisions of older people. These authors argue that the way the media represent senior entrepreneurship may influence older people's identification with the entrepreneurial role, thereby affecting their entrepreneurial intentions and behaviours. Another example of the application of SIT can be found in the work of Marques et al. [24], who – drawing on this theory – investigated how age-related stereotypes affect older people's self-perceptions and their willingness to participate in social activities.

The interrelationships between behaviour, gerontology, prejudice, health and socioeconomic factors are particularly relevant from the perspective of Social Identity Theory. This analysis of the theoretical landscape systematically articulates how age-based group categorisations can influence perceptions – including self-perceptions – and lead to specific behaviours.

3.2.2. Stereotype Embodiment Theory

In relation to the potential internalisation of age discrimination, Stereotype Embodiment Theory (SET), proposed by Levy [25], is particularly noteworthy. This theory posits that individuals can internalise age stereotypes throughout their lives. This internalisation may subsequently influence their health, cognitive performance and behaviour in old age. Consequently, repeated exposure to ageist biases may affect the entrepreneurial self-efficacy of older people. Drawing on this approach, Swift et al. [26] explore how internalised ageism influences older people's self-exclusion from social activities and decisions such as early retirement. Their model (Risks of Ageism Model, RAM) is proposed to explain how negative age attitudes hinder active ageing. Meanwhile,

Levy et al. [27] argue that the internalisation of negative stereotypes about old age may influence older people's self-perception and behaviour, including their propensity to become entrepreneurs.

Interpreting this threat, Chasteen et al. [28] propose, from this theoretical perspective, that awareness of negative stereotypes may affect individuals' performance in relevant domains. Consequently, this theory suggests that society's negative perceptions of ageing can become self-fulfilling prophecies for older people.

Stereotype Embodiment Theory provides a solid theoretical framework for understanding how stereotypical representations in audiovisual communication can shape and reinforce prevailing social attitudes towards older people. This understanding highlights the responsibility of media content creators to challenge ageist narratives and build fairer and more equitable representations.

3.2.3. Framing Theory

Also relevant to the topic under discussion is the theoretical framework of Framing Theory, as developed by Kroon et al. [29], to explore the dynamics of audiovisual perception. These authors offer significant contributions regarding the ways in which the media represents senior entrepreneurship.

They argue that, compared with corporate media, senior workers receive more negative framing in news media ($p = 0.516$). Corporate spokespersons avoid negative stereotypes in the news media, mainly to protect their own business reputation. However, news media adopt more problematic frames, emphasising the costs and incompetence that older people may represent for the economy. The hypothesis proposes that positive framing of active ageing and entrepreneurship has the potential to counteract negative stereotypes and foster a more favourable perception of stigmatised social groups.

Senior entrepreneurs can turn this around and use framing to their advantage. If the underlying mechanisms are known, they can use it to legitimise their own companies. Research by Snihur et al. [30] found that, although age-based framing is more likely to be negative than role-based framing, certain prestigious occupations generate an 'age premium', in which being older is an advantage. Taeuscher & Rothe [31], along the same lines, analyse how evaluations of older people differ when they are framed according to different types of roles, demonstrating that role-based framing reduces negative stereotypes.

3.2.4. Socioemotional Selectivity Theory

The idea that conceptions of senior entrepreneurship should prioritise motivational and personal fulfilment aspects over purely economic considerations is

advanced by Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST). Developed by Carstensen et al. [32] this theory posits that people prioritise emotionally meaningful goals as they age.

Kornadt et al. [33] use socioemotional selectivity as a methodological framework to examine how perceptions of ageing influence older people's interaction with technology and social media. This study underlines the importance of incorporating emotional motivations in later life into research and intervention strategies. Subjective age, understood as older people's self-perception of their own age in contrast with their chronological age, stands as a fundamental construct in the configuration of age identity and acts as a highly significant predictor of personal and professional development processes and outcomes. Adaptability, associated with health and skills, is consistent with this theoretical trend that older people adjust their goals and behaviours as they age.

Despite significant advances in audiovisual communication in terms of diversity and representation, there is still a tendency to associate the figure of the senior entrepreneur with prejudice. The idea remains that ageing can be associated with a form of life decline that must be resisted and concealed [34].

3.2.5. Intergroup Contact Theory

The still current Intergroup Contact Theory, originally developed by Allport in 1954 [35], remains a valid framework for understanding interactions between members of different social groups. It argues that prejudice is not inevitable, but that certain optimal conditions must be met in order for it to be mitigated.

In their study, Lytle et al. [36] used this theory to analyse the effectiveness of virtual intergenerational activities in reducing ageism among young and older people. These programmes offer a structured approach to designing and evaluating initiatives aimed at improving intergenerational relationships and mitigating age-related biases. The hypothesis posits that, under certain conditions, interaction between individuals from different groups can lead to a reduction in prejudice.

3.2.6 Intersectionality Theory

In parallel, references are included to Intersectionality Theory, explored by Spedale [37], which highlights how multiple identities (age, gender, ethnicity) interact in social characterisation, underlining the importance of considering diversity within the group and its reflection – or lack thereof – in the media.

3.3. Joint results

The mapping of densities and semantic networks reveals that the terms 'ageism' and 'stereotypes' form the central core of the themed clusters, surrounded by concepts

such as discrimination, perception, gender, adaptation and social networks, as shown in Table 2. The chronological evolution of keywords reflects a progressive shift towards the inclusion of issues related to gender, diversity and technological adaptation, especially following the 2020 health crisis, which intensified the need to give visibility to traditionally underrepresented groups.

Table 2. Main theories and relationship with determining factors

Theory	References	Definition	Characteristics
Stereotype embodiment	Levy (2009); Swift et al. (2017); Levy et al. (2018)	Individuals internalise stereotypes that can influence their health, cognitive performance and behaviour in old age	Stereotypes, self-efficacy
Social identity	Tajfel and Turner (1979); Marques et al. (2020); Soto-Simeone and Kautonen (2021)	People construct part of their self-concept through their affiliation with social groups; age-based classification can generate in-group favouritism and discrimination against other groups	Support, stereotyping, intergenerational
Framing	Kroon et al. (2019)	Positive framing can counteract negative stereotypes and foster more favourable perceptions	Support, stereotypes, authenticity
Socioemotional selectivity	Carstensen et al. (1999); Kornadt et al. (2021)	Emotionally meaningful goals are prioritised with age	Self-efficacy, experience
Intergroup contact	Allport (1954); Lytle et al. (2020)	Virtual intergenerational activities help reduce ageism	Intergenerational

Intersectionality	Spedale (2019)	Interaction of multiple identities that requires consideration of diversity and its media representation	Intergenerational
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Source: author's own work.

The study analyses the interaction between gender and age discrimination and longevity, exploring the underlying mechanisms through the frameworks of Intergroup Contact Theory and Intersectionality. The latter considers the compound effects of multiple identity factors, including self-efficacy, defined as the belief in one's ability to achieve a goal or perform a task.

The chronological progression of the predominant keywords in the reviewed literature reveals a growing focus on work-related factors, such as employment, skills, workplace interactions and older workers. This trend towards professional research suggests a shift in academic interest towards the practical implications of entrepreneurship in the labour market. In the broader context of the senior entrepreneurial ecosystem, their perception can influence incentives to engage in activities and even limit opportunities for networking and collaboration.

4. Conclusions

A comprehensive review of the existing literature on ageism and stereotypes in media representation was conducted, generating relevant contributions with important implications for understanding and providing foundations that help correct age-related biases, especially in the field of senior entrepreneurship.

It should be acknowledged, however, that this study is not without limitations. Reliance solely on peer-reviewed articles published in international, English-language databases may result in the omission of relevant research available in other languages or regional formats, potentially restricting the cultural and contextual breadth of the findings. Moreover, the emphasis on indexed academic sources inevitably entails the exclusion of valuable contributions from grey literature, lived experiences and professional perspectives less present in formal academic channels. Bibliometric mapping itself is conditioned by keyword selection and database categorisation processes, which may inadvertently influence the emphasis given to certain trends or clusters to the detriment of others. Consequently, the generalisation of conclusions to all cultural or local contexts should be approached with caution.

In terms of publications on ageism and stereotypes, a clearly increasing and exponential trend is confirmed, with a good coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.8911$).

However, the Spanish-speaking context does not stand out among the journals most interested in the subject (21%). A search was performed for themes related to communication and entrepreneurship (Social Sciences, Communication, Film, Radio, Television, Theatre and Humanities), and the results returned by the databases consulted were also found to include contributions from fields such as Gerontology, Sociology, Medicine, History and Technological Innovation.

The graphical visualisation of the data indicates that nodes associated with psychosocial health occupy peripheral positions in the visualisations generated from each database analysed. However, as the chronological axis progresses to the right, terms related to the coronavirus crisis – such as 'pandemic' and 'COVID-19' – gain centrality in the overlap maps. Gender-related themes feature prominently on the central time axis, reflecting a growing emphasis on social inclusion in recent years. This trend focuses on the empowerment and visibility of traditionally marginalised populations, including women and LGBTQI+ minorities. At the contemporary periphery of the discursive analysis, concepts linked to communication are particularly prominent, including animated films, television, imagery, memes, communication, intergenerational communication, contact, impact and – most prominently – social media. The analysis reveals a pattern of increased attention to labour issues in recent literature, manifested in the prevalence of keywords such as employment, skills, work, older workers, workplace, offices, behaviour, bias and studies. This professional orientation defines the main scope of the research presented here.

The analysis of discursive representations reveals a changing landscape of senior entrepreneurship within the postdigital context, where the marked emphasis on social media, digital platforms and labour factors reflects the evolution of this phenomenon in response to population ageing and its associated stereotyped perceptions. People over the age of 50 are actively redefining their presence in digital media – particularly on social media – and challenging traditional stereotypes about age and technological competence, in line with Stereotype Theory. The persistent inclusion of clichés in audiovisual communication reinforces negative social attitudes, highlighting the urgency of more nuanced and positive representations.

Social Identity Theory illustrates how age-based group categorisations shape perceptions, behaviours and self-perceptions, underlining the need for diverse media narratives that foster inclusive identities and mitigate harmful effects on older people's self-esteem. Similarly, the intersection between gender and age discrimination – observed through the frameworks of Intergroup Contact Theory and Intersectionality – reveals the compounded effects of multiple identity factors influencing entrepreneurial propensity. This multidimensional complexity of ageism calls for nuanced representational and political approaches that avoid simplifications and address its structural roots.

Technological adaptability is emerging as a cornerstone for the active participation of older people in the digital economy, in line with Socioemotional Selectivity Theory, according to which older people adjust their goals and behaviours as they age. This adaptability is a key asset in business activities, which must be recognised both in media stories and in public policies to promote visibility and social action. Digital literacy and technological access thus become unavoidable priorities, ensuring full inclusion in the contemporary economy.

Intergenerational collaboration functions as an effective strategy to counter age-related biases, facilitating the transfer of knowledge and experience between generations; evidence from business studies confirms that age-diverse teams display greater innovation, resilience, productivity and creativity, derived from the synergy between institutional knowledge and fresh perspectives. In parallel, the recognition of self-efficacy as a determining factor underlines the relevance of empowering narratives that showcase the capabilities and achievements of older people in entrepreneurial settings. Such narratives not only generate positive social models, but also catalyse new entrepreneurial initiatives, consolidating senior entrepreneurship as a vector of change in the postdigital era.

In short, the results show that publications continue to identify the persistence of ageist stereotypes in media representations of senior entrepreneurship, highlighting the need to promote inclusive and collaborative narratives. Within the analytical framework, two main factors have been identified as essential for overcoming barriers and fostering a realistic and positive image of senior entrepreneurship in the postdigital environment: technological adaptation and intergenerational collaboration.

Taken together, these findings underline the need for a paradigm shift in the media representation of older people and their social perception. By challenging ageist stereotypes, promoting positive and diverse representations, and recognising the adaptability and potential of older people, it is possible to foster a more inclusive environment that supports and drives senior entrepreneurship in the postdigital era. This change will not only benefit individuals but will also enrich society as a whole by harnessing the vast experience and wisdom of older generations.

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