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The Well-Being of Older Adults: Age Diversity and Inclusion in Vicente Guerrero, Baja California

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Abstract

This article aims to highlight age diversity as an essential component in building inclusive societies, focusing its analysis on different categories that shape the experience of older adults. Using a qualitative methodology from a phenomenological perspective, research was conducted in the rural community of Vicente Guerrero, Baja California, Mexico, to explore older adults' perceptions of their well-being and the barriers they face, particularly regarding access to services and their inclusion in digital environments. The study is grounded in Sen's (1992, 2000) human capabilities approach, which allows for an analysis of how social, economic, cultural, and spiritual conditions influence their quality of life and well-being. Key findings include persistent digital exclusion and a lack of adequate services. The study's limitations include its focus on a single community, which limits the generalizability of its results. The article's main contribution to the field of gender studies lies in its exploration of the intersection of aging, diversity, and inequality.

Keywords

capabilities; diversity; inclusion; older adults; quality of life; social welfare; technology

1. Introduction

Today, living in society involves not only coexisting with other human beings, but also recognizing, respecting, and valuing the inherent characteristics that make us unique. Human diversity is one of the defining characteristics of being human, and throughout history, it has been a fundamental factor in building more inclusive and equitable societies. This diversity manifests itself in multiple dimensions: age, gender, and religion, among others. Inclusion and proper care for older adults are everyone's responsibility. Since aging is

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a natural process, it is essential to respect those who have reached this stage and prepare ourselves to remain healthy and autonomous for as long as possible (Ministry of Welfare, 2018).

Sen's (1992, 2000) theory of human capabilities highlights the relevance of individual capabilities and the opportunities that allow people to perform activities or functions that they value as important. From this perspective, the present study aims not only to deepen our understanding of the quality of life of the older adult population, but also to propose a conceptual approach that is tailored to the specific needs of this age group. The goal is to contribute to a more precise and contextualized understanding of well-being at this stage of life (Sen, 1992, 2000). In this context, each individual brings a unique life experience, shaped by their personal and social trajectory. However, despite the richness that diversity offers, certain groups of people have historically been marginalized or excluded due to their identity or characteristics. In this sense, it is necessary to delve deeper into this issue within the Latin American context to generate scientific evidence that can influence public policies focused on aging. These policies must recognize and make visible older adults belonging to sexual minorities, considering the diverse contexts in which they live (Fernández-Silva & Mancilla-Mancilla, 2024). In the case of Mexico, older individuals within the LGBTTTIQ community face a triple form of discrimination, based on age, gender, and social class (Instituto Nacional de las Personas Mayores, 2019). This necessarily requires an assessment of the intersectional factors that affect their well-being. Among these groups, older adults constitute a particularly vulnerable sector, often facing the phenomenon of ageism.

On the other hand, Coelho-Junior et al. (2024, p. 1) define ageism as "the creation of negative stereotypes about aging that culminate in the development of prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions against older people." Similarly, although aging is a natural part of human development, older adults have historically been vulnerable, a situation exacerbated by social and technological changes.

This stigma may affect their physical and mental well-being, as well as their social functioning—that is, the activities they perform as part of their daily lives—and limit their access to essential public services. In this regard, Valenzuela (2024, p. 21) posits that "social time and the intensity of social time generate differentiated aging processes." Therefore, aging not only implies the inscription of time on the body, but also a concept where inequalities manifest themselves in different ways depending on individual living conditions.

Following this same line of thought, globally, older adults represent a significant and constantly growing sector. Currently, nearly 700 million people are over 60 years old (United Nations, 2026). In other words, population aging continues to increase daily, and with it comes the need to address the concerns of this age group. In this sense, the purpose of this article is to analyze the situation of older adults from the perspective of diversity, recognizing the importance of integrating their different experiences and dimensions of life, which include not only their physical and mental health, but also their cultural, religious, and social identity. Through an approach based on Sen's (1992, 2000) human capabilities framework, this work seeks to understand how structural, social, and cultural limitations affect the quality of life of older adults and how these factors contribute to their well-being. The concept of human capabilities allows us to understand that well-being depends not only on health or economic status, but also on the ability of older adults to lead a life they value as important, which implies access to resources, opportunities, recognition, respect, and active participation in society.

The analysis of this phenomenon is contextualized in the municipality of Vicente Guerrero, in Mexicali, Baja California, a region on the northern border of Mexico with particular characteristics in terms of its cultural,

social, and geographical diversity. This environment is especially relevant for the study of the older adult population, given that residents of rural areas often face significant barriers in terms of access to health services, education, and technology. In this regard, the research is based on a qualitative, phenomenological approach, using semi-structured interviews with older adults in the community, which allows us to capture the perceptions and realities of this social group in relation to their health and community participation.

By addressing the diversity of older adults in this specific region, the study seeks to highlight the multiple ways in which older people experience aging, recognizing not only their challenges and limitations, but also their abilities and contributions to the community. This work also aims to influence public policy in Mexico, encouraging it not only to address the basic needs of older adults, but also to further promote their social and digital inclusion, ensuring they have access to the necessary opportunities to live a full and satisfying life, on equal terms with the rest of the population. Through this research, it is hoped that it will contribute to the debate on the need to create more inclusive environments that value age diversity.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Diversity and Aging

Population aging is one of the most significant demographic phenomena of recent decades, and its global impact is undeniable. According to data from the United Nations (2024), it is estimated that, by 2050, one in six people worldwide will be 65 years of age or older. This is linked to an increase in life expectancy and a decrease in mortality rates, representing a significant achievement for society. However, it also gives rise to social, economic, and structural challenges that must be addressed urgently to ensure the well-being of older adults.

An age-friendly community adapts its services and infrastructure to respond to the needs of older adults, which in turn promotes healthy aging and improves their quality of life by optimizing health, security, and inclusion (Pan American Health Organization, n.d.)

Aging represents one of the most significant challenges, as it is crucial to reduce the negative stereotypes surrounding this population group. Older adults are largely perceived as dependent, frail, and having virtually no active life compared to society at large. This view of old age not only minimizes and limits the contributions of this age group but also disregards their extensive experience and knowledge of life and the legacy they leave for younger generations.

In this context, age diversity emerges as a fundamental concept that must be made visible and valued. Old age is not a homogeneous experience; in fact, older adults go through a diversity of experiences due to multiple factors, such as their abilities—that is, their skills and knowledge—their identity, their physical and mental health, and even their religious beliefs. Older adults experience their aging process in a particular and unique way, with a diversity of opportunities that each of them values according to what they consider important.

Although biological aging, according to Alvarado and Salazar (2014, as cited in Robledo Marín et al., 2022, p. 135), refers to "the consequences of the maturation process in the human body, such as cellular wear and tear, disease, and genetics," it is also important to recognize that diversity is not limited to these considerations.

It is related to various aspects of being, such as identity, technology, and beliefs, as well as the socioeconomic conditions of each individual. All of this forms a core part of a much broader vision of what it means to be an older adult today, which creates a strong connection between the diversity of experiences and old age.

Therefore, it is urgent to value age diversity, considering this group not only as a vulnerable population, but also as a group with multiple diverse capabilities that can contribute significantly to society. Recognizing this diversity allows us to guarantee the rights and well-being of older adults, all of which contributes to building a more inclusive society for future generations.

2.2. Ageism: Just Another Form of Discrimination

According to Guachichullca-Ordóñez and Banda-Poma (2025, p. 963), ageism, as an expression of social inequality, constitutes a situation that "must be overcome if harmonious coexistence free from age discrimination is desired." In Latin America, ageism is a phenomenon marked by stereotypes and acts of discrimination against this age group. This perception of old age negatively affects and can impact the well-being and inclusion of older adults.

To describe ageism, a study conducted in Spain poses the following:

> Societies have used age, gender, or race to categorize and classify people. Based on this label, people play a predetermined role in that society. If racism was combated in the 19th century and sexism in the 20th, ageism is considered the third "ism" in the 21st century. (Seco Lozano, 2022, p. 7)

According to the World Health Organization (2025), ageism not only affects older people but also has a negative impact on society as a whole. By treating older adults as a homogeneous and vulnerable group, they are denied the opportunity to participate fully in social, cultural, and economic life. This contributes to their isolation, a condition that affects a large number of older people, especially those who live alone or have limited financial resources. Furthermore, ageism restricts their access to health services, employment, education, and other aspects essential for a dignified life. This social exclusion creates a cycle of poverty and marginalization that negatively impacts the quality of life of older adults.

Meanwhile, Klein Caballero (2024, p. 66) argues that there are "challenges and problems to ageism through a resurgence of the paradigm of decrepit, vulnerable aging, inevitably facing death." In this sense, it is important to recognize the diversity and inclusion of older adults and acknowledge that people are not all the same, as their experiences and even their abilities make them unique. The challenge lies in recognizing this age group as active and productive individuals at different levels, depending on their physical and mental health.

Eliminating the barriers that prevent the full inclusion of older adults is essential for a society that recognizes not only the rights but the abilities of this age group. This includes promoting a broader positive and realistic view of old age, based on recognition of the continuing contribution of older adults to society. Although it is true that public policies have currently been concerned with creating accessible environments and promoting the active participation of older adults, society must eradicate the narrative and discriminatory practices against this group. Therefore, the challenge is not only to eliminate prejudices towards older adults, but also to build a society in which the skills and experiences are valued, and the rights and dignified life of

this age group are recognized. The inclusion of older adults must be recognized in society's narratives as a right for everyone.

2.3. Regulatory Framework for Older Adults

At the international level, the rights of older adults have been recognized in key documents such as the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing (United Nations, 1982) and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (United Nations, 2002). These documents underscore the importance of ensuring the full participation of older adults in society, paying special attention to their health, economic security, and development opportunities. In this same sphere, global actions stemming from the 2030 Agenda are aimed at health and well-being, understood as part of Goal 3, which involves ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages (United Nations, 2023).

In the Latin American context, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) highlights the following as part of the 2030 Agenda:

> The motto and cardinal principle of the 2030 Agenda is precisely that "no one is left behind." This means that each country must identify, within its own context, which groups have been left behind—in traditional human rights terms, those groups that have suffered discrimination and marginalization and do not fully enjoy their rights. (ECLAC, 2017, para. 7)

Likewise, the ECLAC (2018, para. 1) states that "social inclusion ensures that all people, without distinction, can exercise their rights and guarantees, take advantage of their skills and benefit from the opportunities available in their environment."

At the national level in Mexico, this broad framework of social inclusion is addressed through the National Development Plan 2025–2030. Specifically, it aligns with Objective 2.1, which seeks to strengthen the social protection network to guarantee the social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups. Furthermore, Strategy 2.1.4 explicitly targets adults aged 65 and over by implementing actions to reduce socioeconomic inequality gaps and ensure their overall well-being and quality of life (Gobierno de México, 2025).

For its part, the National Human Rights Commission (2020) plays an essential role in protecting the rights of older adults, promoting public policies that ensure equal opportunities, access to services, and dignity. The 2019–2024 National Development Plan in Mexico has highlighted the importance of the social inclusion of this vulnerable group, particularly those living in poverty.

In turn, the Instituto Nacional de las Personas Mayores (2012) states that, since its creation, it "has promoted actions that foster the comprehensive development of older adults and their participation and inclusion in the economic and social sphere of collective life" (para. 12).

At the local level, the Baja California State Development Plan 2022–2027 reflects a commitment to the National Development Plan 2025–2030 by addressing the well-being of the most vulnerable population. This includes older adults through the following measures:

> Promoting the social development and well-being of older adults living in poverty, extreme poverty, or vulnerability, by providing them with financial support to address urgent basic needs related to their quality of life. Contributing to the economic well-being of vulnerable older adults by providing them with income to cover daily expenses through bimonthly support payments. (Gobierno del Estado de Baja California, 2022, p. 263)

Likewise, the Mexicali Municipal Plan 2025–2027 aligns with the National Development Plan 2025–2030 by seeking the well-being of all people through actions targeting social vulnerability and socioeconomic inequality affecting older adults, according to data from the Comité de Planificación del Desarrollo Municipal de Mexicali (COPLADEMM, 2025; see also Table 1).

Table 1. COPLADEMM data and the well-being of all people: For a safe and peaceful Mexicali.

Axis	Problems identified	Proposed strategies or actions
Well-being for all people	Inequality in access to basic services in rural and peri-urban areas.	Implement inclusive policies that prioritize services in marginalized areas.
	Insufficient comprehensive care programs for children, older adults, and migrants.	Establish community-based comprehensive care centers.
	Lack of access to cultural and sporting activities.	Decentralize cultural and sporting activities.

Note: Prepared by the author based on information from COPLADEMM (2025).

Table 2 shows the cluster of important data that refers to the regulatory framework related to older adults.

Table 2. Regulatory framework.

Scope	Regulations	Description
International Standards	Vienna International Plan of Action (1982)	Recognition of the need to guarantee the full participation of older adults in society, with emphasis on health, economic security, and development.
	Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002)	A comprehensive approach to promoting active aging, guaranteeing access to opportunities for social participation and development, with an inclusive vision of human rights.
National Regulations (Mexico)	National Human Rights Commission (2020)	Protecting the rights of older adults by promoting public policies that ensure equal opportunities and access
State regulations (Baja California)	The Baja California State Development Plan 2022–2027 (Gobierno del Estado de Baja California, 2022)	Proposals for improving the quality of life of older adults, with a focus on poverty, access to services, and social and economic empowerment.
	2025–2027 Municipal Development Plan (Comité de Planificación del Desarrollo Municipal de Mexicali, 2025)	Strategies and actions aimed at improving the well-being of older adults, including food support, social integration, and economic empowerment.

Note: Prepared by the author using data from the United Nations (1982, 2002), the National Human Rights Commission (2020), the Gobierno del Estado de Baja California (2022), and the Comité de Planificación del Desarrollo Municipal de Mexicali (2025).

2.4. The Diversity of Older Adults in Mexico: The Case of Vicente Guerrero

In Mexico, older adults constitute a significant segment of the population and face various challenges related to their social integration. From a local perspective, this study examines the case of Vicente Guerrero, a locality in the municipality of Mexicali situated on the northern border—adjacent to Arizona and California, and bordering the state of Sonora. Research was conducted to explore the diverse experiences and perceptions of older adults regarding their well-being, as well as the social, cultural, and service-access barriers they encounter. In this context, the study aims to analyze the perceptions of older adults in this locality, highlighting the diversity of their experiences, their needs, and how they engage with their social environment, guided by the following research question: How do the capabilities and functionings experienced by older adults in the locality of Vicente Guerrero, in Mexicali, contribute to their well-being?

3. Methodology

This qualitative research employed a phenomenological approach, aiming to understand the subjective experiences of older adults within their social context. It is grounded in Sen's (1992, 2000) human capabilities approach. Inclusion criteria encompassed individuals aged 60 or older residing in Vicente Guerrero, regardless of gender. Exclusion criteria applied to individuals with cognitive impairment that would preclude their participation in the study. Six semi-structured interviews were conducted—three with men and three with women—and the results were analyzed using the software program ATLAS.ti; a descriptive analysis was performed. Participants were selected through convenience sampling from the older adult population in the community of Vicente Guerrero, located in Mexicali, Baja California. Located on the border with the U.S. states of California and Arizona and adjacent to Sonora, this rural community represents an environment of particular academic interest due to its cultural diversity and the specific challenges faced by older adults in rural areas.

4. Results

Although chronic illnesses were common (diabetes, hypertension, arthritis), many older adults continued to participate actively in daily life. Their social support network and limited access to health services were key determinants of their well-being.

The research findings suggest that older adults in Vicente Guerrero have a wide range of experiences, and the well-being of this group is influenced by various social and spiritual factors. Despite health-related challenges, spirituality and community solidarity appear to be fundamental elements of their well-being. However, limited access to health services, especially in rural areas, remains a significant obstacle.

The study also highlights the need to create opportunities for digital inclusion, as many older adults have limited access to new technologies, which restricts their participation in modern society (see Table 3).

Table 3. Satisfaction, health and well-being, spirituality, and access to technology.

Category	Description	Key Factors	Implications	Narratives
Satisfaction	Older adults reported a high level of personal satisfaction, especially related to family, religious faith, and participation in community activities.	Family relationships. Religion. Community participation.	Although social support is a positive factor, limited access to healthcare and a lack of technological infrastructure hinder their full integration into society. The connection to faith provides comfort and strength in the face of the challenges of aging. Belonging to an active community contributes significantly to well-being.	"I am happy because I serve Christ. I am a Christian; I committed my life to Christ. I have been serving the Lord for many years, and I have witnessed His miracles" (Miriam) "Well, the one thing I managed to do…uh, was to get my papers in the United States. I mean, I'm an American citizen now—though I haven't renounced my own country, my homeland. I'm a citizen there because they granted me citizenship, so now I live off the pension I receive from there, plus some additional support I get here" (Héctor) "[When asked: Are you happy here?] Yes, we work here—we have to, because the tourism season has been poor" (Bernardo) "[When asked: Do you feel you've achieved what you wanted in life?] Honestly, not quite. I still need to provide an education for my children—that's something I haven't managed to do yet….But, in truth, I am happy because I have my children and they're doing well; it's just that there are other things—like financial matters—that are still lacking" (Bernardo) "[When asked: Do you consider yourself happy living here in Algodones?] Yes. [Why are you happy?] Because my children, my grandchildren, and everyone else are here. I've lived here my whole life. I was born in Mazatlán, but when I was just a six-month-old baby, I was left there; then, at age five, I was brought here, and I never went back to Mazatlán. I'm about to turn 70—in December, I'll be 70" (Marisol) "Yes, I feel happy—well, in some ways, I suppose. Life brings its own little problems—illnesses and such—so you end up feeling…well, it's a mix; there's both sadness and joy" (Arturo) "Well, thank God—yes, I am happy" (Amanda)

Table 3. (Cont.) Satisfaction, health and well-being, spirituality, and access to technology.

Category	Description	Key Factors	Implications	Narratives
Health and well-being	Despite the prevalence of chronic diseases (diabetes, hypertension, arthritis), many older adults maintain an active life. A strong social support network is crucial.	Common chronic illnesses (diabetes, hypertension, arthritis). Social support network. Limited access to healthcare services.	The impact of chronic diseases is moderated by active participation and social support. The lack of healthcare infrastructure in rural areas limits access to medical and specialized treatments.	"I feel healthy" (Mariam) "Well, the usual, you know—a bit of diabetes and some muscle aches; I suppose that's normal—they're starting to show up now" (Héctor) "I'm in good health" (Bernardo) "Yes, I'm sick with all sorts of things. I have to get injections for my anemia, and I also have…[sentence left unfinished]—for diabetes, and everything else. People don't think I'm sick because I'm up and about all day long" (Marisol) "I've had prediabetes for about 25 or 30 years, but that's about it" (Arturo) "I have high blood pressure and arthritis" (Amanda)
Spirituality	Spirituality plays an important role in the emotional well-being of older adults. Community solidarity is a cornerstone of emotional support.	Spirituality	Spirituality offers comfort and hope, improving resilience in the face of adversity.	"I feel good because I have Christ" (Mariam) "Well, thank God—yes, I am happy" (Amanda)
		Community solidarity	Solidarity in local communities fosters a sense of belonging, strengthening psychological and social well-being. The support of family and friends is key to maintaining independence and quality of life.	"He/she also spoke with my boyfriend" (Miriam) "Look, when they all get together here—sometimes they come for my name day or my birthday, or whenever they feel like it—they let me know, and over they come. They don't even fit in the patio; there are about 90 of them—adults, middle-aged, kids, great-grandchildren, the whole lot" (Héctor) "I have a son and a daughter; she's studying, but she lives in her own home" (Bernardo) "I like to talk about everything—my daughter's probably going to scold me for this, but I just feel comfortable when I'm talking…I don't really have friends, other than the ones who visit me here at the second [referring to her clothing stall]. I get caught up in conversation with them, and I have a great time—I just really love to talk" (Marisol) "Yes, that's my daughter—I talk to her every single day [his daughter was in the office, listening to the interview]" (Arturo) "Yes, sometimes I go out for coffee with friends and we chat. Well, I have three [children] here, and one is on the other side [of the border/far away]; I keep in touch with him by phone, and the ones who are here visit me every day" (Amanda)

Table 3. (Cont.) Satisfaction, health and well-being, spirituality, and access to technology.

Category	Description	Key Factors	Implications	Narratives
Access to technology	Limited access to digital technologies hinders the active participation of older adults in modern society.	Digital divide. Lack of technological infrastructure.	The lack of digital inclusion limits access to services, information, and the ability to independently manage everyday tasks. The limited technological infrastructure and lack of training contribute to the social exclusion of this group.	"I also use the phone to talk to my boyfriend" (Miriam) "I have a phone, but only for calls" (Héctor) "Look, I do things the old-fashioned way—since I don't know how to use a cell phone, for example, I go and pay my electricity bill in person and handle other matters directly; honestly, I just don't know how to use one" (Bernardo) "Yes, I use the internet only to watch TV, because if you try to watch TV without the internet, you can no longer watch it the way you used to" (Marisol) "I use the phone, I think, and Megacable [which is an internet company]" (Arturo) "Well, I have three children here, and one is on the other side [referring to the US], and I communicate with him by phone" (Amanda)

Notes: This table summarizes the study's key findings, highlighting the relationships between social, spiritual, technological, and health factors that affect life satisfaction and well-being among older adults in Vicente Guerrero; it illustrates how different areas impact the quality of life of this group and underscores the need for public policies that integrate technology, healthcare, and community participation to promote active and dignified aging.

Older adults express a strong sense of well-being, rooted in the presence of family, economic security (for example, binational pensions), and religious devotion. However, this satisfaction entails ongoing financial responsibilities and health challenges.

Participants reported a high prevalence of chronic conditions (diabetes, hypertension, arthritis). Despite physical illnesses, most maintain an active lifestyle and positive outlook, heavily relying on social interactions to buffer the impact of disease.

Faith in God serves as a fundamental coping mechanism, providing emotional resilience, purpose, and a sense of daily comfort against the vulnerabilities of aging. Furthermore, faith in God serves as a fundamental coping mechanism, providing emotional resilience, purpose, and a sense of daily comfort in the face of the vulnerabilities of aging.

Finally, a clear digital divide was identified. Although older adults use basic technology mainly for essential communication—such as phone calls with family—or simple entertainment online, their lack of digital skills forces them to carry out administrative procedures in person. This requirement negatively impacts their well-being, considering that most live with health conditions that make travel difficult.

5. Discussion

Research on the well-being of older adults in Vicente Guerrero, Baja California, highlights several factors that influence the quality of life of this population group. International and national regulations protecting the rights of older persons, such as the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing (1982) and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002), have been key in creating a framework that promotes their social inclusion. Despite this, the study shows that the full integration of older adults into society remains a significant challenge, especially in rural communities like Vicente Guerrero.

The results obtained from the interviews show that, although older adults in Vicente Guerrero report a high level of personal satisfaction thanks to their participation in family, community, and religious activities, structural and social barriers hinder their access to a fulfilling life. At the international level, documents such as the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing (1982) underscore the importance of ensuring that older persons have access to health, economic security, and opportunities for development. However, limited access to health services, especially in rural areas, remains one of the greatest obstacles to achieving an optimal quality of life. Common chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and arthritis, which affect the majority of those interviewed, require adequate and consistent access to medical services, which is difficult to achieve in rural contexts due to a lack of health infrastructure.

Within the national legal framework, the National Human Rights Commission plays a key role in promoting public policies that guarantee equal opportunities for older adults. In this regard, the 2019–2024 National Development Plan emphasizes the social inclusion of this vulnerable group, especially those living in poverty. However, older adults in Vicente Guerrero still face conditions of economic and social vulnerability that limit their well-being, as revealed by the data obtained in this study. Despite government efforts to promote inclusive public policies, the effective implementation of these measures remains insufficient in terms of access to health services, education, and participation in work or economic activities.

Another key finding of the research is the fundamental role of spirituality and community support networks in the well-being of older adults. Religious faith and active participation in the community are two factors that interviewees highlight as important sources of satisfaction and resilience. This aspect of older adults' lives aligns with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002), which emphasizes the need to create an environment conducive to the full participation of older adults in social life, including strengthening community ties and providing spaces for cultural and spiritual inclusion.

However, despite these positive aspects, the research also highlights a clear digital divide that limits the participation of older adults in modern society. The lack of access to technologies such as computers, smartphones, or the internet hinders their inclusion in everyday activities that require these tools, such as accessing online health services or communicating with family and friends. This situation contrasts with the approach of the National Development Plan, which advocates for a more inclusive and equitable Mexico for all social groups, including older adults. The lack of adequate technological infrastructure and digital literacy programs for this population group constitutes a clear barrier preventing their full integration.

Diversity within the older adult population is another fundamental aspect that emerges from the study's results. Older adults are not a homogeneous group; significant differences exist related to their cultural and ethnic identity and social conditions. Indigenous older adults or those from minority ethnic communities, for example, face additional barriers such as lack of access to adequate health services and social isolation due to linguistic and cultural barriers. This situation is consistent with international and national documents, which recognize that cultural and ethnic diversity must be taken into account in policies and programs aimed at this group.

In summary, the results of this study confirm that, while international and national policies have made significant progress in protecting and promoting the rights of older adults, structural barriers still exist that prevent their full integration into society. Lack of access to adequate health services, the digital divide, and socioeconomic and cultural inequalities remain challenges that must be addressed comprehensively. It is essential that inclusion efforts not only focus on improving access to basic services but also promote the active participation of older adults in community life, culture, the economy, and politics. Only in this way will it be possible to ensure that the rights of older adults are fully respected and that they can enjoy a dignified and fulfilling life at all stages of aging.

6. Conclusions

This article confirms that older adults are a diverse group whose experiences and needs must be recognized and addressed through public policies that promote social and digital inclusion. Ageism remains a significant obstacle to the full participation of this group in society. It is essential to design technology training strategies tailored to older adults, as well as to strengthen community networks that allow them to remain active and engaged with their surroundings.

The study conducted in Vicente Guerrero shows that older adults exhibit considerable diversity in their experiences and needs. Despite the difficulties arising from common chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension, older adults, both men and women, report a high level of personal satisfaction, particularly due to their family relationships, their religious faith, and their participation in community activities.

However, factors such as limited access to health services and a lack of technological infrastructure affect this group unequally, creating barriers to their full social integration.

The research highlights that, although older adults face similar age-related challenges, gender differences also play a crucial role. Women in particular tend to be more exposed to situations of economic and social vulnerability due to historical inequalities in access to resources and opportunities. On the other hand, although men also experience limitations, they tend to face different types of obstacles, particularly related to their social role and participation in community activities.

Furthermore, analysis within the framework of international and national regulations, such as the Vienna International Plan of Action and the 2019–2024 National Development Plan in Mexico, reveals that, although policies and legal frameworks exist that promote the inclusion of older adults, these measures have not been effectively implemented in rural or marginalized areas. The lack of access to technology and the digital divide, particularly among older adults and women, limits their ability to exercise their rights, access services, and participate fully in modern society.

In this regard, it is essential to adopt a comprehensive approach that considers both the needs of older adults and gender and age differences. This would include strengthening social support networks, promoting digital inclusion, and effectively implementing public policies that not only address health but also guarantee the autonomy and dignity of this group, regardless of gender or age.

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Conflict of Interests

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Data Availability

Data for this research are available upon reasonable request.

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No LLM tools were used in the preparation of this article.

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