Age discrimination in hiring decision making: A multi-level approach

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1. Table of Tables & Figures

2. Acknowledgements

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3. Abstract

The population around the globe is ageing. As a consequence of a drop in both birth and fertility rates, coupled with an increase in life expectancy, a demographic shift is taking place. Moreover, this age shift is not only impacting the overall population, but is also paralleled in the labour market, with the average age of employees getting older, and set to increase even further in the next few decades (Hertel & Zacher, 2018; Kolb, 2014; Toosi, 2009).

The impact of an ageing population has profound societal implications and a widely advocated potential solution to this impending crisis is to encourage people to extend their working lives (Wang et al, 2008). However, there is an ever-increasing body of research to suggest that older workers are vulnerable to age discrimination in the workplace, and that this discrimination may be particularly focused in the area of recruitment and selection (Francioli & North, 2021; Neumark et al, 2015). Nevertheless, there is still limited evidence on the causes of age discrimination. Furthermore, previous research has tended to focus on the individual bias of hiring decision makers, without considering the context in which discrimination is occurring (Finkelstein, 2015). As such, the overall aim of this thesis was to explore the different influences that may be having an impact on the hireability of older job candidates, the factors that could be leading to them being rated more or less hireable by hiring decision makers. Accordingly, it was posited that in recruitment and selection scenarios, hiring decision makers may be influenced by a myriad of factors that exist at

different analytical and conceptual levels (individual, team, and organisational level). Moreover, the reasons why these different factors may, or may not, influence a decision maker could be based on their social identity and how they categorise themselves and others.

The thesis consisted of two quantitative studies, both of which were within-person experimental vignette studies. Study one took place in a higher education setting using both students and staff members as a sample population. The 271 participants who took part, completed a recruitment and selection decision-making task and then subsequently some of their individual attitudes towards older workers were measured. Study two took place across four different organisations (two public-sector and two private-sector). Accordingly, 156 Team leaders (or those responsible for hiring decisions within their respective teams) undertook a recruitment and selection decision-making task, with their perception of the age culture within their employing organisation also being measured. Age diversity climate was then measured at the team level (with 414 team members across the host organisations being surveyed). The data from both studies was analysed using mixed level linear models in SPSS.

Results from both Study one and two found that older job candidates were rated as significantly less hireable than younger and middle-aged candidates, even when controlling for previous work experience and other relevant factors. There were also additional characteristics of the job candidates that moderated the relationship between candidate age and hireability, including their gender and educational status (used as a proxy for social class), with age having a greater negative effect on female candidates, and those candidates

who were degree educated. The hirer's level of age stereotyping was found to moderate the relationship between candidate age and hireability, with a proposal being suggested that when hirers viewed the prospective job candidates as members of an out-group, they were more likely to agree with the content of age stereotypes. There was also some evidence that team-level age diversity climate had influenced hiring decisions within teams.

Overall the results showed that age discrimination is not something that is confined only to laboratory-based studies, and that older workers may find it particularly hard to find work in their later years. Nonetheless, findings also suggest that the reasons for a preference for young over old exists may be complex, with factors at different analytical levels potentially influencing hiring decision makers. However, the hiring decision makers social identity could be a key factor in their decision making.

4. Introduction

A reduction in birth rates, coupled with increases in life expectancy, have resulted in an ageing population around the globe. Furthermore, this demographic change is not only impacting the overall population, but is also mirrored in the labour market, with the average age of employees getting older, and set to increase even further in the next few decades (Hertel & Zacher, 2018). Due to policy changes, such as removal of the default retirement age in the UK, an automatic age for retirement no longer exists. As such, organisations are not only having to manage a workforce which is on the whole older, but the age range within the workforce is also much greater in its diversity (Hertel & Zacher, 2018; Kolb, 2014; Toosi, 2009).

An ageing population has profound societal implications. For instance, if a large portion of this population is not working and, therefore, potentially need financial support, this will have a sizeable economic impact. In the UK, older individuals are expected to either maintain a private pension fund to support their retirement, or are reliant on the state pension and/or government assistance. A commonly used indicator of ageing populations is the Potential Support Ratio (PSR), which is calculated by dividing the number of people in a country that are of working age (16-65 years) by the number of people in the population who are over 65, and who, therefore, potentially need financial support (Hertel & Zacher, 2018). Gerland et al (2014) explain that PSR in the USA is expected to decrease by more than half by the year 2100 (from 4.6 to 1.9) meaning that there are less people in the labour market to support the older people who have left the labour market, and this trend is

mirrored in Europe, with the PSR in Germany predicted to drop from its current value of 2.9 to 1.4, by the end of this century. Nonetheless, the potential burden is not only shouldered by individuals and the state, as if more people are exiting the workforce than entering, it could lead to a potential skills shortage, with organisations already sounding the alarm for the condition of the labour market when the so-called 'baby boomers' retire (Ng & Law, 2014).

A commonly advocated potential solution to this impending crisis is to encourage people to remain in the labour force for longer and extend their working lives (Wang et al, 2008). Moreover, while this solution may have obvious benefits for both governments and organisations alike, research has shown that remaining in work longer may also have some benefits for the individual, beyond financial reward. Socio-Emotional Selectivity Theory (Cartensen, 1995), for example, proposes that an increase in social interactions can help older individuals cope better with the natural physical and cognitive declines that occur in old age, indicating perhaps that in some instances remaining in work may actually be beneficial for older workers. Likewise, a study conducted by Mor-Barak (1995) suggested that older workers found meaning in work beyond financial incentives, such as social and generativity factors. Lastly, qualitative research from Fraser, McKenna et al (2009) which explored some of the benefits of work for older workers, found that individuals viewed continuation of work as helping them maintain a healthy lifestyle in old age.

The potential advantages of maintaining a workforce with greater longevity seem apparent. However, what, if any, barriers exist that limit or restrict the position of older workers in the labour market? In 2009 the US reported 23,000 charges of workplace age discrimination

(Kunze et al, 2011). Moreover, in the UK, statistics show that in 2019 there were just over 2000 complaints of age discrimination (or ageism) that reached the tribunal stage, yet, according to the Ministry of Justice webpages (www.gov.uk/crime-justice-and-law) in 2020 that figure rose by over 74% to 3668. This increase in age related discrimination claims is also echoed around the globe in industrialised nations, and is supported by a body of research that suggests older workers may experience routine discrimination in the workplace (Truxillo et al, 2015).

Bal et al (2011) in their meta-analysis examined the impact of employee age on various factors including selection and advancement, and found age to be negatively associated with various decision outcomes. Likewise, Francioli and North (2021) explain that a recent large-scale survey conducted by the AARP found that nearly 40% of respondents believed age discrimination to be very common in the workplace and approximately 60% of male and female respondents reported having either been a victim of, or having witnessed some form of age discrimination at work. Thus, age discrimination appears to permeate different areas of employee experiences at work, including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management/appraisal, and redundancies (Truxillo et al, 2015).

While both statistics from legal proceedings and findings from research seemingly show age discrimination to be prevalent in the workplace (Hertel & Zacher 2018; Truxillo et al, 2015), there are others who argue that legislation, such as the 2010 Equality Act, provides potential protection for older people who remain in work and that the precariousness of older people's position in the labour market becomes apparent only when they have to search for new work (Heyman et al, 2014). Accordingly, the view that recruitment and

selection is a critical locus for age discrimination in the workplace was shared by the Anti-Ageism Task Force (2006) created in America in a bid to reduce age discrimination and is heavily supported by research (Bal et al, 2011; Newmark et al, 2015).

There are multiple studies which show that when older workers are presented alongside younger workers, there is a strong preference for the younger workers (Bendick et al, 1999; Rosen & Jerdee, 1976a, 1976b). As such, Lahey (2005) claims younger candidates are 40% more likely to secure employment than older individuals. Neumark et al (2015) found that if older workers are able to secure employment, that the process of finding and securing that employment takes significantly longer than for younger workers in the same position. As a consequence of the apparent prevalence of age discrimination in recruitment and selection, and the difficulty older workers face when trying to find work, Francioli and North (2021) claim that some researchers are now terming older workers as the 'new unemployables'. This phenomenon appears to be also echoed around the globe with evidence from Brazil showing that organisations there are significantly less likely to hire older workers (Amorim et al, 2019). Moreover, a study from Sweden (Ahmed et al, 2011) found that older job candidates had significantly fewer invitations to interview (failed at the short-listing stage), and even if they were invited to interview, they were then also significantly less likely to be offered the job.

While there is an ever-increasing body of research to suggest that older workers are vulnerable to age discrimination in the workplace in general, and in recruitment and selection procedures in particular (Truxillo et al, 2015), there still lacks a consensus on the possible causes and/or variability of this discrimination. For instance, why, when two

candidates are matched in other ways (educational achievements and/or previous work experience), would a hiring decision maker favour a younger candidate over an older candidate? Moreover, are there certain scenarios in which age discrimination is more or less likely to occur? Certainly, factors such as age stereotypes have been found to have a negative impact on older workers (Posthuma & Campion, 2009, Finkelstein et al 1995). Moreover, cases of age discrimination are not universal, with some industries reporting more age discrimination than others (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1996; Duncan & Loretto, 2004). Nonetheless, previous research has often focused on any explanatory variables, such as age stereotyping, in isolation, divorcing them from the context in which they are supposedly taking place. Consequently, are there factors which might make stereotyping more or less likely to occur, or even other additional explanatory variables which could better account for why hiring decision-makers may be less likely to hire an older worker? (Finkelstein, 2015).

While there is no doubt persuasive evidence which suggests that age discrimination may be particularly focused in the area of recruitment and selection (Neumark et al, 2015), there have also been criticisms of previous research due to the fact that some of these studies have tended to be limited in scope (Gordon & Arvey, 2004). This is because many studies have often been laboratory based simulation studies (Morgeson et al, 2008; Sackett & Larson, 1990). This means that researchers engage the participants using a hypothetical job scenario, and that the participants involved are likely to be university/college students, with limited work experience, experience of taking part in recruitment and selection processes, or having conducted a selection process (Avolio & Barett, 1987). As a consequence, a meta-analysis conducted by Gordon et al (2004) found that the type of research (laboratory based

versus field based, students as participants etc.) moderated the relationship between age and evaluation outcomes, with students in laboratory based situations more likely to rate older people less favourably, potentially implying that research estimates of discrimination may be inflated.

Finally, the field studies that have taken place have often been either correspondence-type audit studies, or, tended to be limited to single organisations and based on cross-sectional designs, thus, making them specific to certain scenarios and limited in their ability to explain why discrimination is occurring (Harris et al, 2018). This is important if we are to understand what conditions may be making age discrimination more or less likely to occur, as it limits the generalisability of previous findings. As such, the overall aim of this thesis is to explore the different influences that may be having an impact on decision-making in recruitment and selection processes, in respect of older workers. This will then provide a better understanding about when a decision maker may be more, or less, likely to hire an older job candidate.

5. Literature Review

In the UK recruitment and selection processes can take various forms. However, in current times, and certainly in more formalised processes, applicants apply for roles by either submitting their Curriculum Vitae (e.g. resume) or by using an application form, that can be either in paper form or online. Prospective candidates are then shortlisted (depending on the size of the candidate pool), before being invited to interview or to complete other aspects of a recruitment and selection process, such as a job trial or psychometric tests (Cook, 2016; Newell, 2005). The person (or persons) actually undertaking recruitment and selection can also differ in various ways, such as role and/or seniority, depending on the size of the organisation, the sector in which the organisation is based, and the type of role for which staff are being recruited. Nevertheless, it is generally assumed that they will be attempting to ascertain who is the 'best fit' for any relevant job, and, while in theory, all candidates, irrespective of age, should be treated equally (unless there is a justifiable and legal reason for that not to happen), evidence has consistently found this not to be case (Bal et al, 2011).

5.1.The employee or the employer approach

When attempting to establish why older workers are being discriminated against, previous research has tended to take one of two approaches. Firstly, some researchers have looked at different characteristics of older workers, that render them more or less likely to experience ageism (their appearance etc.), and strategies they then may adopt to reduce

the likelihood of being discriminated against (Berger, 2006, 2009). Other researchers have explored factors relating to the employer, such as whether employers, as an individual or a collective, are biased against hiring older workers (Harris et al, 2018). However, the idea that victims of discrimination should somehow strive to alter themselves, to make themselves less likely to experience discrimination, is based on an out-dated perspective (Cortina et al, 2018; Kim et al, 2018), with it instead being accepted that researchers should examine the structures (including organisational structures) that allow such discrimination to occur. As such, when trying to understand why older job candidates may be less likely to be selected in recruitment processes, this thesis will focus on the factors that could influence hiring decision makers, while still recognising that there may be certain characteristics of older workers (such as their gender), that could potentially worsen the impact of their age.

5.2. Who is an older worker?

Before proceeding to an in-depth discussion regarding the different factors that could influence hiring decision makers, it is arguably fundamental to first discuss who may be perceived as an 'older worker' and why. Accordingly, understanding the factors that could lead to a person being classified as 'old' or as an 'older worker' is, for a variety of reasons, complex. Moreover, while biological age may be considered a rigid category, an individual's self-perception of their own age, and the perception of others' age is more of a socially constructed category. This is because the definition of older age (and by proxy an older worker) is something that varies over time and between cultures, and is affected by a multitude of contextual factors including, an individual's physical appearance, the age of the

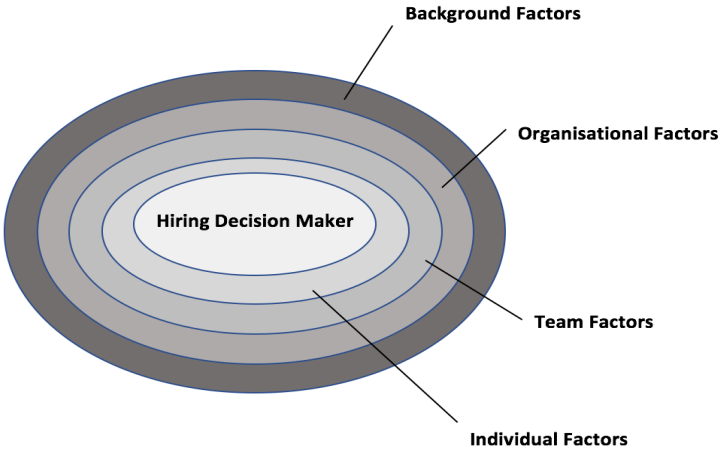
perceiver, and the context in which the perception is made (Marcus & Frizche, 2015). In addition, when a categorisation is made in an organisational context, regarding a prospective candidate's age, it also is highly likely that a social comparison will have been made. This is because a 50-year-old job candidate may feasibly be considered 'older' when compared to an individual in their early 20s. However, that viewpoint could change if that person is compared to another person who is of similar age, or older (Shore & Goldberg, 2005).

Schalk et al (2010) explain that the most basic biological measure of a person's age termed 'chronological age', represents the actual number of years a person has existed. Nonetheless, there is no defined point at which a person becomes an older worker. As such, McCarthy et al (2014) attempted to explore how decision-makers within organisations conceptualise age, and at what point a person becomes 'older'. They found that the chronological age at which a person was considered 'older' ranged from 28 years old to 75 years old, with an average age of 55 years. Yet, significantly, as the decision makers themselves aged, their conceptualisations of who they perceived as older changed, with those under the age of 35 conceptualising 'older' differently from those who were over 35 years old. In consequence, this provides evidence that older workers should be considered a social collective (e.g. a group without defined boundaries) and that in a recruitment and selection scenario, both the decision maker's evaluation of a job candidate's age, and how they see themselves, in relation to their age, potentially matter in terms of how older job candidates are evaluated.

5.3.A Multi-Level Approach to Age Discrimination in Recruitment and Selection

As well understanding who may be categorised as an older worker, it is also beneficial to understand the different levels at which influencing factors could be conceptualised. This is because a hiring decision maker does not make decisions in isolation: they are a person (or persons) based within an organisation, and within that organisation they also may, or may not, reside within a team or workgroup. This means it could be problematic to explore individual attitudes towards older workers, without also considering the organisational context in which hiring decisions are being made. Moreover, organisations themselves are geographically, economically, industrially and culturally located. This means that there could be wider social forces that influence hiring decisions. Accordingly, figure 1 (seen below) provides a model depiction of the different conceptual levels in which influencing factors will be classified in this thesis.

Figure 1: Age Discrimination: A Multi-Level Model of Influencing Factors



Researchers such as Derous and Ryan (2019) claim that the short-listing stage of recruitment and selection processes (e.g. resume and/or application form screening) has largely been overlooked by discrimination researchers, in favour of exploring fairness in areas such as interviews and/or psychometric tests.

Nevertheless, previous studies can generally be classified as either correspondence/audit studies or laboratory-based/simulated employment situations (Gordon & Arvey, 2004). Correspondence studies usually consist of researchers creating job applications/CVs for fictitious job applicants and then applying for real vacancies to see if they are short-listed, or, get a call back from recruiting organisations (Neumark et al, 2015). Accordingly, one of the benefits of these studies is that they are more realistic than lab-based approaches, and, thus, have greater validity. However, there are also downsides, as researchers using this approach can only establish whether older candidates are less likely to be hired. They do not provide an understanding of why these candidates were discounted, or, any other potentially relevant information about the decision maker (such as their age etc.) or their organisational context.

Laboratory studies or simulated employment situations have tended to take the form of decision making tasks in which participants are presented with fictitious scenarios and asked to make an evaluative judgement about different individuals (Finkelstein et al, 1995). These types of studies have tended to utilise students for participants.

Yet, some of benefits of lab-based studies can also be considered as a negative. For instance, one benefit is that such studies are much more controlled than correspondence

studies because researchers can control any comparative choices (e.g. make sure that the job candidates vary just by age etc.). As such, it is easier to attribute judgements/evaluative outcomes to specific characteristics, because job candidates can be matched according to different criteria. However, this could also be considered as a downside, as in real life short-listing processes, prospective candidates likely vary by numerous factors (including previous work experience, qualifications etc.). In consequence, by manufacturing a controlled situation, researchers potentially render these studies less ecologically valid (Gordon & Arvey, 2004). To summarise, there is no clear consensus as to what constitutes the 'better' approach to recruitment and selection research design, as both research designs have their own strengths and weaknesses.

While there are no doubt a multitude of factors that could influence decision makers, when they are faced with older job candidates, previous research has tended to focus on either the characteristics of the rater (their age, tenure etc.), the actual selection process (e.g. the amount of information decision makers were given about candidates), or factors such as age stereotypes, which have been shown multiple times to impact various areas of the workplace (Morgeson et al, 2008). However, this focus has led to gaps in our understanding of how older workers are evaluated in recruitment and selection processes, for example little is known about how decision makers' organisational context could influence their hiring decisions (with regards to older workers). Accordingly, this thesis will explore a number of different influencing factors that can be conceptualised as existing at the individual level, the team level, the organisational level, and the wider background level. Moreover, the factors that have been included in this literature review are factors that are either heavily supported by previous research, or, according to key researchers in this area,

constitute a likely knowledge gap (Bal et al, 2011; Finkelstein & Farrell, 2007; Morgeson et al, 2008; Truxillo et al, 2015). As such, this means that not all influencing factors have been included in this review, which does not mean that other factors are not potentially important, it is simply beyond the scope of a PhD to include every influencing and/or moderating factor in a thesis of this size.

5.4.Influential Background Factors

There are a host of background (or macro) factors that could potentially be impacting recruitment and selection processes. However, this literature review will focus on: the labour market, societal age norms, industry/sector, and job type. This is because these factors specifically, have been found by previously researchers to have a negative impact on the position of older workers (Moore, 2009; Shore & Goldberg, 2005).

The classification of these factors as background factors is due to the fact that they could potentially have wider influence, outside of any individual organisation. As such, there may be little that individual decision-makers can do to influence these factors (for example, the condition of the labour market is largely subject to economic forces that are outside of the remit of individual organisations or hiring decision makers). Nonetheless, their potential influence should not be discounted, as while some of these background factors could have a direct impact on hiring decision makers, some of the other influencing factors, that will be discussed in this chapter (organisational level factors etc.), could be also be contingent on these factors.

5.5.The Labour Market

While older workers undoubtedly have some agency regarding their ability to remain in the labour force, there is evidence that the economic performance of the country in which they reside can have a significant impact on their labour market position, and potentially influence the likelihood of them securing employment in a recruitment and selection process (Shore & Goldberg, 2005). For example, during periods of economic prosperity, older workers have been shown to enjoy a stronger labour market position (Karpinska et al 2011). However, there is also evidence that negative age stereotypes and cultural age norms may have more of an impact on hiring decision-makers during economic periods of downturn, perhaps, therefore, implying that in a recruitment and selection process, the economic context may influence how hireable older candidates are rated (Karpinska et al, 2011).

The proposition that older workers may hold a weaker labour market position and find it more difficult to secure employment during certain economic periods is consistent with Becker's (1957) economic theory of discrimination. Economic theories of discrimination can generally be divided into two approaches: competitive and collective. Competitive models are based on the notion of individual behaviour (e.g. individuals discriminating against other individuals). Whereas collective models position entire groups as discriminating against other groups (e.g. systemic racism such as white people discriminating against black).

Competitive models of discrimination can be further differentiated into taste-based and statistical-based paradigms. Taste based theories propose that discrimination is due to

personal taste and that this taste is based on irrational beliefs that may be due to characteristics such as personal prejudice or stereotypical views (e.g. the taste for discrimination is due to individual factors such as a dislike of older workers or a stereotypical belief that they may be less productive than younger workers). However, statistical theories posit that discrimination occurs due to rational beliefs about others, such as the belief that older workers may retire soon, and, as such, there would be costs associated with recruiting and needing to train a new employee. Likewise, it also suggests that discriminatory decision-making can occur due to a lack of time and/or information (e.g. that recruiters are in a time-limited situation, so may not have the resources to seek information that challenges age stereotypes, and, therefore, hire the person they think is the 'safest bet') (Guryan & Charles, 2013; Lippens et al, 2022).

Becker's (1957) economic theory of discrimination can be categorised as a competitive taste-based approach. Becker maintains that hiring decision-makers may have a taste for discrimination, but that they can only exercise this taste in certain labour market conditions. These conditions could be when an organisation is struggling to maintain an adequate labour supply (e.g. there are more job openings than candidates). Accordingly, Henkens and Schippers (2008) maintain that employers will often consider recruiting individuals that are different from their typical employee, such as older or migrant workers, when they are facing labour shortages. Becker's theory is also supported by research from Fields et al (2005), which found that ethnic representation within a workforce, was positively related to the difficulty the organisation had procuring labour, meaning that the harder it was for them to fill jobs, the more likely they were to employ ethnic minority workers. As such, it seems feasible that when hiring decision makers are able to choose from an abundant

candidate pool, they may be free to exercise any individual preferences for younger over older workers. Yet, in other economic periods, older workers may be much more likely to be successful in a recruitment and selection process, as they may not be competing against younger candidates.

5.6.Societal Age Norms

Age norms, which are defined by Lawrence (1996 p.209) as "widely shared judgments of the standard or typical ages of individuals holding a role or status within a given context", may exert influence and steer individual behaviour, with regard to whether society views behaviour as 'age appropriate'. The seminal study by Neugarten et al (1965), found that individuals develop, through the socialisation process, strong views about age appropriate behaviour. Moreover, these views manifest as a type of cultural timetable in which life events are expected to take place at certain points (for example, we might expect people to marry in their 20-30s, child bear before their 40s, and retire in their 60s). As a consequence, if individuals deviate from this age timetable, then, while it is not always viewed as negative, it may undoubtedly be viewed as unusual.

Moore (2009) claims that recruitment and selection processes are an area in which socially constructed norms likely guide such behaviour, suggesting that when faced with an older job candidate, decision makers may be influenced by age norms. Karpinska and colleagues (2011) maintain that workplace age norms are probably influenced by the national pensions system, and that while a default retirement age no longer exists, the age at which individuals become eligible for the state pension is likely to be the current age norm around

which individuals are expected to retire. Accordingly, if a prospective job candidate was older than the retirement age, or even approaching this age, then searching for work would appear incongruent with this age norm, and, thus, it could be more difficult for them to secure employment.

The two dominant paradigms that posit how and why social norms affect behaviour are Rational Choice Theory and Socioeconomic Theory. The Socioeconomic approach proposes that through socialisation, norms are internalised by individuals, and this internalisation means that external rewards and punishments for non-conformity are unnecessary. The Rational Choice approach, in contrast, suggests that norms are enforced through both positive and negative sanctions (Radl, 2012). As such, this approach would posit that older job candidates are potentially facing discrimination in hiring processes, as they are being punished for deviating from an age norm. Other possibilities are that deviation from the norm potentially makes age more salient in a selection process (e.g. the older candidates stand out more) and, thus, allows any 'taste for discrimination' to be enacted (Becker, 1957).

While Rational Choice provides a potential theory as to how age norms could impact hiring practices, with the assumption being that people searching for work in their later years is a norm violation, research has also shown that workers can face age discrimination from a relatively young age. For example, Wangberg et al (2016) found age to be negatively associated with employment success from about the age of 50, potentially raising the question of whether an individual of that age is really perceived as abnormal for wanting to remain in work.

An alternative theory that could explain how age norms impact the workplace and, in particular, hiring practices is Career Timetable theory (Lawrence, 1988). This theory posits that within the workplace, different job roles are subject to different age norms. Employees are then judged against a timetable, which establishes if an employee, or prospective employee in the context of recruitment and selection, is on target with that timetable, or, behind/ahead of schedule. Shore et al (2003) explain that those individuals who are on target, or ahead of the career timetable, are then rewarded. Conversely those individuals who are behind schedule are viewed less favourably as deviating from the norm, with research showing that these individuals receive lower performance ratings and are less likely to be promoted (Tsui et al, 2002).

When considering how Career Timetable theory (Lawrence, 1988) might explain how age norms influence hiring decision makers, when faced with an older job candidate, then it may be important to reflect on how age norms are violated in recruitment and selection processes. Possible norm violations could be older workers trying to gain employment at an age that is past, or near to, the usual retirement age at that organisation, or, potentially even applying for an entry level job (as those jobs might feasibly be perceived as being for 'younger people'). Nevertheless, while this theory may have some explanatory value in explaining how age norms are enacted within organisations, this value does appear limited to quite specific scenarios. As such, it does not really provide an adequate explanation as to why age discrimination occurs at an age much earlier than retirement, and, is far more widespread than just instances where a worker is applying for lower or entry level positions.

5.7.Industry/Sector

There is strong and robust evidence that attitudes towards older workers, and any subsequent discrimination, may vary across sectors and industries. This potentially indicates that when recruiting new employees, hiring decision makers may be influenced by the sector in which they are based. For example, Arrowsmith and McGoldrick (1996) claim that negative age stereotyping is more prevalent in industries that place high value on change and innovation (such as the tech industry). The hospitality sector, which has traditionally relied upon younger casual workers to fill low skilled roles, is another industry that reports high levels of age discrimination (Lucas, 1993; Martin & Gardiner, 2007). In addition, research by Granleese and Sayer (2006) found that women in the higher education sector, in both academic and professional services roles, were subject to a combination of age and gender discrimination. Moreover, a combination of both age and gender discrimination has also been observed in the financial sector (Duncan & Loretto, 2004). The combination of different candidate characteristics (such as gender and age) will be discussed in more detail at the end of this literature review chapter. However, there does appear to be evidence that age discrimination does not occur in isolation, which raises the possibility that prospective job candidates may not be being viewed as simply 'older' or 'younger' workers, but that different characteristics (social and/or demographic) may intersect in some way.

A sector that places a great value on youth, particularly in western culture where youth is equated with beauty, is the entertainment and media industry. Lincoln and Allen (2004) explain that while different from a corporate recruitment and selection process, the demand for actors clearly reduces with age and that older actors often struggle to find

work. Gerbner (1998) maintains that studies on age discrimination in the entertainment industry have shown that television actors have steadily become younger over the past 3 decades. Similarly, research conducted by the Screen Actors Guild (1999) found that it is particularly difficult for actors over the age of 40 to obtain roles in feature films, and this effect is compounded for older women (e.g. that again gender and age are potentially combining).

Nonetheless, while it seems plausible that hiring decision makers may evaluate older job candidates differently, depending on the sector in which they are based, this situation is not always necessarily negative for older candidates. For example, there are some sectors which report far less age discrimination, with health and social care being one such sector (Moore, 2009). Yet, a potential explanation for this reportedly low level of age discrimination could be linked to Becker's (1957) theory of discrimination, as health and social care is a sector in the UK that suffers from well documented labour supply shortages.

Collectively, findings suggest that there are some sectors in which older workers could find it even more difficult to secure employment, with hiring decision makers more inclined to favour younger candidates. There are also various potential explanations for why this may be occurring, with this potentially being due to the fact that some sectors have clear links to the content of age stereotypes (e.g. stereotype that older workers are less capable with technology). As such, it seems then understandable why older workers report high levels of age discrimination in the tech industry. Furthermore, other industries may experience vast differences in their ability to secure an adequate labour supply, with the hospitality industry traditionally relying upon younger unskilled workers. This could then mean that they

experience a vastly different candidate pool compared to other sectors such as healthcare. Thus, when attempting to understand why decision makers may be more or less inclined to employ an older job candidate, it may be important to first consider the sector in which that decision maker is based.

5.8.Job Role

The final background factor that will be explored is the job role for which any recruitment is targeted (e.g. the job role the older candidate is applying for). Perry and Finkelstein (1999) propose that when short-listing applicants, decision-makers engage in a matching process, during which a prospective job candidate's suitability is inferred, when job-related cues are matched to the individual's profile. Furthermore, some cues, such as age, may be more salient in certain circumstances, such as a job role that is considered more suitable for a young person (e.g. a young age typed role). The proposition that some jobs are age typed as being old or young is supported by research (Reeves 2011; Shore & Goldberg, 2005), which found that in a recruitment and selection process, older workers were more likely to be successful in obtaining employment if the job they were applying for was classified as an 'old type' job. Conversely, they were more likely to be unsuccessful if applying for a 'young type' role.

How, and why, then does a job get typed as being old or young? Undoubtedly, humans have some physical deterioration as they age, meaning that there are potentially some jobs that may be deemed physically unsuitable for some older workers (Waldman & Avolio, 1986). Nonetheless, research has found age discrimination to present in a variety of sectors, many

of which, such as the tech industry, are not considered manual or heavily physical professions (Arrowsmith and McGoldrick, 1996). Likewise, legal protection from age discrimination begins in many countries from 40 years onwards (McCarthy et al, 2014), when the physical limitations of ageing may still be in their infancy.

Some of the potential explanations for how a job gets age typed include the age of the person who was in the role previously (e.g. a younger person filled the role so they deem the role to be more suitable for a young person). Also, the age range of the applicant pool, with Cleveland et al (1988) finding that the age profile of an applicant pool impacted on the evaluation of older job applicants. This then suggests that hiring decision makers make judgements on whether a job is old or young based on who actually applies for the job, and that once those judgements have been made, a person who does not fit that criterion (e.g. an older person applying for a young typed job), may be less likely to secure employment.

5.9.Summary of Background Factors

When attempting to understand what factors may influence decision makers in a recruitment and selection process, and influence their propensity to hire an older candidate, it may be important to first consider the factors that have been highlighted in this section. These factors: the condition of the labour market, current societal age norms, the industry/sector in which the decision maker is employed (and in which the candidate is applying for a job), and lastly the role for which the candidate is applying, could potentially frame other influences, and, therefore, hiring decisions may be actually embedded in these factors. For example, the conditions of the labour market may overshadow any individual

attitudes towards older workers, or any age norms within a specific sector or industry. This is because particular age preferences cannot be exercised unless there is an adequate labour supply. Moreover, the prevalence of age norms in any given industry may influence the culture in an organisation and mean that some organisations are considered more 'age friendly' towards older workers. Thus, it is plausible these organisations may be more accepting of older job candidates, or more used to a more diverse candidate pool. Lastly, the role for which an older candidate may be applying could be typed as either young or old. This may mean that, in some contexts, the candidate's age is not only more salient (e.g. their age stands out so could trigger stereotyping etc.), but also that they differ from the typical candidate that the hiring decision maker thinks should be applying for the role.

5.10. Influential Individual Level Factors

There may be a multitude of factors that are individual to each hiring decision maker, which could influence their evaluation of older job candidates, with previous research examining the impact of decision makers own age, their attitudes towards older workers, their tenure, and work experience (Morgeson et al, 2008). However, this next section will primarily focus on the influence of age stereotypes and affect towards older workers. This is because firstly, with regards to age stereotypes, there is strong and enduring evidence that they are negatively impacting the workplace for older workers (Harris et al, 2018). As such, the potential of their influence cannot be discounted when exploring key factors. In addition, theoretical models of bias propose there to be a second element of biased attitudes, termed affect (Fiske, 2004), which been largely overlooked by researchers in this area. Thus,

little is known about how affect may also impact behaviour in the workplace, and, as a consequence, there has been a call to examine this factor in more detail (Finkelstein, 2015).

5.11. Age Stereotypes

The dictionary definition of 'bias' is "a strong feeling in favour, or against, one group of people, often not based on fair judgement" (Collins Dictionary n.d.). Yet, whilst there are various theories on the conceptualisation of bias, one of the most well-known is based on the tri-partite model of attitude development (Fiske, 2004), and considers attitudes/bias to be made up of three distinct elements: cognitive, affective, and behavioural. Stereotyping is the cognitive part (e.g. a person's thoughts about older workers), prejudice or liking/disliking is the affective part, and discrimination is the potential behavioural outcome that can result from stereotyping and/or affect (Finkelstein & Farell, 2007).

Stereotypes can be understood as a type generalisation, usually over exaggerated, that is made about certain groups (in this instance about older people in the workplace) with regard to their characteristics, attributes or behaviours (Allport et al, 1954). Moreover, stereotypes are used as a guide for behaviour in a variety of social situations, by providing a schema or mental shortcut that prescribes appropriate interpersonal conduct (Avolio & Barrett, 1987).

McCann and Giles (2002) explain that when attempting to understand how age stereotypes may be impacting the workplace, it is probably useful to look to the wider world. Cuddy and

Fiske's (2002) stereotype typology which is illustrated below in Figure 2, was developed to understand how different minority groups are stereotyped in society.

Figure 2: Stereotype Typology (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002)

		Competence	
		Low	High
Warmth	High	**Paternalistic stereotype** low status, not competitive (e.g., housewives, elderly people, disabled people)	**Admiration** high status, not competitive (e.g., ingroup, close allies)
	Low	**Contemptuous stereotype** low status, competitive (e.g., welfare recipients, poor people)	**Envious stereotype** high status, competitive (e.g., Asians, Jews, rich people, feminists)

This typology shows us that older people, in general, are often stereotyped as being high in warmth, but low in competence. Accordingly, from this perspective, it is feasible to see how stereotypes about older people lacking in competence could impact on their position in the workplace and, thus, influence hiring decision makers.

Examples of some of the age stereotypes that have been found to be common in the workplace can be seen in Table 1 below (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). However, research (Rosen & Jerdee, 1976) has shown stereotypes are not always negative, with the last two stereotypes included in the table below, actually considered to be positive towards older workers.

Table 1: Common Workplace Age Stereotypes & Content

Stereotype	Content
Performance/Productivity Stereotype	Older workers are less productive
Motivation Stereotype	Older workers are less motivated in the workplace
Reaction to Change Stereotype	Older workers are resistant or negative towards changes in the workplace.
Training/development Stereotype	Older workers are less willing to undertake training
Home/work-life imbalance stereotype	Older workers are especially vulnerable to home/work-life imbalances
Sickness stereotype	Older workers are more likely to be sick than younger workers
Cost stereotype	Older workers cost organisations more than younger workers
Interpersonal Skills Stereotype	Older workers have better interpersonal skills than younger workers
Dependability/Reliability Stereotype	Older workers are more reliable/dependable than younger workers

With regards to evidence to support the content of the above stereotypes, and, whether they have any grounding in reality, previous research has on the whole, challenged the content of many common age stereotypes (Chiu et al, 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2012; Waldman & Avolio, 1986). Nonetheless, there is a body of research that has found age stereotypes to have an impact on a variety of decisions in the workplace, including recruitment and selection, with age stereotyping leading to older workers being rated lower in selection processes, performance appraisals, less likely to be promoted, and more likely to face redundancy/lay-off (Avolio & Barrett, 1987; Finkelstein, Burke & Raju, 1995; Posthuma & Campion, 2009).

How then, might age stereotypes impact on recruitment and selection processes and hiring decision-making and lead to the occurrence of age discrimination? There are several potential answers to this question, with one relating to the social categorisation of prospective job candidates, and the others relating to characteristics of the actual selection process.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) proposes that when individuals categorise people into different groups, they create an 'us' and 'them' situation (formally termed as 'in-group' or 'out-group'). Moreover, research has shown that people have a tendency to exaggerate differences with out-group members, and over-estimate their similarities with people they perceive as in-group members. This exaggeration process can also be linked to problematic cognitive processes such as stereotyping (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). As such, this could suggest that when a hiring decision maker perceives an older job candidate as out-group, then they may have a tendency to rely on stereotypes to predict their behaviour. This then results in the decision maker evaluating the older candidate as being a poor choice of hire, as the content of age stereotypes is generally derogatory about older people in the workplace (e.g. they are less productive and motivated etc.).

The second potential answer as to why age stereotypes are having such a negative influence on older workers relates to features of the actual selection process. Karpinska and colleagues (2011) assert that stereotypes are often used by individuals as a cognitive shortcut in time-limited situations, when people have to make relatively quick judgements on people with limited information, such as selection processes. This means that they are left with no, or limited, time or information to challenge the stereotype content. As such, it

seems feasible to consider that hiring decision makers, when put into time limited situations (and when given a limited amount of information about the individual about whom they are making a decision) could be vulnerable to a reliance on age stereotypes.

A further potential reason that has been proposed as to why hiring decision makers could be vulnerable to age stereotyping is the salience of age in a recruitment and selection process, in as much as age is a highly visible identity marker (Perry & Finkelstein, 1999). Yet, in the UK it is no longer common or best practice to include a date of birth on a CV or application form. Nevertheless, when researching the outcomes of the presence of implicit and explicit markers of age on CVs, Derous and Decoster (2017) found that while overall the older candidates were rated as less hireable than younger candidates, the ratings for older job candidates were actually lower when their age was concealed, suggesting that decision makers may be taking cues about a candidate's age from other information sources, including their education/qualifications and/or work history.

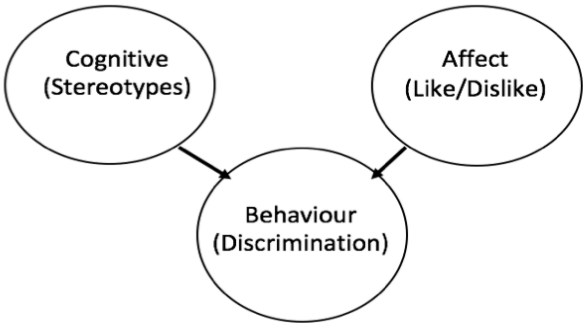
There is convincing research that age stereotypes have negative outcomes for older workers. As such, they could be feasibly impacting on the likelihood of an older candidate being successful in a recruitment and selection process, and, thus warrant inclusion when attempting to establish their influences on hiring decision makers. In addition, there are also plausible explanations as to why hiring decision-makers may be influenced by age stereotypes. Yet, what, if any, evidence exists to show whether age stereotyping is more or less likely in particular contexts? Posthuma and Campion (2009) made a number of propositions about what they termed 'upstream' and 'downstream' moderators. The upstream moderators supposedly increased the likelihood of age stereotypes being

triggered, and the downstream moderators decreased the likelihood of age stereotypes resulting in actual discrimination. The upstream moderators included factors such as job-age type (whether typed as an old or young job), the industry/sector, how much information a rater is given (again, as indicated, limited information could potentially lead to stereotyping occurring), and finally the age of the rater, which was posited as likely having an impact on stereotyping, until the rater themselves identifies as being part of that in-group (e.g. they stereotype until they perceive themselves as also being an older worker and then they stop stereotyping as they perceive other older people as 'in group'). Accordingly, while it should be noted that these moderators were not empirically examined by Posthuma and Campion and that they were propositions based on previous research, these propositions appear consistent with many of the key influences that have been discussed so far in this literature review. Thus, it suggests that further research is needed to understand the contexts that may increase or decrease the likelihood of stereotyping occurring, and the extent to which age stereotyping leads to actual discrimination.

5.12. Affect Towards Older Workers

The other individual level factor that will be explored in this section is affect. As explained previously, the tripartite model of attitudes (which can be seen below in Figure 3), which has been adapted for the conceptualisation of bias by numerous researchers (Fiske, 2004) proposes that bias comprises of both cognitive and affective elements, and that both have the potential to produce a behavioural outcome (e.g. discrimination). The affective element refers to a person's feelings about another person/group (e.g. like/dislike, sympathy, disgust or anger etc.).

Figure 3: Tripartite Model of Bias (Fiske, 2004)



Nevertheless, there is some ambiguity in the affect literature, with regards to whether 'affect' should be conceptualised and measured as a bipolar or unipolar construct (Russell & Carroll, 1999; Zautra et al, 1997). This disagreement is centred around arguments as to whether positive and negative affect are independent feelings, or, whether they are one construct, with the opposite of positive affect being negative affect. As such, this next section will provide a broad discussion of 'affect', with propositions being made as to how both 'positive affect' and 'negative affect' could influence hiring decision makers. The methodology chapter will then provide more detail about the approach that is used for the measurement and conceptualisation of affect in this thesis (e.g. unipolar or bipolar).

Finkelstein (2015) maintains that with regard to older people in the workplace, affect is the element of bias that has been least empirically investigated, and, as such, is not as well understood as age stereotypes. However, a study by Cuddy et al (2007) found affect towards older people (NB this study examined affect towards older people in general society, as opposed to specifically in the workplace) was a stronger predictor of behavioural intentions than stereotypes. Thus, if these findings were to be extrapolated to the

workplace, then it could indicate that while there is a body of research which links age stereotyping and discriminatory outcomes (Harris et al, 2018; Posthuma & Campion, 2009), that affect towards older people in the workplace may also be guiding individual behaviour.

Fiske and Lee (2008), when they reviewed racial and gender affect in the workplace, acknowledged that looking only at the stereotype element of the tripartite model of bias, meant that researchers were missing a key part of understanding how, and why, some people are biased against certain groups. Moreover, they claimed that affect is more likely to be implicated in discrimination when economic stereotypes are elicited. As such, in relation to older workers, this could be mean that if a hiring decision maker ascribes to the stereotypical belief that older workers cost more than younger workers, which is a common age stereotype (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Posthuma & Campion, 2009), then this could lead to anger and/or resentment, and negative affect towards older workers. Nonetheless, while the potential link to economic stereotypes provides one explanation for why affect may be implicated in decision making, this is again quite a specific scenario and, as a consequence, further explanations for how and why affect may be impacting decision making will be explored.

In wider society (as opposed to specifically in the workplace), one of the theories commonly put forward to explain why age discrimination occurs is Terror Management Theory (Becker, 1971, 1973, 1975). Proponents of this theory (Greenberg et al, 1986) argue that age discrimination occurs as a result of anxiety about our own death, and that when engaging in age discrimination, individuals are actually trying to control this emotional reaction and avoid being reminded of this inevitability (Finkelstein & Farrell, 2007). Accordingly, when

considering this element of affect, it could be theorised that anxiety about death does not lead directly to the behavioural outcome of discrimination, but instead triggers anxiety, which leads to an impact on affect, which then results in the discrimination.

There does appear to be empirical support for the idea that as humans, we are scared of death (Pennebaker, 1997; Wegner, 1992), and, as a consequence, make conscious attempts to limit intrusive thoughts about our own death. Moreover, key research by Arndt et al (1997) hypothesised that when participants were reminded of their own death, they would try to limit death related thoughts. As such, when accessibility of death related thoughts was measured, results showed these thoughts to be lower for the participants who had been reminded of their own mortality (as opposed to the control group who had received no such reminder of their own mortality).

Nevertheless, while the use of Terror Management Theory (Becker, 1971, 1973, 1975) to explain age discrimination in wider society has some potential support, one of the main drawbacks of this theory is the lack of empirical validation for its application to the workplace. Moreover, one of the possible reasons why this theory is limited in its ability to explain age discrimination in the workplace, is due to the fact that discrimination in the workplace occurs at an age that in wider society would be unlikely to be considered 'old' (McCarthy et al, 2014). As such, while it has not been empirically investigated, it seems somewhat improbable that when faced with a job candidate in their 40s or early 50s, that a decision-maker would avoid selecting that candidate due to that person triggering anxiety about their own mortality. Moreover, this theory attributes age discrimination to be solely as a result of individual factors (e.g. psychologically defensive behaviour to protect the

individual), and fails to plausibly explain, why, for example, age discrimination is more prevalent in certain sectors, or within some organisations (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1996). In consequence, while it provides some reasons for why, as a society, we may value youth, it provides an unconvincing and limited explanation why hiring decision makers may be less likely to select an older candidate in a recruitment and selection process.

A more plausible explanation as to why affect towards older workers may influence hiring decision-makers, can once again (as with stereotypes) be linked to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This is because it has been posited that our social identities also have an affective element (Tajfel, 1978), meaning that we like or have positive feelings about people who we perceive as being similar to us (in group) and may have negative affect for people who we perceive as different (out-group). Moreover, this theoretical explanation can also be linked to a further approach that is supposedly underpinned by Social Identity Theory called Relational Demography (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Goldberg et al, 2010).

Relational demography (Lawrence, 1997) uses a similarity/attraction or homophily paradigm to propose that in the workplace employees like being surrounded by people who are demographically similar to them, and that when this takes place, it leads to higher organisational commitment, lower turnover intention, and greater levels of cohesiveness (Kirchmeyer, 1995; Riordan & Shore, 1997; Tsui et al, 1992). As such, this approach would posit that when a candidate is demographically similar to a decision maker (i.e. younger decision-maker and younger job candidate) then the decision-maker may be more likely to categorise the candidate as in-group, and, may then have higher amounts of affect for

them. This then results in them being more likely to hire an in-group candidate and less likely to hire a candidate who is demographically different (and out-group).

5.13. Summary of Individual Level Influences

The factors covered in this section are conceptualised as being influential at the individual level, meaning they are individual to each hiring decision maker. Furthermore, they are based on the notion of bias, in this instance bias against older workers, comprising of two potentially predictive elements (with discrimination being the behavioural outcome of the other two elements). Firstly, the cognitive element, which manifests as how much an individual engages in age stereotyping (e.g. believes that older workers are less productive, less motivated etc.). Secondly, feelings, which manifests as affect towards older people in the workplace (e.g. do they like or feel affection towards older people in workplace or do older people potentially trigger feelings of resentment or anger).

Previous research (Harris et al, 2018; Posthuma & Campion, 2009) has found age stereotypes to be significant predictors of negative outcomes in the workplace. As a result, it could be likely that they may impact on hiring decision making, with those decision makers who agree with the content of age stereotypes, then possibly less likely to hire an older candidate (as they would believe the older candidate to be less productive than a younger worker, and, thus, a younger worker would be more beneficial to their employing organisation, and a more successful 'hire').

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) provides a plausible theoretical explanation as to why age stereotypes are actually being enacted in the workplace, with the suggestion being that when a decision-maker perceives a person as out-group, that they may have a tendency to use stereotypes as a schema to predict how the other person will behave, which in the case of older workers is mainly detrimental.

The affective element of bias has been far less investigated in workplace. Nonetheless, preliminary evidence (Cuddy et al, 2007) found affect to be acting as a predictor of behavioural intentions. Furthermore, it was proposed that affect may actually be triggered by certain age stereotypes (economic stereotypes etc.), which could also explain some instances of discrimination against older workers.

In terms of theoretical explanations for why affect is influencing decision makers, once again Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and the related theory of Relational Demography (Lawrence, 1997) may provide some clues. This is because individuals may have positive affect towards people who they perceive as in-group and have negative affect for people who they categorise as out-group. Moreover, individuals supposedly like being surrounded by people who are demographically similar to them in the workplace. As such, this could indicate that in hiring scenarios, younger decision-makers, may have a tendency to favour younger candidates over older candidates (as they see them as in-group and demographically similar), whereas older decision makers may favour older candidates.

5.14. Influential Organisational Level Factors

The factors that have been explored so far have been factors that could exist outside of any individual workplace (e.g. background factors), and factors that are individual to each decision maker. However, it was posited earlier in this chapter that a hiring decision maker does not make decisions in isolation, meaning that in a recruitment and selection process, the decision maker also resides within an organisation. As such, this next section will explore the potential impact of organisational factors on hiring decision makers.

There is some preliminary evidence that organisational factors may influence the likelihood of discrimination occurring in an organisation. For example, research by Fitzgerald et al, (1997) found that tolerance towards sexual harassment within an organisation was one of the biggest predictors of sexual harassment actually taking place in the workplace. This, therefore, implies that that if an organisation accepts discriminatory attitudes, or turns a blind eye to such views, that discrimination may then be more likely to take place. Furthermore, it could also suggest that there are some organisational environments in which individual employees are more able to enact personal biases (or express prejudicial views etc.), without fear of penalty. However, with specific regard to older workers, the impact of organisational factors constitutes a significant knowledge gap (Zacher & Gielnik, 2014).

When attempting to establish which organisational factors may be most influential to hiring decision makers (in respect of older job candidates), then given the level of research attention that organisational culture has garnered over the past few decades, this factor

cannot not be overlooked (Schein, 1985, 1996). Moreover, it has repeatedly been claimed that if we are to understand why age discrimination is occurring in the workplace, and in particular why older workers face discrimination when attempting to secure employment, then it is important to understand how attitudes towards older workers are embedded within organisational cultures (Staundinger, 2015). Nevertheless, organisational climate, which is sometimes referred to as the sister concept of organisational culture (Wilson, 2000), has been receiving lots of attention recently with regards to older workers, with researchers linking age-related climates to a number of both positive and negative organisational outcomes (Kunze et al, 2011, 2013, 2014). As such, both organisational culture and climate will be explored in this following section.

5.15. Organisational Culture

Schein's (1985, 1996) seminal research on organisational culture suggests that culture, which is the term he adopted to describe the shared beliefs and values that employees hold, (both consciously and unconsciously) regarding their employing organisation, develops from a wide variety of influences including an organisation's past history, and the industry in which it functions. Schein proposed organisational culture to consist of three conceptual layers. The first layer he called artefacts, which are the shared behaviours that employees exhibit. The second later is values, and relates to the shared beliefs that employees have about their employing organisation. Lastly, the third layer is underlying assumptions and relates to the shared implicit assumptions that employees have about their employing organisation and the world in general.

The proposition that organisational culture plays a key role in hiring decisions is not a novel suggestion. Bowen et al (1991) posited the idea that hiring decisions are often based on decision makers matching a prospective candidate to an organisation and its culture, rather than against a specific job profile. This idea is described as person-organisation fit and is based on the notion that prospective job candidates should ideally be a 'good fit' for the hiring organisation, and that this is just as important as his/her individual knowledge, skills and abilities.

A study by Wilson (2000) explored the role of organisational culture on diversity and inclusion within organisations, and found that organisational culture can actually undermine robust and systematic human resource practices, such as a thorough recruitment and selection process. Moreover, this study found that those organisations who were most successful at managing an inclusive workforce, were not the organisations that loudly advertised their values as 'diversity friendly', but instead were the organisations that had cultures which showed that they actually valued diversity (e.g. recruited, promoted and rewarded diverse employees etc.). These findings therefore imply that organisation culture plays a key role in influencing its employees and potentially hiring decisions.

With specific regard to older workers and organisational culture, it is clear to see how Schein's (1996) three level model could be applied to the treatment of older workers, and in particular older job candidates in a recruitment and selection process. For example, if an organisation consistently shows that it does not value its older workers, by treating them unfairly and in a discriminatory manner, then this could lead to, or be as a result of, shared

implicit assumptions about older workers within that organisation. Furthermore, it is also feasible to see how individual level factors such as age stereotypes, may have a relationship with an organisation's culture, as shared assumptions among employees may actually be considered a shared consensus regarding age.

While there remains quite limited research examining the role of organisational cultures on the treatment of older workers, Zacher and Gielnik (2014) attempted to explore whether organisations have different age cultures. As such, they found preliminary evidence that some organisations appear to have young age cultures, which place greater value on younger workers, whereas other organisations have old age cultures, which are more positive towards older workers. Likewise, Appanah and Biggs (2015) conducted a theoretical review of the role of 'age friendly cultures' in organisations and how this then impacted on the workplace participation of older workers. Yet, while the consequences of specific organisational cultures such as 'age cultures' or 'age friendly cultures' are still unknown (or have not yet been empirically examined), it could be hypothesised that those organisations with cultures that are more accepting of older workers may then be more likely to hire an older candidate in a recruitment and selection process, or, a perhaps a better way of viewing the situation could be that they are more likely to not hire a person just because they are older.

5.16. Organisational Climate

There appears to be some evidence to suggest that an organisation's culture could impact hiring practices, however, this is not the only organisational factor which may further

warrant examination. Organisational climate, which can be described as employees' shared perceptions of their employing organisation's policies, procedures, and practices, may also impact decision maker behaviour in a recruitment and selection process (Wilson, 2000).

Reichers and Schneider (1990) maintain that employees' awareness of organisational climate occurs as part of a sense-making process, in which information regarding relevant stimuli is then interpreted. This results in employees making a judgment with regard to which behaviours may be rewarded or punished within their employing organisation. As such, hiring decision makers may perceive themselves to be rewarded or punished for recruiting an older worker, depending on how they interpret the climate at their employing organisation.

Organisational climate (as well as organisational culture), can be conceptualised as a generic organisational climate, which encompasses the overall functioning of a specific organisation, or as a particularistic climate, such as climate for diversity or inclusion. Moreover, in terms of research, the particularisation of climate has been found to improve the concept's predictive validity, and in respect of practicality for its use in the workplace, make it a more useable tool for diversity management practitioners (Schnieder et al, 2013; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

Previous research has on the whole found general diversity related climates to have a positive impact on the workplace, with studies showing a positive diversity climate can reduce diversity-related conflict in the workplace, and moderate the relationship between workforce diversity and organisational performance (Nishii, 2013). Furthermore, a meta-

analysis by Mor-Barak and colleagues (2016) found that those organisations whose diversity management efforts focus on improving diversity climates, were consistently associated with more positive workplace outcomes. These findings, therefore, suggest that organisational climate is impacting behaviour in the workplace, and, therefore, may also potentially influence hiring decisions

Nonetheless, due to an ageing population, and the fact that going forward organisations are potentially going to have to manage a workforce with a far older age profile, there has been a call from researchers to narrow the conceptualization of organisational climates to account for specific age-related climates (Boehm et al, 2014). As such, various different age specific constructs have been developed including, age diversity climates (aggregated perceptions about an organisation's policies and practices regarding age), climate for age inclusion (perceptions of specific policies, practices and procedures that are aimed at incorporating and supporting an age diverse workforce), and age discrimination climate (perceptions about whether an organisation may discriminate in some way against employees of different ages) (Zacher & Yang, 2016; Kunze et al, 2011, 2013). Accordingly, Kunze and colleagues chose to focus their research on age discrimination climate, and found that the age diversity of an organisation, that is the demographic age profile of an organisation's workforce, was positively related to employees' perceptions of an age discrimination climate. This implies, perhaps somewhat counter intuitively, that the wider the age profile of an organisation, the more likely employees are to perceive a climate for age discrimination.

Kunze and colleagues (2011, 2013, 2014) also linked various other age-related climates to a variety of other organisational-level outcomes. For example, they found a negative association between perceived climate for age discrimination and organisational performance. They found a positive relationship between age-diversity climate and employees' perceptions of social exchange, which, in turn, predicted organisational performance. They also examined the potential link between discrimination and climate, proposing and finding a positive age climate to be negatively linked to discrimination. In consequence, these findings have led some researchers to claim that organisational climates are potentially one of the major drivers of discrimination within an organisation (Nelson & Probst, 2010). As such, there seems definite merit in exploring whether organisational climate may impact on hiring decision makers, in relation to older workers.

5.17. Summary of Organisational Level Influence

It has been suggested that research on age discrimination in the workplace, and in particular in recruitment and selection, has failed to take into account the influence of organisational factors (Staundinger, 2015). As a result, there is a body of research on individual predictors of age discrimination, such as stereotypes (Harris et at, 2018), but little is known about whether an organisation's culture and/or climate may be impacting on hiring decision making. Yet, given the importance that many organisations appear to place on 'person/organisation fit' when recruiting for new employees and, research linking both organisational culture and climate to a variety of different workplace outcomes, it seems feasible that these factors could influence hiring decision makers, making them more or less likely to hire an older job candidate. In addition, it could also be that individual level factors

(such as affect and stereotypes) and background factors (such as Industry) may interact with some of these organisational level influences. For example, shared stereotypes may manifest as shared underlying assumptions about older workers. Moreover, the interaction of these factors may be more prevalent in certain sectors. As such, this could further support the notion that hiring decision making is a multi-faceted process, in which single isolated predictors cannot be divorced from one another (if we are to understand why age discrimination is occurring).

In terms of theoretical explanations as to why organisational factors, such as culture and climate, may be influencing hiring decision-makers, then once again, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) may provide a plausible explanation. This is because Ashforth and Mael (1989) suggest there are multiple social groups that individuals can identify with in the workplace, including their employing organisation (e.g. organisational identity). Ashforth and colleagues (2008) explain that organisational identity is how collective employees answer the question who they actually are as an organisation. Moreover, by identifying with their employing organisation, employees potentially identify with certain values or attitudes that are supposedly exhibited by employees of that organisation, and potentially attempt to behave (or enact their identity) in a way that is consistent with those values (Whetten, 2006). As such, there are patent links for organisational identity to factors such as organisational culture (and climate) that have been discussed in the above section, because culture supposedly embodies the values that are prevalent within a particular organisation (Schein, 1996). As a consequence, if an organisation has an age friendly culture or climate, which signals its valorisation of older workers, then an employee who identifies strongly with that organisation may then seek to

behave in a way that is consistent with that culture/climate. This means organisational identity is a social identity which could feasibly shape the decision making of those tasked with hiring responsibilities, and provides a plausible theoretical explanation as to why organisational factors, such as culture and climate may be influencing decision makers.

5.18. Influential Team/Group Level Factors

The final level of influence, which will be explored in this literature review chapter, is that of team or workgroup influence. This is because not only are teams one of the most commonly used methods for dividing up employees in the workplace (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006), but also because there is some evidence (which will be explored in more detail in the theoretical chapter that follows this chapter) that in some instances the processes that occur within teams may be more influential to employees, that processes that occur at the organisational level (Riketta & Van Dick, 2005).

The dictionary definition of a work team is "a group of people who work together at a particular job, or to achieve something" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). Teams can then vary in size, structure, and function. Moreover, while they can have manifestations such as leaderless teams, in reality, teams often have a hierarchical structure in which one (or more) person/s is designated leader or given certain responsibilities within that team, such as recruitment and selection decisions (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). As such, from here on in, the person responsible for team hiring decisions, will be referred to as the team leader (while still recognising that in some instances that might not actually be the leader of a team).

Similarly to the other level influencing factors, there are a multitude of factors that could be included in this section, however, the focus will be on team diversity and team climate. This is because firstly the amount of diversity that occurs within a team has been found to impact a wide variety of organisational outcomes, and spawned various theoretical explanations (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Secondly, because organisational factors, such as climate, can also be conceptualised at the team level, as many of the processes that occur at an organisational level have also been shown to exist at the team level (West & Richter, 2011).

5.19. Team/Work Group Diversity

Teams are becoming far more diverse in respect of their demographic characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, and age (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). In addition, with the average employee age set to substantially increase over the next few decades (Hertel & Zacher, 2018), the age profile of teams could be set to change even further, with teams potentially getting older or having to incorporate a greater range of ages. Yet, given that previous research has found team diversity to have an impact on a number of different workplace outcomes (Van Knippenberg et al, 2007), it could be feasible that the actual age diversity profile of a team may render the team leader more or less likely to hire an older job candidate.

There are two different approaches to team diversity, both based on different theoretical assumptions. The first is based on a similarity/attraction paradigm which posits that homogenous teams are more successful because team members are happier when working

in groups with people who are similar to them. Accordingly, homogenous teams have been shown to exhibit less team conflict, greater cohesiveness, lower turnover or turnover intention, and better team performance (Murnighan & Conlon, 1991; O'Reilly et al, 1989; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007; Wagner et al, 1984). As such, using this perspective it would seem feasible that a team leader may prefer to hire employees who were demographically similar to the other team members. Thus, the decision-outcome, or likelihood of an older candidate being successful in a recruitment and selection process, would depend on the actual age diversity within the team to which they were applying.

An alternative perspective is the information/decision-making perspective. The general premise of this approach is that greater team diversity is beneficial because diverse group members are likely to possess different knowledge, skills and abilities, and, therefore, this diversity may reduce the likelihood of negative cognitive processes like 'group think'. Moreover, in terms of support for this approach, there is evidence that team diversity can improve innovativeness, creativity, and performance (Bantel & Jackson, 1989; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Thus, if a team leader believed that increasing the diversity in their team was important for team performance, or if they already were managing a diverse team who were performing well, then they may be more inclined to hire an older candidate, as they could believe that the older candidate could bring a new perspective to their team.

The main difference between the two perspectives, in terms of whether diversity or similarity is favoured, may be whether the team is task focused or relationship focused. Task focused teams tend to endorse the benefits of diversity and, therefore, may be more likely

to hire an older candidate, who increases the age diversity within the team. Conversely, teams that place greater emphasis on inter-relational aspects (e.g. having cohesive interpersonal relationships and minimising conflict) may be more likely to hire a candidate who is demographically similar to other team members. As such, collectively, these findings suggest that the likelihood of a team leader hiring an older job candidate may be due to both the current diversity within that team, and the team leader's beliefs about whether they think diversity is good or bad for their team's performance (Triandis et al, 1994; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007).

5.20. Team Climate

It has been claimed that due to the size and proximity of teams that the practices and policies that take place within them, could actually be more influential to employees, than the practices and policies that take place at an organisation level (Ashforth et al, 2008). Moreover, this claim has been supported by research that has found single organisations to have large variations in team climate, suggesting that potentially a shared organisational consensus may not always exist (West & Richter, 2011). As such, team climate, which can be understood as shared perceptions of a team's policies, procedures, and practices (Wilson, 2000) could feasibly influence team members. This is because by making interpretations about the policies, procedures, and practices that take place in their team, they may then make assumptions about which behaviours/actions will be rewarded or punished (Schneider et al, 2013).

In respect of previous research that has examined the impact of team climate on hiring practices, there have been no specific studies exploring the impact of team climate (either generic team climate or age-related team climates) on recruitment and selection processes. However, there have been studies that have explored the impact of team climate on other individual, team, and organisational level outcomes. For example, a study by Gonzalez and DeNisi (2009) found team diversity climate to be a significant predictor of organisational commitment. Furthermore, multiple other studies have found team climate to be a significant predictor of team behaviour, with a study by Zohar and Luria, (2005) finding that team climate for safety, was a positive predictor of safety behaviours within teams. In addition, a study by Pirola and Mann (2004) found team climate for innovation to be a positive predictor of creativity behaviour within teams. Accordingly, these findings suggest that team climate may be a significant predictor of behaviour within teams. Moreover, if extrapolating from the organisational level age climate literature, then it may be that age-related team climates may also influence behaviour. Hence, team leaders who reside in teams with climates that are more positive towards older workers, may be more likely to hire an older worker, and, conversely, team leaders who reside in teams with less positive team age climates are less likely to hire an older candidate.

5.21. Summary of Group Level Influences

There have been various studies that have looked at how individual level factors, such as age stereotyping, may be impacting the position of older workers in the workplace (Harris et al 2018). Additionally, researchers have begun to explore how organisational factors may also influence on the experiences of older workers (Appanah & Biggs, 2015; Kunze et al,

2011, 2013, 2014). Nonetheless, little is known about how team level factors may impact individual behaviour, such as hiring decision making, in respect of older workers. This is a potential gap in the literature if we consider the proposition that, firstly, the organisation of employees into teams is now commonplace both in the UK and around the world (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Secondly, that team members could be more proximal to their team members, than other employees in their employing organisation. As such, it could be that there are team level factors, such as team climate or team diversity, that influence the hiring decisions that take place within teams, making them or less likely to employ an older worker.

In relation to theoretical explanations for why team related factors could be influencing team hiring decisions, then once again Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) provides an explanation for how and why this might be occurring. This is because it is plausible that teams may have unique values, beliefs, and attributes that differ from other teams within their employing organisation. As such, if a team member identifies with their team, then they may choose to enact their team identity by behaving in a way that is consistent with those beliefs. This could then be relevant if teams have negative values or beliefs about older workers.

Prototypicality (which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter), is a mechanism by which social categories become salient, and may also be a relevant factor in this instance (Ashforth et al, 2008). This concept is based on the notion that social groups, such as teams, may contain prototypes who can be thought of as representative exemplars (e.g. people who embody the characteristics/attributes that are associated with that group) (Hogg &

Hardie, 1992). As such, if teams have a prototypical team member, then prospective employees may be judged against this prototype, which could be relevant for older candidates if age was a salient characteristic.

Lastly, after examining the potential impact of team diversity on team hiring practices, then it is possible that once again the similarity-attraction based theory of Relational Demography (Lawrence, 1997), which was discussed in the individual level influence section, may also provide a theoretical explanation. This is because this theory, supposedly underpinned by a Social Identity approach (Goldberg et al, 2010; Hogg & Terry, 2000), posits that individuals like being surrounded by people who are demographically similar to them. As such, if teams consist of team members who are all young, then a team leader may be less likely to hire an older candidate.

5.22. Summary of Factors Influencing Hiring Decision-Makers

Research has consistently supported the proposition that, while there may be both economic and social justifications for extending working lives, older workers face routine discrimination in the workplace (Bal et al (2011)). Moreover, this discrimination is clearly more focused in some domains, with recruitment and selection being one in which age discrimination is especially prevalent (Francioli & North, 2021). Nonetheless, a lack of information exists on the reasons why older workers find it particularly difficult to obtain employment. As such, the aim of this thesis is to explore how different influencing factors (conceptualised at different analytical levels) may impact on hiring decision makers, making them more or less likely to hire an older candidate.

After reviewing previous literature, it is proposed that hiring decision-makers may be influenced by a multitude of factors, which could be linked to their social identity and how they categorise both themselves and prospective job candidates. Furthermore, certain background factors could frame all other influences, making them more or less influential to hiring decision makers. As a result, if we are to understand why older workers are being rated as less hireable than younger workers, then it could be vital to firstly consider the wider context in which hiring decisions are made, with there being good evidence to suggest that the sector or industry in which a hiring decision maker is based, and even the wider economic conditions, could make them more or less likely to select an older worker (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1996; Duncan & Loretto, 2004).

Individual level factors were next explored, with these influences considered individual to each hiring decision-maker (such as their level of bias towards older workers etc.). Accordingly, consistent with a tri-partite model of attitudinal development, bias was proposed as consisting of stereotypes, affect and behaviour (Fiske, 2004). Moreover, stereotypes and affect were both linked to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), with it being posited that when a decision-maker categorises an older candidate as out-group, they may have a tendency to rely on age stereotypes to predict the candidate's behaviour on the job, and, potentially have negative or less positive affect for them (which could result in them being evaluated as a poor choice of hire).

Factors relating to the hiring decision maker's organisational environment (organisational level) were also explored, as it has been claimed that these factors could be major drivers of discrimination in workplaces (Staundinger, 2015). As such, the potential influence of both

organisational culture and organisation climate were discussed, with proposals that organisations could have cultures that are more, or less, age friendly. For example, some organisations may value older workers and embody this value by recruiting and rewarding older employees. In contrast, there may be other organisations who claim to be 'age friendly' but whose actions do not match their claims, and, thus, they may have both explicit and hidden shared assumptions about the older people in the workplace, that could influence the likelihood of an older person gaining employment into that organisation.

The organisational level section highlighted that social identities can also consist of work related identities (such as organisational identity) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Accordingly, it was posited that if an organisation has a culture that is less age friendly, in respect of its treatment of older workers, and a hiring decision maker identifies strongly with their employing organisation, then they may enact their organisational identity by behaving in a way that is consistent with that culture (e.g. avoiding or being reluctant to hire an older worker). In consequence, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) again provides a plausible theoretical explanation as to why organisational factors could be influencing hiring decision-makers.

Lastly, team (or work group) factors were considered. This is because not only is the use of teams as a means of dividing up labour common in the UK and around the globe (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006), but also because team related factors have been found to influence a variety of different outcomes in the workplace (Van Knippenberg et al, 2007). Team diversity was discussed first, with it being suggested that having a high amount of demographic diversity can be viewed both positively and negatively, depending on what a team may value

(innovativeness/creativity versus interpersonal relations). As such, the impact of team diversity on team hiring decisions remains unclear.

Climate, which was previously explored at the organisational level, was also explored at the team level. This is because it is a construct that has been shown to exist at multiple levels (individual, team and organisational) (West & Richter, 2011; Wilson, 2000). Thus, it was proposed that if age/age diversity is a salient factor in a team's climate (e.g. they perceive their team to have practices and policies that support, or do not support, age diversity), then this could be an influence on hiring decisions in a team. Moreover, just as a hiring decision-maker can identify with their employing organisation, a team member could also identify with their respective team (Ashforth et al, 2008). As such, again, enacting team identity could mean behaving in a way that is consistent with the climate in a team, therefore, a Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) again provides a theoretical explanation for why team factors may be influencing team hiring decisions.

5.23. An Intersectional approach to Age Discrimination

Up to this point, this thesis has largely applied the perspective that older workers are being viewed as a homogenous group, and, that any variation in their hireability (e.g. the likelihood of them being successful in a recruitment and selection process) is probably due to factors relating to the hiring decision maker (e.g. their attitudes and organisational environment etc.) or background factors (such as the wider economic conditions). However, it was also proposed at the beginning of this chapter, there may also be some

characteristics of older workers, that could feasibly impact on how they are being perceived by decision makers. Moreover, this proposition appears to be particularly relevant when the nature of recruitment and selection is considered. This is because it is unlikely that a candidate pool would vary only by age (e.g. that they are just younger or older etc.). Instead, it is likely that job candidates vary by a variety of social and demographic characteristics, such as their age, gender, ethnicity, social class etc. As such, the next section will consider whether it is plausible to treat older workers as a homogenous group, or if they should perhaps instead be considered a heterogeneous group.

Ozbilgin et al (2011) suggest that focusing on a single social or demographic category, such as age, gender/sex, or ethnicity (e.g. age or gender discrimination in the workplace), is unhelpful when trying to understand the complex nature of inequality. Moreover, Marcus and Fritzche (2014) state that it is unlikely that a person would be categorised, or would categorise themselves, as simply 'younger' or 'older'. Instead, it may be more probable that social and/or biological/demographic categories would be used in conjunction (e.g. someone would consider themselves and/or be considered by others as an 'older female' or an 'older Asian male' etc.). As such, this could suggest that when a hiring decision-maker is evaluating prospective job candidates, that he or she does not perceive those candidates as simply 'younger' or 'older', but that different characteristics of the candidate intersect for the decision-maker (e.g. they are perceived as an 'older woman' or an 'older man' etc.).

Crisp and Turner (2011) maintain that different combinations of social and demographic categories can actually serve to inhibit or accentuate positive or negative consequences for people in the workplace. In respect of discrimination outcomes, this could mean that in

some instances the combining of two or more characteristics could lead to more positive outcomes, while in other cases it may lead to even greater negative outcomes than when a certain characteristic is considered solely. Accordingly, in recruitment and selection situations, it could then be that hiring decision makers may be more, or less, likely to hire an older candidate, depending on the intersect of their age with other factors such as their gender (for example, an older woman could be evaluated as less hireable than an older male).

5.24. The intersect of Age and Gender

There are various different intersectional combinations (including two-way and three-way intersects). Nonetheless, there is an overwhelming body of literature that suggests women are routinely subject to discrimination in the workplace (Hideg & Krstic, 2021), with research showing women are more likely than men to receive lower performance ratings, less likely to be promoted or recruited into leadership positions, and if they are employed into a leadership position, they are then less likely to have success as a leader (Lyness & Heilman, 2006, Ryan et al, 2011). As a result, the combination of gender and older age will be explored, with the suggestion being, that older job candidates may potentially be evaluated differently depending on their gender.

With regards to empirical support for the intersect between age and gender and discriminatory outcomes, Duncan and Loretto (2004) found that female employees who were over the age of 40 years were statistically more likely to report having experienced discrimination in the workplace than employees of any other age and gender combination

(e.g. older males or younger women etc.). Furthermore, research conducted by Neumark et al (2015) also found that female workers experienced greater age discrimination than older males, and, a study by Moore (2009) found that older women who reported having experienced discrimination in the workplace, were unsure as to whether this was age or gender based discrimination. As such, these findings indicate that potentially both hiring decision makers and prospective candidates themselves may be unable to separate aspects of their identity, such as gender and age, and in some instances these factors could be interacting to produce different outcomes (e.g. older workers may be more likely to face discrimination in a recruitment and selection process if they are also female, or, conversely, discrimination may be less likely to occur for an older worker who is male). This is particularly concerning if we consider that female workers are more likely than male workers, to have taken career breaks (due to family/caring responsibilities) and occupy part-time roles (Dex et al, 2008). This means older females may have a greater need than older males to remain in the workplace longer if they are to prepare financially for retirement (build a large enough pension fund or have any national insurance contributions (in the UK context) to be eligible for a state pension) (Schilling, 2016).

5.25. The Intersect of Age and Social Class

The second intersect that will explored is the possible interaction between older age and social class. Social class is unique from many of the other social and demographic factors that can potentially lead to discrimination, as it is not protected under equality legislation. Nonetheless, while little is known about how social class may impact the experiences of older workers, research by Schilling (2016) found that older workers of lower social class

struggled to remain in the labour force in later life and held a weak labour market position (e.g. they were considered as a dispensable group in the labour market).

It has also been posited that how older people are treated in the wider world, is often mirrored in the workplace (McCann & Giles, 2002). Moreover, this proposition is also supported by Walker (1981), who argues that inequality in older age is as a direct result of lower socioeconomic status (which is a term sometimes used interchangeably with social class) and traces these effects back to inequalities that originate in the workplace. Accordingly, previous research has found a relationship between social class and successful ageing, with higher social class being associated with better health outcomes in older age (Barrera et al, 2014). In addition, psychosocial wellbeing in older age has also been found to be associated with social class, with older people who are higher social class also reporting greater levels of well-being than older people who are lower social class (Everson-Rose et al, 2011). As such, if we extrapolate these findings from the wider world to the workplace, then it may be that older workers who are perceived as being lower social class may, when compared to people who are a higher social class, experience inequality in the workplace with respect to different outcomes when searching for work in later life.

In consequence, this thesis is attempting to establish the reasons why older workers may be being rated as less hireable than other age groups, in recruitment and selection processes. However, due to findings which suggest older workers may not be a homogenous group (Neumark et al, 2015; Schilling, 2016), it will utilise an intersectional approach. This means it will attempt to establish whether age intersects with gender and social class for some older workers in their influence on hiring decision makers.

5.26. Intersectionality

Ramarajan (2014) explains that the investigation of the impact of intersecting social and demographic characteristics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity etc.) is still in its infancy in terms of quantitative organisational studies. Nonetheless, previous studies can generally be grouped into the following theoretical perspectives: social psychological, intersectional, micro-sociological, and psychodynamic/developmental.

In relation of this thesis, the two paradigms that are most relevant are the social psychological approach and intersectionality. The social psychological approach acknowledges that dual or multiple identities exist, however, is largely based on the notion that features of a particular situation or context will mean that one of those identities will become more salient (Ramarajan, 2014). Nevertheless, a limitation with this approach is that previous research (Moore, 2009) which examined the discrimination experiences of older women, found that when certain identities intersect it is very difficult to separate these identities (e.g. they are viewed in conjunction rather than one identity being more important than another). The Intersectionality approach, which is more often used to explain discriminatory outcomes for marginalised groups, is based on the idea that the combination of certain characteristics or identities can actually produce distinct outcomes (e.g. being an 'older woman' produces a different outcome from being simply 'older' or a 'woman'). As such, this approach appears consistent with research that was presented in the previous chapter (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Neumark et al, 2015), and will be used going forward.

There are various theories that have been developed in order to explain intersectionality, and these include the double jeopardy hypothesis (Beale, 1970) and the double advantage hypothesis (Epstein, 1973). The double jeopardy hypothesis (Beale, 1970), which was originally developed to explain the outcomes from the intersect between race and gender, proposes that holding membership of two minority groups doubly disadvantages individuals, as they are subject to the negative stereotypes of both groups. As such, Brewer et al (1981) explain that older female workers may then be stereotyped as being less productive and that lacking emotional stability. Accordingly, this approach supports the notion that older workers are not a homogenous group, and that age may intersect in a negative way with some of the job candidate's other characteristics, such as their gender and/or social class. However, what it fails to explain is why individuals engage in stereotyping in the first place, or why stereotyping occurs more often in some industries/sectors (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1996). In consequence, it is quite limited in its ability to provide a thorough explanation of why, for example, older women may experience greater age discrimination than older males.

In contrast to the double jeopardy hypothesis (Beale, 1970) is the double advantage hypothesis (Epstein,1973). This theory posits that the combining of two or more group categories, can in some instances, actually serve to advantage individuals. Furthermore, this theory originated from studies that examined race and gender, but has also been applied to other intersects. Nonetheless, many academics have claimed this hypothesis to actually be a myth that lacks evidential support (Sanchez-Hucles, 1997). As such, given the body of research that suggests older workers are subject to routine discrimination in the workplace

(Bal et al, 2011), it does not seem plausible that some older workers may actually be advantaged in certain circumstances. However, this may be a consequence of varying comparators (e.g. older males may appear to be advantaged if compared to older females, but if they are compared to younger men then it is unlikely they would be perceived as 'advantaged').

A different intersectionality theory that will instead be explored is intersectional invisibility theory (Purdie -Vaughns & Eibach, 2008), which falls under the Social Identity umbrella (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987). Intersectional invisibility posits that when people are members of multiple disadvantaged groups (e.g. older and female or older and lower social class), that this then increases their invisibility in both groups. As such, they are never considered prototypical members of either group. Accordingly, this theory then has the potential to not only explain why the intersect of age with other characteristics seemingly produces distinct outcomes, but also is consistent with the framework that has been proposed so far for this thesis.

5.27. Summary of Literature Review Chapter

To conclude, it is proposed that hiring decision making, in relation to the recruitment and selection of older workers, is a multifaceted process, in which a multitude of different factors (including individual, team, organisational, and background factors) may influence the likelihood of them being selected. Furthermore, it could be that older workers should not be treated as a homogenous group, with it being posited that the intersection of

different social and demographic characteristics could result in some older workers being even more likely to experience age discrimination. As such, this means it could be difficult to isolate and attribute the cause of age discrimination to any single factor, as factors may be embedded in one another and therefore mutually influential. Nonetheless, it appears that the way in which a hiring decision maker categorises themselves (e.g. their age identity, organisational identity, team identity etc.) could provide a credible theoretical explanation for why some of these different level factors are acting as an influence on decision makers. Accordingly, the use of a social identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) as a framework for this thesis will be discussed in more detail in the chapter that follows.

6. Theoretical Chapter

The previous chapter explored in detail, some of the key influencing factors that, in respect of older workers, may potentially impact on hiring decision making. Accordingly, it was proposed that while the individual attitudes of hiring decision makers are no doubt important in understanding why older workers are being rated as less hireable, that the environment (including organisational and wider societal environment) in which a decision maker is based also matters. Furthermore, it was also suggested that if hiring decision making is posited to be contextually driven, then a theoretical explanation that can adequately account for all the different influencing factors is needed. Thus, a social identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) was put forward as a framework for understanding why some hiring decision makers may be less likely to select an older job candidate.

6.1. The Limitations of Classical Theories of Age Discrimination

It was proposed in the previous chapter that some of the classical age discrimination theories, that have been used in past to explain the apparent inequality that older workers face, have a number of drawbacks. This is because not only do they lack empirical support for any application to the workplace, but, also, because they focus on individual influencing factors, ignoring the importance of the environment or context in which the decision maker is based. For example, Terror Management Theory (Becker, 1971, 1973, 1975) posits that age discrimination occurs because older people remind us of our own mortality. As such,

this theory has been linked to some of the individual level influences that were discussed in the previous chapter, such as 'affect'. This is because it has been claimed that older workers, remind people of their own inevitable death, and trigger affective feelings of anxiety and potentially even disgust (Finkelstein & Farrell, 2007). The need to limit such feelings then results in bias against older workers.

Nevertheless, the theory has a number of limitations. Firstly, it fails to provide an explanation why age discrimination is more prevalent in certain sectors or organisations (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1996; Duncan & Loretto, 2004), which is supported in its lack of empirical validation in the workplace. Secondly, age discrimination has been shown to begin for workers from as early as their 40s or 50s (McCarthy et al, 2014), with it seeming unlikely that a job candidate of that age would remind a hiring decision maker of their own death. Accordingly, this theory is then limited in its ability to adequately explain why decision makers are less likely to select an older candidate.

Career Timetable theory (Lawrence, 1988) was also introduced in the first chapter as a theory that was developed specifically for the workplace, with the proposal that organisations have specific norms about age appropriateness in the workplace. For example, it may be expected that entry or lower level positions in an organisational hierarchy are usually filled with younger workers, that older workers will inevitably be more experienced than younger workers, and that retirement usually take places for employees around the ages of 60-65 years old. Accordingly, when these norms are violated (e.g. by an older person applying for work at an age that is close to retirement, or an older person

applying for a job for which they lack experience) then it tends to result in that individual being evaluated negatively (Tsui et al, 2002).

Career timetable theory (Lawrence, 1988) seemingly then provides a theoretical explanation for how and why age norms are enacted in the workplace. As such, there may be some circumstances in which this theory has good explanatory value. For example, in recent times the labour market has seen the emergence of a new type of employment for older workers termed 'Bridge employment'. The traditional perception of retirement, in the UK certainly, is that individuals leave their career job, fully withdraw from the labour force, and live out the rest of their lives supported by either a private and/or the state pension (Beehr & Bennett, 2014). However, bridge employment is a phenomenon that is being observed much more in the labour force and has been proposed by many as a potential solution to the some of the problems that an ageing workforce may create (Zhan et al, 2015).

Bridge employment is defined as a type of employment that older workers may engage in after retirement from their career job. Furthermore, this employment could be in the same field as their career job, but, in a different role perhaps with less hours and/or responsibilities. Alternatively, research has also shown that some older workers are choosing to seek employment in a sector or role that is different from their career job (Feldman, 1994: Kim & Feldman, 2000). As such, if this phenomenon grows in popularity, then it could feasibly lead to more older workers attempting to find work in sectors/roles for which they lack experience. Moreover, if some older workers remain in their career sector, but seek purposefully employment with less responsibility than the job from which they retired, then arguably they may be seeking jobs that are lower status in an

organisational hierarchy, and possibly reserved for younger workers. As a result, both these situations could then lead to clear instances of age norm violations, in which they are treated less favourably in a recruitment and selection process.

Nonetheless, the scenarios provided above (e.g. bridge employment) are clearly quite specific, and, as such, it seems unlikely that this theory can account for all, or even many of these cases of age discrimination, given its prevalence in the workplace (Bal et al, 2011; Truxillo et al, 2015). Furthermore, it also fails to provide an explanation for why there are clear variations in individual attitudes towards older workers (e.g. why some people engage in age stereotyping etc.), or why age discrimination is more prevalent in certain industries and/or organisations (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1996; Harris et al, 2018; Shore & Goldberg, 2005).

6.2.A Social Identity Framework to Understanding Hiring Decision Making

A Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) was instead suggested as being able to provide a theoretical frame for many of the different level factors, that were proposed as possibly having an influence on hiring decision makers, when faced with an older job candidate. Accordingly, this approach posits that as individuals we have different social identities, some of which may be work-related, and we attempt to behave in ways that are consistent with those identities.

Social Identity Theory was first associated with the writings of Henry Tajfel (1982) and John Turner (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), however, there are other related theories and mechanisms

that will also be explored in this chapter, including Social Identity's sister theory of Self-Categorisation theory (Turner et al, 1987). After providing a more detailed description of these theories, the multiple different social groups that hiring decision makers could potentially be identify with, including some identities that are unique to the workplace, will be explored (Ashforth et al, 2008). Different social groups will be defined and the development or emergence of key identities explored. Next, the roles that these various social identities play in shaping decision-makers' thoughts and feelings, and ultimately their behaviour in the workplace, will be addressed. Finally, the salience of social identity roles will be examined, with proposals about those situations in which different identity roles may be triggered, and about the mechanisms that may be linked to the enactment of these different identity roles.

6.3.Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) is based on the notion that our identity is tied to the social groups with which we align ourselves (e.g. our gender, ethnicity, religion etc.). As such, social identity helps us to make sense of the world, as if we put ourselves and others into different social and/or psychological categories (male, female, Catholic, Jewish etc.), then this provides us with a potential schema or template for how people who are members of those groups should behave. Furthermore, because our membership of social groups forms such a strong part of our identity, by extension they are then intrinsically linked to our sense of belonging and self-esteem.

As explained in the previous chapter, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) also posits that by categorising ourselves into different social groups we create an 'us' and 'them' situation, or what is more formally termed as 'in-group' or 'out-group'. Correspondingly, research has shown that people have a tendency to exaggerate differences with out-group members, and over-estimate their similarities with people they perceive as in-group. Moreover, this exaggeration process can be linked to phenomena such as stereotyping (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

With regards to how our social identities emerge or develop, Taifel and Turner (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) identified three stages that take place during social categorisation. The first stage is the initial categorisation, and during this stage we classify ourselves and others into particular social psychological groups (e.g. I am a Catholic or I am a Student etc.). In the second stage, people who categorise themselves as being part of a particular social group then begin to adopt the behaviours and/or actions that they associate with that social group, and, as such, conform to group norms about behaviour (e.g. Catholic people believe in God and because of this they go to church and pray etc.). The third and final stage is social comparison. During this stage, individuals attempt to preserve their self-esteem and pride at being part of a particular social group by comparing themselves favourably to other social groups, and, by also possibly thinking that they are superior to other social groups. This then allows them to maintain their pride at being a member of the social group.

While Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) should undoubtedly be considered a generalised social psychological theory that has applicability to the wider world, research has also consistently found it to have relevance to the workplace (Miscenko

& Day, 2016). Accordingly, Ashforth and Mael (1989) maintain that are multiple social collectives that individuals could identify with in the workplace including, age cohort, their employing organisation, their team or workgroup, department, union, and so on. However, before exploring some of these collectives to understand how identification with these social groups might influence hiring decision makers, the next section will provide a brief overview Self Categorisation Theory (Turner et al, 1987) and relevant mechanisms, which have clear pertinence to the framework being proposed for this thesis.

6.4.Self-Categorisation Theory & Key Mechanisms

Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner et al, 1987) was developed by John Turner and colleagues in the 1980s as an extension to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). However, whilst Social Identity Theory primarily focuses on in-group and out-group behaviour, and the resulting impact on group member's self-esteem etc., Self-Categorisation Theory expanded this approach to look at some of the underpinnings of social identities, and to propose some of the mechanics to connect social identity to behaviour and cognition.

Self-Categorisation theory (Turner et al, 1987) recognises that individuals have both self and social identities and the salience of a situation will depend on which identity is triggered. Thus, the salience of a context was something that Turner (1999) recognised was important to our social identities (e.g. different identities can become more or less important depending on the context). Self-Categorisation theory also includes propositions about when an individual will perceive a collective as a social group, and, therefore, the likelihood

of them identifying with a social group. Lastly, this theory also explores motivations and consequences of identifying with a collective.

Several key mechanisms were also proposed by Turner et al (1987) including prototypicality and normative fit. The concept of prototypicality was explored in the previous chapter and is based on the notion that social groups may have representative exemplars (e.g. prototypical members), who embody the characteristics and attributes that are associated with that group (Hogg & Hardie, 1992). In relation to how this mechanism could then impact the behaviour of hiring decision makers, it was posited that prospective employees may be being compared to group prototypes, which could disadvantage older candidates in some circumstances (e.g. if the prototype is a younger worker etc.)

Normative fit represents the idea that as individuals we have certain beliefs (which can be stereotypical beliefs) about how people in certain social categories should and should not behave. Moreover, if a person exhibits behaviours that are consistent with those expectations (normative fit), then the category they are associated with becomes more salient (Oakes et al, 1991). As such, if an old job candidate exhibits behaviours or characteristics that have an association with older workers (e.g. perhaps they express that they sometimes struggle using technology), then this could make the category of 'older worker' salient in a recruitment process, and potentially then be more likely to trigger out-group bias.

6.5.Relevant Social Identities

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) has been proposed as a theoretical framework to understand why, in a recruitment and selection process, older workers are seemingly less likely to be hired, than younger candidates. Furthermore, other related theories and key mechanisms have also been explored to understand some of the processes that may underpin decision-making in hiring situations. In the next section, some of the different social groups that may be relevant to hiring decision makers, and with which they may categorise themselves and others, will be explored. This should then allow a better understanding of how these different social groups may potentially influence hiring decision-makers. Lastly, although it is not a social identity, personal identity will be briefly discussed. This is because while social identities are considered key for understanding hiring decision making (in respect of older job candidates) it should also be acknowledged that the decision maker's personal identity could also have some influence on their decision making.

6.6.The 'Older Worker' Identity

The first social group that will be discussed, to establish its potential impact on hiring decision makers, is the Older Worker identity. As such, with regards to Social Identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), the application of this theory makes various assumptions. Firstly, as explained in the previous chapter, age is a biological or demographic category, such that we tend to group people that are roughly similar ages into social categories (younger, older, middle-aged etc.). Furthermore, research has suggested that the

context of the workplace, who is actually classified as an 'older worker' will vary according to the perceiver (hiring decision-maker) and perceived (older job candidate) (Marcus & Frizche, 2015; Shore & Goldberg, 2005). Accordingly, in relation to hiring decision makers, when faced with an older job candidate, they may then either also identify themselves as an older worker and perceive the candidate as in-group, or, not identify as an older worker and perceive an older candidate to be out-group.

However, it may not be as simple as assuming that when a decision maker reaches the approximate age for which he or she may be considered an older worker, that they also perceive themselves to be an older worker and therefore, part of their social identity. Instead, research has shown that individuals may actually distance themselves from social identities which they potentially perceive to be less than positive (Jackall, 1978). This could then suggest that it may depend on how much a decision maker values the older worker category, as to whether they then identify with that category. Moreover, there is also potential that the degree to which they place value on the category of older worker may depend on how much older workers are valued within their employing organisation.

The proposition that older hiring decision makers may not necessarily perceive older job candidates as in-group, due this identity potentially being a social identity that they may want to distance themselves from, could also be linked to Relational Demography (Lawrence, 1997) that was discussed in the previous chapter. This is because using theory, which is based on a homophily/similarity-attraction paradigm it was posited that it is feasible that older decision makers may be more likely to favour older job candidates. However, the fact that older decision makers may not actually want to be categorised as an

older worker themselves, raises a question mark over this proposal. Moreover, this is consistent with findings from Kite et al (2005), which found that older workers are just as likely to engage in negative age stereotyping as younger workers.

Nevertheless, while it is unclear how and when a hiring decision may perceive an older job candidate as in-group, if the hiring decision maker perceives an older job candidate as being out-group, they may then have a tendency to exaggerate differences between themselves and the prospective candidate and, as also explained in the previous chapter, rely on age stereotypes to predict their behaviour (e.g. they may believe that older workers are less productive than younger workers, so might not be a good candidate to hire) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). As such, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) provides a useful lens for exploring why age stereotypes may be being enacted in the workplace (and specifically in hiring situations), which then leads to the unfair treatment of older workers.

6.7. Occupational Identity

While the 'older worker' identity category may be influential in terms of its ability to influence hiring decision makers when faced with an older job candidate, it is likely that there are other work-related social collectives that decision-makers could identify with, and which might therefore influence their behaviour (Miscenko & Day, 2016). For example, Kielhofner (2002) proposed that individuals may have an occupational identity (e.g. I am an 'engineer' or I am an 'academic' etc. and that occupation is part of 'who I am'). He defined this as "a composite sense of who one is and wishes to become as an occupational being, generated from one's history of occupational participation" (2002, p. 106). This could

therefore mean that there are certain attitudes, values or behaviours that individuals then associate with that occupation, or, that there may even be a prototypical engineer or academic (e.g. a representative exemplar who is a person that they perceive to be the ideal engineer/academic etc.). This proposition becomes even more pertinent when we consider what was highlighted in the previous chapter that age discrimination may be more prevalent in certain sectors (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1996; Duncan & Loretto, 2004) and that jobs (or occupations) within an organisation may be age typed as either a young or older person's job (Shore & Goldberg, 2005). As such, it could be that age is more salient for some occupations. Consequently, in a recruitment and selection process, if the hiring decision maker is recruiting for an occupational role with which they also identify (e.g. an engineer is recruiting another engineer), then they may have certain expectations about what makes a prototypical engineer (for example, younger male). Conversely, if a person applies for a role as an engineer and they deviate from that the hirer's idea of a prototypical occupational identity, then the hirer could treat the candidate as being out-group. Alternatively, they may enact their occupational identity by favouring job candidates who match that prototypical identity (e.g. favouring male over female candidates and younger candidates over older candidates). It is also possible that occupational identity could be linked to age stereotypes about certain occupations. For example, as highlighted in the previous chapter, research has found age stereotyping to be more prevalent in the technological (tech) sector (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1996), potentially suggesting that a prototypical tech worker would be a younger person.

6.8.Organisational Identity

As well as workplace identities consisting of occupational identities, employees could also potentially identity with their employing organisations. This is known as organisational identity and was also introduced in the previous chapter. Nonetheless, organisational identity is not a new concept as researchers have recognised and discussed the merging of individual with the organisation for over 100 years (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Simon, 1947; Taylor, 1911). Moreover, Ashforth et al (2008) explain that organisational identity it is how employees as a collective, answer the question 'who they are' as an organisation, with research finding organisational identity to be positively associated with both organisational citizenship behaviour, and, more pertinently, in-group bias. Thus, when an employee identifies with their employing organisation, then by extension, they may identify with values and attitudes that are entrenched in that organisation, and could then enact their organisation identity by behaving in a way that is consistent with those values/attitudes (Ashforth et al, 2008; Whetten, 2006).

With regards to how organisational identity may impact on hiring decision-makers and provide an explanation as to why they may be more or less likely to hire an older job candidate, it is likely that some of the mechanics of other identity roles will also be important for this identity role (Ashforth et al, 2008). Firstly, decision makers will potentially be more likely to identify with their employing organisation if it is an identity that they value (e.g. they are proud of being an employee at that organisation). Secondly, similarly to occupational identity, there may be a prototypical employee in their employing organisation (e.g. a person who may have certain demographic attributes and/or behave in a certain

way) and prospective employees may be judged against this prototypical persona. Thirdly, if an employee identifies strongly with their organisation then they may be likely to overestimate the similarities between themselves and other employees, and exaggerate differences with people they perceive as out group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This could then mean that if the prototypical employee in an organisation is a younger person, then a hiring decision maker may enact their organisational identity by favouring younger job candidates.

Furthermore, as indicated in the previous chapter, there are clear links between organisational identity and proposed influencing factors such as organisational culture and climate. This is because these concepts supposedly embody the values and behaviours that are revered within a particular organisation (Schein, 1996). This means that if a decision-maker strongly identifies with his or her employing organisation, then by proxy they are identifying and aligning themselves with the culture and/or climate within that organisation. In consequence, organisational identity may be important for understanding how organisational factors, such as culture, influence hiring decisions, with a plausible assumption being that the more strongly a hiring decision maker identifies with their organisation, the more affected they may be by factors such as organisational culture.

6.9.Team Identity

The final work-related social identity that will be explored in this chapter is team or workgroup identity. As explained in the previous chapter, the organisation of employees into teams is one of the most common ways of dividing up employees in the UK (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Moreover, similar to other work-related social identities, team identity

assumes that different teams may have their own unique values and beliefs, and that team members potentially assume that identity role by behaving in a way that is consistent with those values and beliefs. Likewise, each team could also potentially have a prototypical team member, who other people (current and prospective employees) are compared against (Ashforth et al, 2008).

It was also highlighted in the previous chapter that research has found smaller more proximal collectives (such as teams) may be more influential to employees, than larger collectives, such as their employing organisation (Ashforth et al, 2008; Riketta & Van Dick, 2005; Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000). Thus, this could infer that person responsible for hiring decisions in a team (referred to as the team leader in the previous chapter) may be more influenced by factors within their respective team, than organisational factors.

How then can team identity provide a theoretical explanation for the hiring decision making that takes place within teams? Again, this could be linked to the concepts that were discussed in the previous chapter, such team climate, as well as the mechanism, prototypicality. It was explained in the previous chapter that concepts such as climate can exist not only at the organisational level, but also at the team level or individual psychological level (Wilson, 2000). Accordingly, if a team has a climate that suggests it does not value older workers, then a hiring decision-maker who identifies strongly with that team, may enact their team identity by behaving in a way that is consistent with the climate. This then means that that the choice to not hire an older candidate, could be because the decision maker thinks they will not be a good fit for the team.

It is also plausible that, as with other social groups, teams have a prototypical team member, a person who is especially revered or valued in that team. As a consequence, prospective job candidates may be compared against this prototype, which could have relevance if age is a salient factor for the prototype. Thus, once again a Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) provides a theoretical means of understanding hiring practices in teams.

6.10. Non-Social Identities - Self or Personal Identity

Prior to summarising the theoretical framework that has been posited for this thesis, personal identity will be briefly explored. This is because even Social Identity theories such as Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner et al, 1987) acknowledge that our personal identities do, in some instances, guide our behaviour. As such, while the primary focus for this thesis are social identities, it should be considered that there could potentially be elements of a person's own personal identity, that could result in them being more or less likely to hire an older job candidate.

Self-identity refers to the idiosyncratic characteristics that define us as distinct individuals, and this is often referred to, or linked to, aspects such as our perception of our own values, abilities and interests as an individual (e.g. I am a creative person, I am a fair person etc.) (Postmes & Jetten, 2006). Moreover, whilst there are elements of our self-identity that may remain relatively stable, it is possible that our self-identity evolves over time, changing based on our life experiences (e.g. we might consider ourselves a fair person but then an incident may occur which challenges that identity feature etc.) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Research has looked at how self-identity may impact on decision-makers in a recruitment and selection processes, and render them or more or less likely to hire an older candidate. A study by Fasbender and Wang (2017) examined whether decision-makers' core evaluations of themselves (e.g. their self-concept and overall value they place on themselves as a person) would buffer the relationship between negative attitudes towards older workers and unwillingness to hire an older person. They found that it did indeed moderate the relationship between those two factors, with those individuals reporting a higher or more positive core self-evaluation less likely to avoid hiring an older candidate. This finding could therefore suggest that in certain circumstances, self-identity could disrupt the relationship between social-identity and preference for in-group candidates. For example, a decision maker may perceive an older candidate as out-group, and, as such, have a negatives attitude towards older workers in the workplace, but their self-identity might mean that regardless of this, they want to treat all candidates fairly as they identify themselves to be a fair/honest person. Alternatively, this could be linked to the self-categorisation concept of depersonalisation, and mean that a person's self-identity gets redefined according to the social context that they are in (Hogg & Smith, 2007). Hence, and while they may perceive themselves to be fair, that 'fairness' may become less important in certain social contexts when their social identity becomes more salient.

Accordingly, whilst self-identity is not central to the theoretical framework used in this thesis, it should be acknowledged that in some circumstances, self-identity can be a guide for individual behaviour in the workplace and could explain why some people do not behave in a way that is consistent with their social identities.

6.11. Summary of Theoretical Chapter

A Social Identity Approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986, Turner et al, 1987), is used in this thesis as an umbrella term for a number of relevant theories and mechanisms including, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner et al, 1987). Theories within this approach share the notion that as individuals we understand ourselves according to the social groups with which we categorise both ourselves and others. Furthermore, because we potentially identify with multiple social groups (including some groups that are unique to the workplace), the salience of a particular identity will depend on its activation. For example, in some situations team identity may be important, and at other times age cohort or organisational identity may be more salient. How then does this theoretical approach provide a plausible and comprehensive explanation as to why hiring decision makers seem to be favouring younger candidates over older candidates? Firstly, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) posits the idea that hiring decision makers may categorise prospective older job candidates as either in-group or out-group (depending on which particular social identity is most salient). Accordingly, if the decision-maker perceives an older candidate to be out-group, then they may have a tendency to use age stereotypes to evaluate candidate behaviour, which then leads to negative judgements of that candidate (as age stereotypes are generally derogatory about older workers). Moreover, relevant mechanisms like normative fit posit, that if an older candidate behaves in a way that is consistent with a decision maker's stereotypical beliefs about older workers (e.g. they perhaps refer to being uncomfortable using technology in a recruitment process), then this makes their older

worker identity even more salient (Oakes et al, 1991). Thus, this approach provides an explanation as to why age stereotypes are impacting the workplace.

The concept of affect, which was discussed in the previous chapter and is understood as being a key element of biased attitudes (Fiske, 2004), may also be triggered in a hiring decision making process. This is because our social identities supposedly have an affective component, meaning that we have positive feelings about people who we perceive as similar or 'in group' and may lack positive affect or have negative affect for those that we categorise as 'out group' (Ashforth et al, 2008). As such, it is easy to conceive that having a higher amount of positive affect for some candidates, could lead to those candidates being favoured over others.

Using a social identity framework (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) also allows the exploration of key mechanisms such as prototypicality. Accordingly, prototypicality could suggest that prospective older job candidates are being compared against other exemplar members of a social group (team, organisation etc.) to see how they measure up. This then means if age is a relevant characteristic for the prototype, then it could feasibly result in an older job candidate being more or less likely to be selected in a recruitment and selection process.

A Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) provides a theoretical connection to some of the organisational and team level influencing factors that were explored in the previous chapter, such as organisational culture and team climate. This is because it not only provides an explanation for why these different conceptual levels

might influence decision makers (because social identities can exist at these different levels), but, also, it suggests that when decision makers behave in ways that are consistent with their team climate or organisational culture, they may actually be enacting their team or organisational identity. Thus, this could then indicate that the more strongly a person identifies with their team or employing organisation, then the more likely they will be to be influenced by the culture or climate in that team or organisation.

To conclude, some of the theories that have been used in the past to explain why age discrimination occurs, may have value in certain circumstances (e.g. Career time table theory (Lawrence, 1988) and Bridge employment (Zhan et al, 2015) etc.). However, after reviewing the literature in the previous chapter, it appears these theories are limited in their capacity to adequately explain many of the different influencing factors have been found to impact on older workers. Instead, the generalised social psychological theory of Social Identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and other strongly related theories are seemingly able to provide a much more comprehensive understanding as to why hiring decision makers may be reluctant to hire older workers

7. Research Questions & Hypotheses

7.1.Study One

The aim of this thesis is to explore some of the potential reasons why decision-makers, in a recruitment and selection process, may be less likely to select an older job candidate. Two studies will be conducted that will be referred to as Study One and Study Two. Both Studies will consist of a recruitment and selection decision-making task, during which hiring decision makers will be asked to rate the hireability of different prospective job candidates.

Study One will examine how individual-level factors, such as age stereotypes and affect towards older people, may influence hiring decision-makers. It will also explore how some of the candidates' other social and demographic characteristics may intersect with their age, to potentially make them more or less hireable. Staff and students at the University of Sheffield will be used as a sample population. Accordingly, the research questions for Study One are as follows:

Q1) In a recruitment and selection process, when equally matched with work experience and qualifications, are older candidates rated as less hireable than other aged candidates?

Q2) Will some of the older job candidates' other characteristics (such as their gender and social class) moderate the impact of their age?

Q3) To what extent to Individual level factors such as age stereotypes and affect towards older workers influence decision-makers in recruitment and selection processes when faced with an older job candidate?

7.2.Study One Hypotheses

As indicated in the previous two chapters, there is reliable and robust evidence to suggest that older workers are subject to routine discrimination in the workplace (Bal et al, 2011). Moreover, as indicated recruitment and selection appears to be a particularly significant site for the occurrence of age discrimination (Francioli & North, 2021). Accordingly, research has indicated that when out of work, older workers take significantly longer than other age groups to secure employment (Neumark et al, 2015). Moreover, studies have also shown that when older job candidates are presented alongside younger candidates, that decision-makers have a preference for the younger candidates (Bendick et al, 1999; Rosen & Jerdee, 1976).

The potential reasons why hiring decision-makers may favour younger over older candidates were proposed in the previous chapter and using a Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) it is predicted that if a decision-maker views an older candidate as out-group, then they may have a tendency to rely on stereotypes to inform them about the candidate's potential behaviour (which results in a negative evaluation). Furthermore, hiring decision-makers may also compare prospective candidates to relevant group prototypes and, if age is a salient characteristic for the prototype, then an older candidate may be less likely to be hired (Hogg & Hardie, 1992).

Thus, it would be expected that in a recruitment and selection process, when presented with younger, middle-aged, and older job candidates, participants (hiring decision-makers) will rate the older candidates as less hireable than the younger or middle-aged candidates.

> ***Hypothesis 1:*** *The age of prospective job candidates will be a predictor of their hireability, with older job candidates rated as less hireable than younger or middle-aged candidates.*

It was also proposed in the previous chapters that older workers should potentially not be considered a homogenous group and there may be other social and demographic characteristics of older candidates that intersect with their age, such as gender or social class (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Schilling, 2016). As such, intersectionality was posited as a way of understanding how different characteristics may negatively intersect, with this concept being used as a theoretical lens for both study one and two (Ramarajan, 2014).

As indicated in the literature review, there is robust evidence that women have historically faced discrimination and inequality in the workplace (Hideg & Krstic, 2021). Moreover, there is also evidence that this inequality may continue and potentially increase as they age (Neumark et al, 2015). For example, Duncan and Loretto (2004) claim that older women are statistically more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace than any other gender and age combination (e.g. younger females or older males etc.).

The potential theoretical reasons why age and gender may negatively intersect for older women were also explored in the previous chapter. As such, Intersectional Invisibility theory

(Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) was used to posit that individuals who are members of multiple disadvantaged groups are rendered invisible members of each group, and, thus, are seldom considered a prototype for either group. This could then mean that even if a woman was considered prototypical for a certain job, or within a certain organisation, that because the woman is also older, she becomes a marginal member of the 'female' category and, therefore, is less likely to be positively evaluated in a selection process.

It may be expected that in a recruitment and selection process, the age and gender of the prospective candidate will negatively intersect, and, thus, hiring decision makers may be more likely to rate the hireability of older female candidates as lower than older male candidates.

> ***Hypothesis 2****: The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the candidate's gender, with age having a stronger negative effect on the hireability of female candidates.*

As well as the intersect between the age and gender, the literature review chapter also explored the potential intersect between age and social class. Studies show that in the wider world, older people who are lower social class are more likely to face inequalities (McCann & Giles, 2002). Moreover, there is some research (Schilling, 2016), albeit preliminary, which indicates that older workers who are also lower social class and less skilled hold a weaker labour market position than older workers who are higher social class. In consequence, this could imply that age has a greater negative impact on those who are

lower social class, as potentially being higher social class may somewhat buffer the impact of ageing.

Nonetheless, the difficulty with assessing the impact of social class is that firstly there are various ways that it can be measured (Cirino et al, 2002). Furthermore, it is difficult to establish how a hiring decision maker would reliably infer a job candidate's social class during a short-listing process. However, a potential solution, which is discussed in more detail in the methodology chapter that follows this section, is to use educational status as a proxy for social class. This is because Hollingshead (1975) maintains that length of schooling/education is traditionally used as an indicator of social class. As such, in this study, whether the prospective candidates are degree educated (or not) will be used as an indicator of their social class.

> ***Hypothesis 3****: The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the candidate's educational status (as an indicator of social class), with age having a stronger negative effect on the hireability of candidates who are not degree educated (e.g. perceived as being lower class).*

As discussed in the previous chapter, Bridge employment is the name used for an emerging type of employment that has been observed in the labour market among older workers (Zhan et al, 2015). As such, instead of adhering to the traditional type of retirement, whereby an older worker retires entirely and becomes reliant either on the state and/or a private retirement fund/pension, some older people are choosing to seek alternative employment as a method of transitioning to full retirement (Beehr & Bennett, 2014).

Furthermore, some of these older workers are choosing bridge employment in their career field, while others are seemingly attempting to find work in an entirely new area (Zhan et al, 2015). In consequence, this could lead older workers to attempt to find employment in careers for which they lack directly relevant wok experience. Career Timetable theory (Lawrence, 1988) which has been used in the past to explain why age discrimination occurs could be useful for in these circumstances. This is because this theory would posit that Bridge employment could feasibly violate age norms, as older candidates would naturally be expected to be more experienced than younger candidates. This then could result in older candidates who lack work relevant experience being evaluated negatively (even if relevant work experience is not strictly necessary for a role). Accordingly, it would be expected that older candidates who do not have relevant work experience would be rated as less hireable than older candidates who do have relevant experience.

> ***Hypothesis 4****: The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the candidate's work experience, with age having a stronger negative effect on those candidates who do not have previous relevant work experience.*

The previous chapters highlighted the influence that negative age stereotypes seemingly have on the workplace (Harris et al, 2018). Moreover, while research (Ng & Feldman, 2012) has found the content of these stereotypes to be largely inaccurate, they have nonetheless been shown to have a significant impact in various areas, including recruitment and selection (Posthuma & Campion, 2009).

Potential reasons why age stereotypes are being enacted in the workplace were also explored in previous chapters, with a Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982, Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1986) providing the proposal that when a person views another person as out-group, then they may have a tendency to rely on stereotypes to inform them about their potential behaviour (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). In respect of older workers, this then results in the hiring decision maker evaluating them as a poor choice of hire. As such, it is suggested that if a hiring decision maker agrees with the content of age stereotypes (e.g. believes the content to be correct/accurate) then they may then be less likely to select an older candidate in a recruitment and selection process.

> ***Hypothesis 5****: The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the participant's age stereotyping, with age having a stronger negative effect on hireability when the participants agrees with the content of age stereotypes.*

The tri-partite model of bias, which proposes biased attitudes to consist of stereotypes and affect that can both lead to a behavioural outcome of discrimination (Fiske, 2004), was also introduced in the previous chapters. Furthermore, while there has been some preliminary research which found that affect for older people was a better predictor of behavioural outcomes, than age stereotypes (Cuddy et al, 2007), there are other researchers who claim the potential impact of affect, is an area that constitutes a significant gap in the literature, with regards to our understanding of age discrimination in the workplace (Finkelstein, 2015).

The previous chapters also made a number of propositions about how and why affect may influence hiring decision-makers, including the claim that when economic stereotypes are activated, it can trigger an affective reaction (Fiske & Lee, 2008). Thus, if a hiring decision-maker ascribed to the stereotypical belief that older workers are more expensive/costly, which is a common age stereotype (Ng & Feldman, 2012), then it could lead to them resenting older workers and having negative affect towards them.

A Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) was again used in the previous chapters to provide an explanation why affect may influence hiring decision makers. For example, Ashforth et al, 2008 claim our social identities to have an affective element, and to preserve our self-esteem we have positive affect for those who we categorise as in-group, and potentially negative affect towards those who are perceived as out-group. Accordingly, it would then be expected that if a decision-maker lacks positive affect for older workers (or has negative affect), then they may be less likely to select an older job candidate.

> ***Hypothesis 6****: The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the participant's level of affect towards older workers, with age having a stronger negative effect on hireability when participants have lower affect for older workers*

Lastly, one of the key criticisms of previous studies on age discrimination is that they lack ecological validity. This is because they have tended to be laboratory based, rather than field studies, and used students as a sample population instead of real world employees

(Gordon & Arvey, 2004; Morgeson et al, 2008). As such, many of these criticisms are based on claims that because these studies are not realistic, they inflate the amount of age discrimination that actually occurs in the workplace. However, as the sample for this study will include both staff and students as decision-maker participants, it will be possible to explore whether there are any differences in how they rate older job candidates and if the criticisms of previous studies are warranted. Thus, consistent with previous criticisms (that students in artificial environments likely magnify the impact of age), it may be expected that the student participants may be more likely to rate older job candidates as less hireable.

> ***Hypotheses 7****: The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the occupational status of the participant, with age having a stronger negative effect on hireability when the participants are students.*

7.3.Study Two

Study Two will explore how team and organisational level factors may influence hiring decision-makers, in respect of older job candidates. In addition, while Study One will take place in a single context and using a single job role, Study Two will take place across four different external organisations and using multiple different job roles.

As with Study One, Study Two will also take an intersectional approach to hiring decision-making to establish if the candidate's gender interacts with their age. Accordingly, the research questions for Study Two will be as follows:

Q1) Will team level factors, such as team climate, influence decision-makers in recruitment and selection processes when faced with an older job candidate?

Q2) Will organisation factors, such as organisational culture, influence decision-makers in recruitment and selection processes when faced with an older job candidate

Q3) Will some of the job candidate's other social and biological characteristics intersect with their age and make decision-makers more or less likely to hire an older candidate?

7.4.Hypotheses Study Two

As previously indicated, there is a body of research that suggests that older workers are subject to age discrimination in the workplace (Bal et al, 2011). Moreover, this discrimination is seemingly more prevalent in areas such as recruitment and selection (Francioli & North, 2021). Thus, consistent with the hypotheses for study one, it would again be expected that in a recruitment and selection process, older candidates will be rated as less hireable than younger or middle-aged candidates.

Hypothesis 1*: The age of prospective job candidates will be a predictor of their hireability, with older job candidates rated as less hireable than younger or middle-aged candidates.*

As with Study One, Study Two will also use intersectionality as a lens to understand how different characteristics of job candidates may intersect (Ramarajan, 2014). However, whereas study one will examine the intersect between age and gender, and age and social class, study two will focus only on the intersect of age and gender. The reasons for just focusing on age and gender will be discussed in the methodology chapter, but for practical reasons, in particular, in order to limit the numbers of job candidates being evaluated, focusing only on gender and age was necessary for study two. As such, consistent with literature that was discussed for study one (Duncan & Loretto, 2004), in a recruitment and selection process, it would be expected that older female candidates will be rated as less hireable than older male candidates.

> ***Hypothesis 2:*** *The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the candidate's gender, with age having a stronger negative effect on the hireability of female candidates.*

The previous chapters explored the potential impact that organisational factors such as organisational culture could have on hiring decision-makers when faced with an older job candidates. Organisational culture is a term that was adopted by Schein (1990, 1996) to describe the shared beliefs and values that employees hold regarding their employing organisation. Moreover, it has long been proposed that when recruiting for new employees, hiring decisions are influenced by what is termed 'person/organisation fit'. This means that while decision-makers know that the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the candidate are important, they also consider how well the candidate will 'fit' in to their employing organisation (Bowen et al, 1991).

With regard to the specific impact of culture on older workers, there has been some preliminary research (Zacher & Gielnik, 2014) that has explored whether organisations have age-related cultures, with findings showing that some organisations have young age cultures (e.g. they place greater value on youth and younger workers), and other organisations have older age cultures, which are then more age friendly with regards to older workers. As such, it could then be feasible to posit that when decision makers are based in organisations that have age friendly cultures, that they may be more likely to hire older job candidates.

Theoretical explanations as to how and why organisational culture may influence hiring decision-makers is once again based on a Social Identity Approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987), with organisational identity being posited as a potentially relevant workplace social identity (Ashforth et al, 2008). Thus, if an organisation has a culture which values older workers, then an employee who identifies strongly with their employing organisation may enact their organisational identity by behaving in a way that is consistent with that culture.

In consequence, if an organisation has a culture that suggests it values older workers, then a decision maker may be more likely to hire an older worker, whereas if the organisation has a culture which is less age friendly, then the decision maker may be less likely to hire an older worker.

Hypothesis 3*: The relationship between the age of the perspective candidate and their hireability will be moderated the hiring decision maker's perception of organisational age culture, with age having a stronger negative effect for those decision makers who perceive their employing organisation to have a culture than is less supportive of older workers.*

As well as organisational culture, the concept of organisational climate was also introduced in the previous chapters, with climate being understood as employees' shared perceptions of their employing organisation's policies, procedures, and practices (Wilson, 2000). Furthermore, it was suggested that organisational level variables, such as climate, can also be conceptualised and utilised at the team level (West & Richter, 2011), with some researchers even claiming that team factors may have more of an influence on employee behaviour than organisational factors, due to the proximity of other team members and their smaller size (Riketta & Van Dick, 2005).

While researchers have studied the impact of overall climate on workplaces, it has also been narrowed to make it more age specific. Accordingly, constructs such age diversity climate, climate for age inclusion, and age discrimination climate, have been used in recent studies to examine their impact on a variety of different outcomes (Kunze et al, 2011, 2013; Zacher & Yang, 2016). With regards to the impact of age-related climates on hiring decisions, Reichers and Schneider (1990) maintain that perception of climate allows employees to make judgements about which behaviours are likely to be rewarded or punished within their teams. As such, it is feasible that if a team has a climate that is less supportive of older

workers, then a hiring decision-maker may choose not to hire an older worker as they believe hiring an older worker would be perceived negatively in their respective teams.

Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) is once again used to explain why team climate may influence decision makers. This is because it posits that behaving in a way that is consistent with team climate, may reflect the decision maker enacting their team identity. Furthermore, prototypicality (which was discussed in previous chapters) may also influence hiring decision makers (Hogg & Hardie, 1992. This is because if teams have a prototypical team member, then prospective employees may be compared to this person, which could be relevant if age was a relevant element of the prototype.

In consequence, it is likely that when a decision-maker is based in a team, which has a positive climate for age diversity, they may me more likely to hire an older job candidate. Conversely, when a decision maker is based in a team with a negative climate for age diversity, then they may be less likely to hire an older job candidate.

> ***Hypothesis 4****: The relationship between the prospective candidate's age and their hireability will be moderated by the aggregated team age diversity climate, with those decision makers who are based in teams with a climate that is less positive for age diversity then less likely to rate the older job candidates as hireable.*

Lastly, as indicated, this thesis predicts that hiring behaviour (e.g. decision making) is a way for decision makers to potentially enact their social identities. As such, if a decision-maker identifies more strongly with a social collective (such as their team), it is the team rather

than their own individual beliefs, values and actions that could be more influential on their hiring decisions. Accordingly, this proposal will also be explored in study two, in an attempt to establish whether the climate within a team will have more of an influence on hiring decision makers (in respect of their rating of older job candidates), when they identify more strongly with their respective teams.

> ***Hypothesis 5****: The relationship between the prospective candidate's age and their hireability will be moderated by an interaction between the aggregated team age diversity climate and the extent to which decision-makers identify with their team, with those decision-makers who identify more strongly with their respective teams then being more likely to be influenced by the team climate.*

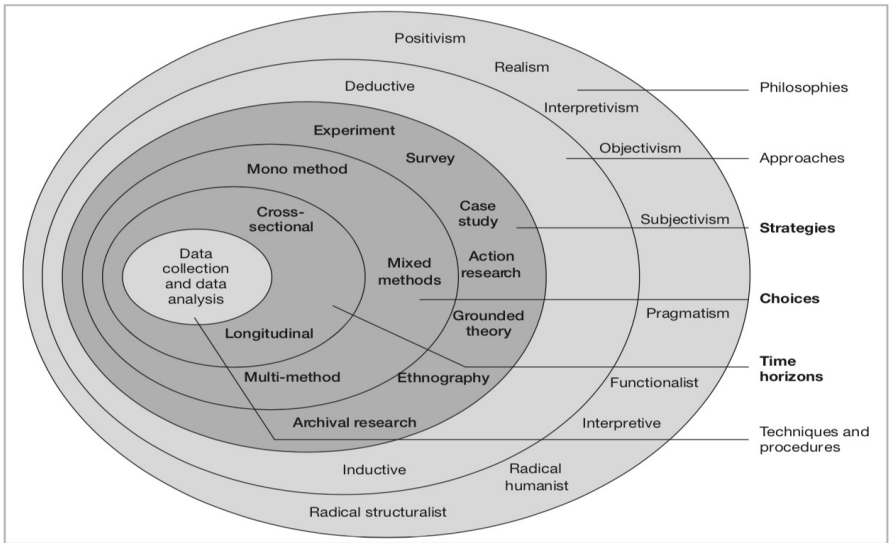
8. Methodology Chapter

This chapter will consider the methodology that was used to test the hypotheses that were developed for both study one and study two. Furthermore, as well as discussing aspects such as the research design, the samples used, and how the studies were actually conducted, it will begin with an overview of the philosophical perspective that underpins the entire thesis, including a discussion on why considering this philosophy is necessary before embarking on any research project.

8.1. Research Philosophy

Before discussing the methodology and research techniques that were used for both studies, it is necessary to provide an overview of the philosophy that underpins the theory and methodology used in this thesis. This is because if we refer to Figure 4 termed 'The Research Onion' by Saunders et al (2009), it is apparent that the choice of a philosophical perspective is what leads to the appropriate strategies and techniques being selected for data collection.

Figure 4: The Research Onion (Saunders et al, 2009)



Accordingly, organisational and business research is said to be underpinned by various different philosophies, with two of the most common, which are also often diametrically opposed on their understandings of the social world, being Positivism and Interpretivism. These philosophies (as well as the many other philosophies that are used by organisational researchers) differ in their understanding of the key concepts of epistemology, ontology, and axiology. What follows is a brief summary of these principles, followed by an overview of how each applies to this thesis (Bell et al, 2022).

Epistemology is the area of philosophy that contemplates the theory of knowledge, which includes questions about what actually constitutes knowledge, where it comes from, and how can it be accessed. As such, theories that underpin organizational research, can broadly be defined as having either an objectivist or subjectivist epistemology. Researchers that adopt an objectivist epistemology (e.g. Positivist researchers) subscribe to the belief

that knowledge exists independently of the observer and should be gained using scientific methods and interpreted using reason and logic. However, researchers utilising a subjectivist epistemology believe knowledge to be a product of the relationship between the researcher and researched, and, which therefore requires methods that are sensitive to this relationship (Bell et al, 2022; Saunders et al, 2009).

Additionally, whilst epistemology is concerned with the philosophy of knowledge, ontology is concerned with the philosophy of reality, with the two ends of the ontological continuum being termed realism and relativism. Accordingly, perspectives that have a realist ontology (e.g. Positivism), claim that there is a single reality, which is observable and which can be accessed using appropriate scientific methods. However, theories that have a relativist ontology (e.g. Interpretivism) believe that there may be multiple realities which are dependent upon the power and perspective of the observer (Bell et al, 2022; Saunders et al, 2009).

Finally, the last key philosophical concept that will be discussed is axiology. Axiology can be understood as the theory of value, meaning that it is concerned with what a researcher (and research) actually values, what the aims of any research is, and why it should be considered worthwhile. Accordingly, axiological considerations include, how the individual values of the researcher may or may not impact on the research. Researchers that then align themselves with a more scientific approach (e.g. Positivist researchers) claim that research should aim to be value free, with the researcher remaining neutral, and the aims of any research to explain any phenomenon (rather than to place value on the research and its outcomes). Whereas researchers that align themselves with approaches such Interpretivism or

Constructionism, would claim that it is impossible for the values of the researcher to not impact on the research, and the researcher should instead take time to explore how their own values have guided and impacted on their research (Bell et al, 2022; Saunders et al, 2009).

Accordingly, after considering the key differences between philosophical approaches in their epistemology, ontology and axiology, it is clear that this thesis is based on the philosophical perspective of Positivism. Positivism, which can be traced back to the 1800s, is broadly based on the notion that the objective methods that are used by researchers in the natural science disciplines, can also be applied to research in the social world. Accordingly, positivist researchers usually subscribe to an ontology which infers that a single reality (or truth) exists, which researchers can access using appropriate methods. With regards to their epistemological position, positivist researchers claim that decisions about what constitutes knowledge and how it should be gained, should take place in an objective fashion in the sense that the researcher does not attempt to influence the nature of that knowledge Finally, the axiology of positivism is that researchers should aim to remain neutral and not let their own values influence the research or its outcomes (Bell et al, 2022; Saunders et al, 2009)

With regards to this thesis, it is apparent that it assumes that an external reality exists. For instance, it is assumed that age discrimination is a definite, observable feature of organisational reality which happens independently of the ideas and judgements of any researcher. Moreover, it assumes that this reality exists on multiple different levels, such as organisational, team and individual. In addition, both study one and study two are based on

deductive approaches, which means that research questions and hypotheses have been developed for testing based on previous literature and theories. Thus, if we then refer back to the Onion Model above (Saunders et al, 2009), then leading on from using Positivism as a philosophical guide, and taking a deductive approach to any research, is an expectation that studies will tend to be quantitative in nature. This means that concepts that have been introduced in the literature review (and form part of the hypotheses that will be tested), such as organisational culture and climate can be operationalised in a way that they can be quantified (e.g. surveys etc. can be utilised). Moreover, it means that a large enough sample is needed for the data collection, and that results from any studies that take place can be generalised to other relevant populations (that finding may be relevant to other organisations etc.) (Bell et al, 2022; Saunders et al, 2009).

8.2.Study One

The following section will explore the methodology that will be used to test the hypotheses that were developed for study one (see previous chapter for research questions and hypotheses).

8.3.Study One - Study Overview

Study one consisted of participants undertaking a simulated recruitment and selection short-listing exercise, during which they were presented with a number of vignettes (which contained information about different prospective job candidates), and asked to rate the

hireability of each job candidate. Questionnaire scales were then used to measure a variety of participant attitudes.

The dependent variable for the study was the hireability scores for each job candidate. The independent variable was the candidate's age, with the following candidate variables being used as moderating variables: the candidate's gender, their social class, and their previous work experience. In addition, the following participant attitudinal variables were used as moderating variables: the participant's level of age stereotyping, and their affect towards older people in the workplace.

8.4.Study One -Research Design & Procedure

8.5. Study One - Study Design

A within-person experimental vignette design was utilised for the study, with the age, gender, and educational status (as a proxy of social class) of the prospective job candidates being manipulated. Whilst the use of experiments and quasi-experiments is common in the natural science disciplines, the investigation of causal relationships using experiments is still relatively rare in the social sciences (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). Moreover, experimental research, can be split into one of three approaches, between-person designs, within-person designs, or mixed designs (Saunders et al, 2009). In a true between-person design, participants would be presented with only one vignette (e.g. one candidate). A comparison would then be made across all participants. However, this design does not allow

participants to make a comparative choice, and, thus, is both unrealistic and not contextually grounded. As such, very few experimental vignette studies employ this design. In a mixed design study, participants are split into groups. Participants in each group then views the same vignettes (mixed within-person), however, each group receives a different set of vignettes. Again, this approach does not lend itself to being a realistic recruitment and selection short-listing experience. Lastly, in within-person designs, all participants are presented with the same vignettes to allow the respondent to make a comparative choice across the vignette population. This design, which is commonly used in vignette research, allows researchers to manipulate different independent variables to establish whether any of these factors potentially impact participant's decision-making (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014).

Atzmuller and Steiner (2010) define a vignette as "a short, carefully constructed description of a person, object or situation representing a systematic combination of characteristics". Moreover, vignette designs are mainly split into two approaches: those aimed at exploring explicit outcomes, and those aimed at exploring implicit processes (Aiman-Smith et al, 2002). Explicit designs are often also called 'Paper-People' studies, whereas implicit designs are commonly known as either 'Policy Capturing' or 'Conjoint Analysis'. In explicit designs, participants are presented with vignettes and requested to make overt judgments or behavioural preferences. In implicit studies, participants are presented with the vignettes and, in order to capture implicit decision-making, are asked to rate or make a preferential choice from the vignettes. Moreover, implicit designs are often used in research which examines decision-making that is not made with the participant's full-awareness, or which could be subject to socially desirable responding (e.g. discrimination/bias research). Socially desirable responding can be defined as "the tendency to give positive self-descriptions"

(Paulhus, 2002) and is an important consideration in any research that attempts to explore aspects of discrimination. This is because when attempting to assess whether some individuals may be biased against other individuals, the ability and motivation of an individual to alter their natural tendency to align with current social norms and standards cannot be discounted (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). Accordingly, this study utilised an implicit vignette design to examine participant's decision-making.

The vignette's (job candidates) varied according to the following independent variables: their age (young, middle-aged, old), gender (male, female), social class as indicated using whether or not the candidate was degree educated or not (yes degree or no degree), and whether they had relevant work experience (yes experience or no experience). These variables created a full factorial population of 24 vignettes (24 different job candidates). However, as suggested by Aguinis and Bradley (2014) too many vignettes can potentially lead participants to experience both cognitive overload and/or respondent fatigue. As such, there are two strategies that can be utilised in cases of large vignette populations to reduce the number of vignettes that each participant must assess. Either a specific number of the total population may be used as a subset (random selection or fractional factorial design), or the population can be partitioned so that each respondent views a specific number of vignettes, but overall all the vignettes are equally assessed. As such, it was decided that fractional factorial design would be employed and the vignette population was divided to create 2 subsets of 12 vignettes (all equally matched by the relevant variables) and participants were then randomly presented with 1 of the 2 subsets. They were, therefore, presented with 12 candidate vignettes instead of 24, with the order of the 12 candidates randomised.

8.6. Study One - Research Setting

Participants were recruited using the University of Sheffield's volunteer distribution list, which is an anonymised list of individuals (staff and students) who agree to take part in research studies that are hosted within the university by staff and students. The university is divided into five different academic faculties and centralised administrative departments. Recruitment and selection of new employees generally takes place using a mix of departmental and HR staff. Prospective candidates apply for roles using a standardised application form. Candidates are then short-listed with chosen candidates progressing to interview (and other selection methods). Staff who are identified as having recruitment and selection responsibilities as part of their role are provided with training, including equality and diversity training (The University of Sheffield, 2020).

8.7.Study One - Research Procedure

Volunteers (staff and students) were then emailed an invitation asking if they would like to take part in a study that would consist of a short-listing exercise and some questionnaire scales that would measure some of their attitudes. Furthermore, as a thank-you (e.g. incentive) for their participation they would be entered into a prize draw for a £50 Marks & Spencer's voucher. Participants could opt to take part by following a hyperlink that was contained in the invitation email. They were then presented with an information sheet and consent form (Appendix A) and if they agreed to participate they were redirected to

complete the study. If they did not consent, then they were thanked for their time and were not able to access the study. It should be noted that participants were initially told that the study was examining decision-making in a recruitment and selection process, and not that the study was specifically trying to examine the hireability of older workers in a recruitment and selection process. The reason for this element of initial deception (which was approved by an Ethics committee) was again to limit the potential for socially desirable responding (Paulhus, 2002). The assumption then being that if participants were told the actual reason for the study then it could potentially alter their behaviour towards older job candidates.

The participants then undertook the simulated recruitment and selection short-listing exercise. This exercise consisted of a fictitious job advertisement, with the job that was used for the advert being an administrative role in a frozen foods distribution company (see exact wording below).

> *You run a business in Sheffield that distributes frozen foods around the country. You are looking to hire an Administrator to assist in head office. Tasks will include: dealing with customer telephone calls and emails, overseeing incoming and outgoing post, diary management for the sales reps, and various other ad-hoc office duties when needed (invoicing, filing etc.). Previous administrative or office experience would be preferred, but is not a necessity as for the right candidate training will be given.*
>
> *12 candidates have applied for the position. Please rate each candidate in terms of their hireability for the above position only.*

The participants were then randomly presented with 12 different job candidates they were asked to rate the hireability of thee prospective candidates on a Likert scale from 1-7 (1=

extremely unlikely to hire, 2= moderately unlikely to hire, 3=slightly unlikely to hire, 4= neither likely or unlikely to hire, 5=slightly likely to hire, 6=moderately likely to hire, 7 = extremely likely to hire). As previously indicated, these candidates varied according to their age, gender, social class, and whether they had previous relevant work experience.

Candidate age was provided as a numerical value in the study (e.g. the candidates were specified in each vignette as being a certain age), however, for the purpose of the analysis age was treated as a categorical variable and grouped into the following 3 levels: young, middle-aged, older. The older group was categorised as candidates over 55 years, which is consistent with research that indicates age discrimination accelerates around this age, and, as such, international public policies on workforce ageing often use 55 years as the cut-off point for older workers (Kooij et al, 2008; McCarthy et al, 2014). The young group was workers between 17-40 years old, which fits with the seminal career stage research by Levinson and Colleagues (1978) which defines early adulthood as being between the ages of 17-40 years. This definition of younger workers was also utilised in more recent research undertaken by Collins et al (2009), which examined older and younger workers. Lastly, the middle-aged group was workers who were between the ages of 41-54 years, which is slightly younger than the oxford definition of middle-aged (45-65 years), though fits more into a mid-career worker definition (Arnold & Randall et al, 2010).

Gender was a binary measure (male/female) in the vignettes, but could also be inferred by the participants from the candidate's name (in the same way as a real-world short-listing process). The names that were used were taken from a website of commonly used male and

female names in the UK (www.nameberry.com), in an attempt to limit any ambiguity about gender.

With regards to **social class**, as previously indicated, the problem with using the candidate's social class as a predictor of their hireability, is that it is difficult to establish how a participant would infer the candidate's social class during a short-listing process. As such, it was decided that because length of schooling has traditionally been used as an indicator of social class (Hollingshead, 1975) that whether the candidate was degree educated or not would be used as an indicator of their social class. Accordingly, within the vignettes, the two levels of this independent variable were the candidate being degree educated (or not).

Lastly, **relevant work experience** was included as an independent variable in the vignettes by adding previous work experience for the candidates, that was (or was not) in the same field as the fictitious job. For instance, previous administrative experience was classified (for analytical purposes) as relevant and previous work experience in a different field was classified as non-relevant.

Following completion of the hiring exercise, participants completed the two attitudinal questionnaire scales (Stereotype scale and Affect scale). The **stereotype scale** consisted of 8 items (e.g. 'how comfortable are older people using technology in the workplace') and used a 5 point Likert scale (1= not at all, 2=slightly, 3=moderately, 4=fairly, 5=extremely).
The **Affect scale** also consisted of 8 items (e.g. 'I feel envious of older people in the workplace') and also used a 5-point Likert scale (1= not at all, 2=slightly, 3=moderately, 4=fairly, 5=extremely). Further details of both scales be can found in the 'Materials' section.

The following demographic information was collected from participants: their age, gender, status within the university (student, staff etc.), educational level, and finally whether they had ever conducted a recruitment short-listing process in the past (e.g. whether they had experience of short-listing).

Finally, after completing the study the participants were redirected to a debrief form (Appendix B). A debrief form was necessary in this instance as the participants had initially been told in the information sheet that the study was broadly exploring recruitment and selection decision-making (Burns & Burns, 2008). Thus, it did not specify that the particular interest was in the hireability of older job candidates and a debrief form was used to provide the participants with the actual purpose of the research, reminding them again of their rights to withdraw their data and other issues related to the ethics of the procedure.

8.8. Study One - Participants

The study took place in 2017 in the University of Sheffield, which is a higher education institute based in the UK. Participants were recruited using the volunteer distribution email list. The sample consisted of 271 participants: 75 males, 183 females, 1 person who did not identify as either male or female, and 12 people who didn't answer this question. The participant's ages ranged from 18 to 69 years old. The mean age was 32.93 (*SD*=11.70). Regarding the occupational status of the participants, 131 were staff members (34 research/academic employees and 90 professional services employees), 129 were students, and 11 people did not answer this question. From the 271 participants 148 people (54.6 %)

had prior experience of short-listing, 113 people (41.7%) had not, and 10 people (3.7%) did not answer the question.

8.9.Study One - Materials

The online recruitment and selection shortlisting task (the job advert and vignettes) and the questionnaire scales used in the study (to measure age stereotypes in the workplace and affect towards older workers) were created online using the survey platform, Qualtrics. The job advert was based on a real advert found on Indeed.com (see Appendix C for copies of the vignettes).

8.10. Study One - The Stereotype Scale

The 8-item age stereotype scale (Appendix D) was created and adapted from the 'work-related age based stereotype scale (WAS)' which was originally developed by Marcus et al, (2016) and measures individual belief in age stereotypes in the workplace. Previously, age stereotype scales have tended to be based on Cuddy and Fiske's (2002) typology relating to competence and warmth (Kleissner & Jahn, 2020). However, Marcus et al, (2016) extended these two dimensions to add in a third factor of 'adaptability', which relates to the commonly held belief that older workers dislike change and lack adaptability (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Nevertheless,, additional stereotype scales that also relate to younger workers (e.g. stereotype scales for 'age' in general rather than

just older workers), often also focus on technical skills, due to the fact that younger workers are often stereotyped as being superior with regards to technical ability, including technological skills (Week et al, 2017). As such, for this study, a fourth factor was added, relating to use of technology (older workers technical skills).

The final scale consisted of 8 items based on the following four dimensions: competence, adaptability, technical/technological skills, and warmth. Two scale items were provided for each dimension, with an example of wording as follows: competence (e.g. how capable are older people in the workplace), adaptability (e.g. how adaptable are older people in the workplace), technical/technology skills (e.g. how comfortable are older people using technology in the workplace), and warmth (e.g. how friendly are older people in the workplace). The items were rated using a 5 point Likert scale (1= not at all, 2=slightly, 3=moderately, 4=fairly, 5=extremely).

The competence, adaptability, and technology use stereotypes are considered as negative age stereotypes (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). However, whilst being high in warmth could in some contexts be considered a positive attribute, in the context of the workplace, warmth could actually be considered a negative attribute, as this is consistent with the Cuddy and Fiske's (2002) notion of older people being perceived as 'doddery but dear' (e.g. friendly and warm, but lacking in competence). As such, because this stereotype is both an overgeneralisation of older people in the workplace, and potentially has a negative impact on the perception of older people's competence in the workplace, the warmth scale items were not reverse scored. Therefore, all items on the

scale were positively scored, such that a high score represented a high belief in age stereotypes in the workplace.

Cronbach's alpha was run for the Stereotype scale and the results (.729) showed that the scale had a good level of internal validity that could have been improved with the removal of the following two items: 'How warm are older people in the workplace' and 'How friendly are older people in the workplace'. workplace'. However, because the scale was showing an acceptable level of internal validity with their inclusion, these items were retained.

Exploratory Factor analysis was also conducted for the stereotype scale. Results of the KMO index were acceptable at .69 (Kaiser, 1970 and Bartlett's test was significant indicating that factor analysis was appropriate. The rotated factor matrix (Appendix P) showed that all but one individual item were above the acceptable KMO limit of 0.5 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). This item was 'how suitable are older people for training and development in the workplace'. However, for the purpose of this analysis this item was retained. The EFA showed that the scale items were loading onto 3 factors (see appendix P for scree plot and rotated matrix table), which explained 69% of the scale variance. These 3 factors were termed technical and adaptability skills, competence, and interpersonal skills.

8.11. Study One - The Affect Scale

The 8-item affect towards older workers scale (Appendix E) was based on a study by Cuddy et al (2007) that examined bias, and included the following emotions that are said to collectively represent 'affect': envy, admiration, disgust, and pity (2 scale items for each

emotion). An example of the wording is: 'I feel envious of older people in the workplace' and items were rated using a 5 point Likert scale (1= not at all, 2=slightly, 3=moderately, 4=fairly, 5=extremely).

The positive affect items (envy and admiration) were positively scored and the negative affect items (disgust and pity) were then reverse scored to create a total affect scale score (a high score then meant higher positive affect and a lower score more negative affect). As such, this study adopted a bipolar approach, where positive affect is considered to occupy one end of the continuum and negative affect the other (Russell & Carroll, 1999). Cronbach's alpha was run for the affect scale and the results (.692) showed an acceptable level of internal validity, which could have been improved to .724 with removal of the item 'to what extent do people feel proud of older people in the workplace'. However, again, because this scale demonstrated an acceptable level of internal validity, this item was retained.

Exploratory Factor analysis was also conducted for the affect scale. Results of the KMO index were acceptable at .66 (Kaiser, 1970) and Bartlett's test was significant. The rotated factor matrix (Appendix Q) showed that all but two individual items were above the acceptable KMO limit of 0.5 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974). These items were 'to what extent do you feel contempt towards older people in the workplace' and 'to what extent do you feel disgusted by older people in the workplace'. However, for the purpose of this analysis these items were retained. The EFA found that the scale items were loading onto 3 factors (see Appendix Q for scree plot and rotated matrix table), which explained 67% of the scale variance. These 3 factors were termed pity/contempt, envy, and admiration.

8.12. Study One - Ethics

Full ethical approval was granted by the University of Sheffield's Management School ethics review board in December 2016 (Appendix F).

8.13. Study One - Data Analysis

The raw data set was downloaded from Qualtrics into SPSS. It was then cleaned to remove any participants that had not fully completed the recruitment and selection exercise (as well as establishing which values were missing from the demographic participant data etc.). After cleaning the data, it was then restructured in SPSS from variables to cases to allow the extraction of the different levels within each independent variable (VARSTOCASES).

The restructured data was then analysed using a mixed level linear model, with this type of test allowing the analysis of multi-level data/hierarchical data with both random and fixed effects (Field, 2018). Mixed level models, which are commonly known as multi-level models, is an approach that can be used for clustered or nested data (including (such as for study one) repeated measures within participants, and participants who are nested within groups e.g. study two). This is because this type of data often violates the independence needed between data points and can increase the likelihood of a Type I error (false-positive) (Hox et al, 2017). As well as certain assumptions that are needed before using this mixed level models (details of which can be found in the 'Results' chapter), it is standard practice to firstly run a null model. This establishes that the grouping variable (the 'participant' for study one and the 'team' for study two) significantly affects the intercept of the dependent

variable. If satisfied by the results of the null model, the mixed level analysis can be conducted. Any further models (e.g. hypothesis testing models) are then compared to the null model (which is an additional function to the null model).

To prepare the data for analysis, candidate age was grouped into 3 levels (young, middle-aged and old). The stereotype scale and affect scale scores were created by reverse scoring where appropriate and then computing mean scores for each scale. Scale variables were then z-scored. The participants' occupational status was also dummy coded for the purpose of the analysis.

The control variables for this study were participant age and gender. Using these variables as control factors is not only relatively standard practice in a quantitative study, but is also consistent with the theoretical framework used in this thesis, which is a Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987). Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) posits that we understand ourselves in relation to the social collectives with which we identify. Furthermore, we may be biased towards people who we perceive as also being members of this collective (in-group), and biased against individuals who are not members of this group (out-group). This could feasibly then mean that older participants may be more likely to rate older candidates as more hireable (as they see them as in group), and, conversely, younger participants may be less likely to rate the older job candidates positively (as they see them as out-group). However, it was also highlighted in the previous chapters that there is evidence that people actually distance themselves from identities that they do not see as desirable (Jackall, 1978), with the proposal being that since 'older worker' identity has negative connotations, this could be an

identity that older people do not want to identify with. As such, it is unclear whether older participants will necessarily see older job candidates as in-group (and be more likely to rate them more positively). Moreover, there is additional evidence that older workers are just as likely to engage in age stereotyping as younger workers (Kite et al, 2005). Thus, while it remains uncertain whether the age and gender of the participant may influence their hireability ratings of the prospective job candidates, these variables will be used as control variables, to establish if they are having an impact on the candidate hireability ratings.

After the analysis had been run, the variables that were not significant were extracted from the model and a second, reduced model was analysed retaining only the significant predictors. Results of these models can be seen in the results chapter (which follows after the methodology of study two).

8.14. Study Two

The following section will explore the methodology that will be used to test the hypotheses that were developed for study two.

8.15. Study Two Overview

Study two differed from study one in that it took place across four host organisations (which were based in retail, manufacturing, civil service, and higher education sectors) and consisted of two parts. Firstly, participants (who were team leaders or persons responsible for recruitment and selection decisions within their respective teams) undertook a simulated recruitment and selection short-listing exercise. For this exercise, they were

presented with vignettes (which took the form of mini CVs for different job candidates), and asked to rate the hireability of each prospective job candidate. Questionnaire scales were then used to measure the team leader's individual perception of the age culture in their employing organisation, and how much they identified with their respective teams. Following this, employees in each participating team then completed an age diversity climate scale, which was then aggregated to create a team-level variable labelled, team age diversity climate.

As in study one the dependent variable for study two was the hireability scores for each job candidate. The independent variable was the candidate's age, with the following variables being used as moderating variables: the candidate's gender, the team leader's perception of the age culture in their employing organisation (age culture), the team-level age diversity climate (team-level climate), and the extent to which the team leader participants identified with their respective teams (team identity).

8.16. Study Two - Research Design & Procedure

8.17. Study Two - Study Design

Study two employed a within-person experimental vignette design. This meant that, as with study one, participants rated each different vignette and, thus, made a comparative choice between the candidates (within person), as opposed to rating a single vignette (between person) or being placed into groups to rate different sets of vignettes (mixed design) (Saunders et al, 2009). Additionally, study two also utilised an implicit vignette methodology

in an attempt to limit the likelihood of any socially desirable responding from the participants (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014).

The vignettes (which took the form of a mini CV for each job candidate) then varied according to the candidate's age and gender. Moreover, whilst the candidate's educational achievements and previous relevant work experience were included in the vignettes, these factors were controlled in this study. For instance, if a degree was necessary for the role then all the candidates within the vignettes were ascribed a degree, and all the candidates had relevant work experience. No dates/length of this experience were provided. These variables created a full factorial population of 6 vignettes (6 different job candidates), which based on best practice guidelines for vignette studies (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014) is a manageable amount for an individual to assess, whilst avoiding cognitive overload/respondent fatigue.

8.18. Study Two - Research Setting

The study took place across four different host organisations. The main criteria for selecting the different organisations was that they were all based in different sectors/industries, that they were large enough to feasibly collect a significant amount of quantitative data, and that they organised employees into teams/workgroups. Organisation A (retail organisation) and B (manufacturing company) were recruited at a networking event hosted at Sheffield University Management School, in which I presented a poster of the results from study one. Organisation C (public-sector government office) was recruited through my own contacts. Lastly, Organisation D (university) was initially supposed to be the NHS. However, due to the

Covid-19 pandemic, non-essential research activities were suspended by the participating trust. As such, because of the logistical issue of recruiting another external organisation during the pandemic period, Organisation D was approached and recruited as a replacement organisation.

I met with all four organisations on multiple occasions to establish that they all used teams (work groups) as a method of dividing up employees, and that there was a person (or persons) within that team that was responsible for, or had an input into, team related recruitment and selection decisions (in virtually all teams, contacts within HR were also jointly involved in short-listing and interviewing prospective candidates). I was also able to establish the approximate size of teams (how many team members) during these meeting.

The four organisations then sent an initial expression of interest email to all teams, which they agreed could take part in the study (in some organisations this was sent to all teams, whereas for other organisations they selected which teams would be invited to participate) asking if they would like to take participate in the study. The initial email explained that it was a recruitment and selection decision-making study, and the aim of the study was to understand whether the attitudes of team-members influenced recruitment and selection decisions in their respective teams. It should be noted that organisational contacts who had agreed to host the study, knew the study was actually examining the hireability of older workers, and that this information needed to be withheld from employees at this stage. Those teams who expressed an interest in participating were then instructed to email myself with the name of their team, the amount of people in their team who were involved in recruitment and selection decisions, and the total amount of team members. A

spreadsheet was then compiled of these teams, which was necessary to establish that there would be enough level 1 (decision makers) and level 2 units (teams) to ensure adequate statistical power (Mathieu et al, 2012).

An actual job from each of the teams who had expressed interest was needed to create the recruitment and selection short-listing task. This was because unlike study one (which used a fictitious job advert for an administrator in a Frozen Foods company), study two attempted to render the short-listing task more realistic by making the job advert (and job role) specific to every team that took part in the study. Accordingly, a specification for a job role in each of the teams was requested from the HR departments of the host organisations. The only request that was made of the job specifications were that they reflected, as much as possible, an average role for each team, meaning that the role would be neither a managing/leading role, nor an entry level role. As such, a job specification for each of the participating teams was provided, and, from these, recruitment and selection task was adapted to make it unique to every team.

8.19. Study Two - Research Procedure

Team leaders, as well as any other team members with responsibility for making recruitment and selection decisions within their respective team, were emailed a formal invitation to participate in the study. This email contained a hyperlink to the Qualtrics study, accessed via a link in the email text which then redirected them to an information sheet and consent form (Appendix G). If the person/s then consented they were able to continue with

the study, whereas, if they did not consent then they were thanked for their time and were unable to proceed any further.

The consenting participants were firstly asked to select their team name from a drop-down box. Next, they were presented with a job advertisement advising them that were recruiting for a named role in their team (the job role differed for each team). They were told that 6 candidates had applied for the role (see Appendix H for example vignette) and were asked to rate each of these candidates in terms of their hireability using a Likert scale from 1-7 (1= extremely unlikely to hire, 2= moderately unlikely to hire, 3=slightly unlikely to hire, 4= neither likely or unlikely to hire, 5=slightly likely to hire, 6=moderately likely to hire, 7 = extremely likely to hire). 6=moderately likely to hire, 7 = extremely likely to hire). An example of the wording can be seen below:

You are currently recruiting for an experienced XXXXX to be based within the XXXXXXX team. The successful candidate will be responsible for various functions within the team and will have prior experience of similar roles. Full training support and career development is available for the right candidate.

6 candidates have responded to the advert. However, you will only be provided with a limited version of their CV, which includes their contact details, educational achievements, and their last 2 job roles. Please shortlist the prospective candidates, using the rating system listed below, based on your opinion of their hireability for this position only.

1=Extremely unlikely to hire
2=Moderately unlikely to hire
3=Slightly unlikely to hire
4=Neither likely or unlikely to hire
5=Slightly likely to hire
6=Moderately likely to hire
7=Extremely likely to hire

The information given to the participants about the candidates (e.g. the vignettes) took the form of a mini CV which consisted of their name, address, educational achievements, last two job roles, and a photograph of the candidate. However, whereas study one included an explicit statement in the vignette about the candidate's age, to make the study more realistic, participants were left to infer the candidate's age using two different methods. Firstly, the dates of the candidate's mandatory schooling were included in the mini C.V. (in the UK mandatory school finishes at approx. 16 years), and secondly the C.V.s included a picture of the candidate (see materials section for details about the pictures used). Accordingly, the prospective job candidates (e.g. the vignettes) then differed according to their age and gender.

Candidate Age was grouped into three levels: young, middle-aged, old. As with study one, the older group was categorised as the candidates who were over 55 years old, which is consistent with research that indicates age discrimination accelerates around this age (Kooij et al, 2008; McCarthy et al, 2014). The young group were candidates aged between 17-40 years old, which is in alignment with career stage research (Levinson et al, 1978). Lastly, the middle-aged group were the candidates who were between the ages of 41-54 years. **Gender** was a binary variable (male/female) and was inferred by the participants from the candidate's name and from the candidate's picture that was included in the vignette.

After completing the recruitment and selection task, team leader participants then completed the Age Culture (Appendix L) and Team Identity questionnaires (Appendix N), with further details of both scales being found in the materials section. The following

demographic information was also collected from the team leader participants: their age and gender.

After completing all elements of the study, the team leader participants were then redirected to an online Debrief form (Appendix I). As with Study One, a debrief was needed for this study because, in an attempt to limit the likelihood of socially desirable responding, the participants were not told that the actual purpose of the study was to examine the hireability of older job candidates. Instead, they were told it was a recruitment and selection decision-making study. As such, the debrief form provided the participants with the actual purpose of the research and again reminded them of their rights to withdraw their data etc. (Burns & Burns, 2008).

After data had been collected from the Team leader participants, data was then collected from the team members of each participating team. Accordingly, the team members were then emailed the second part of the study (it was sent to all members of the team). The invitation email contained a hyperlink which redirected them to Qualtrics and they were presented with an information sheet and consent form (Appendix J). If the participant then consented they were allowed to participate in the study, however, if they did not consent then they were thanked for their time and were not able to proceed further. The consenting participants were asked to select their team name from a dropdown box (so the team-member data could be linked with the respective team-leader/decision maker data) and presented with the Age Diversity Climate scale questions and asked to rate the items using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). They were also asked their age and gender (demographic data).

8.20. Study Two - Sample & Participants

8.21. Study Two - Host Organisations

Study Two was hosted in four organisations:

1) Organisation A is a retail organisation, which employees over 40,000 people in the UK. The sub-division that took part in the study is responsible for the distribution and transport of retail goods in the UK. There were four different geographical sites that took part in the study and five different departments within these sites.

2) Organisation B is a UK based manufacturing company that specialises in both design and engineering and employs over 1600 employees. All teams based in the main headquarters (single site) were offered the opportunity to take part in the study.

3) Organisation C is a UK public-sector government organisation that employees approx. 35,000 people across multiple sites in the UK. A single site office was chosen to take part in the study, however, within this office there are multiple different functions and teams.

4) Organisation D is a UK based university (higher education institution). It employees approx. 15,000 staff (8500 academic and 6500 administrative). The university is divided

into academic faculties and central administrative departments. Selected teams within all academic faculties were invited to participate, as well as a number of teams based within three central administrative departments.

8.22. Study Two - Participants

The sample consisted of 156 team leaders, or other individuals who were responsible for recruitment and selection decisions within their respective teams, and 414 team-members based across the four host organisations. See Table 2 below for the organisational split.

Table 1: Total Participants & Teams by Organisation

	Overall Participants	Team Leaders	Team Members	No of Teams
Organisation A	82	31	51	9
Organisation B	11	11	0	0
Organisation C	140	38	102	17
Organisation D	337	76	261	24
	570	156	414	50

***It should be noted (as the reduction in sample size will have an impact on the power of any statistical analyses) that number of teams that provided useable data was lower than expected for study two. This was because both Organisation A and B were heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. During the data collection period, Organisation B closed their factories and furloughed many of their staff, as such, the number of team leaders that took part in the study was lower than anticipated and it was not possible to collect any team member data with this organisation. Secondly, Organisation A also furloughed and redeployed large numbers of workers, which meant that the team-member data that was collected for this organisation often did*

*not meet the required response rates (this response rate is discussed in more detail in the Data Analysis section).***

The 156 team-leaders were made up of 74 males, 72 females, and 1 person who did not identify as either male or female. There were also 9 people who did not answer this question. The ages of the team-leader participants ranged from 21 years old to 66 years old. The mean age was 43.49 (*SD*=9.01).

There were 414 team-members from 50 teams that participated in the study. These consisted of 9 teams from Organisation A, 17 teams from Organisation C, and 24 teams from Organisation D. The size of the teams ranged from 6 people to 15 people, with the average team size being 8.92 (*SD*=2.14). The gender split of the team members was as follows: 143 men, 164 women, 6 people who did not identify as either (and 101 people who did not answer this question). The ages of the team-members ranged from 22 years old to 71 years old. The mean age was 45.46 (*SD*=11.23).

8.23. Study Two - Materials

The online recruitment and selection short-listing task (e.g. the job advertisement and the vignettes) and the questionnaire scales used in the study: measures of organisational age culture, team identity, and age diversity climate were created online using the survey platform, Qualtrics (each participating host organisation had a separate study set up on Qualtrics). The job advert was a standardized across sites, utilising the same wording for every team-leader participant with only the organisation name, team name, and recruiting

job role names changed, to make it unique and specific to each participating team (see Research Design & Procedure section for exact wording).

8.24. Study Two - Photographs included in Vignettes

The candidate CVs contained a photo of each participant. These photos were accessed from Color Feret faces database (Phillips et al, 1998). All the photographs within this database are the same size and are a head and shoulders shot of people with a neutral facial expression (see example below in Figure 5 and Appendix K for copies of all the photographs that were used in the study).

Figure 5: Example Photograph from Vignettes

I initially chose a selection of photos that I believed likely to match the approximate age of each candidate. I then approached two other PhD students and provided them with multiple photos and asked them to write the age they believed the person to be on the back of the photograph. I then used photographs in the final study that had been rated within 3 years (either side +/-) of the supposed candidate actual age, and that had also been rated

within the correct age group (young, middle-aged old etc.) by all the raters (myself and the other 2 PhD students).

8.25. Study Two - Age Culture Scale

Age culture was measured for the Team Leaders using a 10-item scale that was developed and employed by Zacher and Gienik (2014) (Appendix L). This scale attempts to assess whether an organisation can be considered to have a 'young age culture' (e.g. has an organisational culture that is more supportive of younger workers) or an old age culture (an organisational culture that is more supportive of older workers). The participants rated their agreement/disagreement with items such as "in our company older workers are seen as flexible" using a 7 point Likert scale (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Neither agree or disagree, 5=Somewhat agree, 6=Agree, 7=Strongly agree).

Ideally, variables that relate to organisational factors would be measured at the organisational level (and indeed the culture scale was created for use at that level). Due, however, to the temporal limitations inherent to PhD study, and it not being feasible to recruit the number of organisations needed to be able to use the variable at that level of analysis, the scale was treated as 'Perception of Age Culture' which made it an individual level variable. Accordingly, whilst Hofstede (1985) cautions about the potential pitfalls of using an individual level variable to make assumptions about a larger social collective (e.g. an organisation), as it cannot be assumed that one individual's interpretation of an organisation's culture represents the shared beliefs of other employees, it still gave an

indication as to whether the individual employees perceived their organisation to have a culture that was supportive (or not) of older workers.

After completing the scale, the 10 items were then split in half (5 items for young culture and 5 items for old culture) and scored as a 'culture for younger workers' and a 'culture for older workers'. Cronbach's Alpha was run firstly for the Culture for Older Workers scale, with results showing it had a good level of internal reliability at .950. Cronbach's Alpha showed that the scale for Culture for Younger workers also had good internal reliability at .948.

8.26. Study Two - Age Diversity Climate Scale

Age Diversity Climate was measured for Team Members using a 4-item scale that was originally created by Pugh et al (2008) as a general Diversity Climate scale, but adapted into an age specific scale and utilised by Boehm et al in 2014 (e.g. items were changed from "our team makes it easy for people from diverse groups to fit in and be accepted" to "our team makes it easy for people from diverse age groups to fit in and be accepted") (Appendix M). The scale used a 7 point Likert scale (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Neither agree or disagree, 5=Somewhat agree, 6=Agree, 7=Strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha showed the scale to have a good level of internal consistency at .875.

8.27. Study Two - Team Identity Scale

Lastly, Team Identity was measured for the Team Leaders using a 5-item scale developed by Mael and Ashford (1992) and was adapted for use at the team level (e.g. the word 'organisation' was replaced with the word 'team') (Appendix N). This scale was originally developed as a 6-item scale (Mael, 1988), however, was reformulated by its developers into a 5-item scale, removing the item 'if a story in the media criticised the organisation, I would feel embarrassed'. The scale used a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither agree or disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha showed the scale had an acceptable level of internal consistency at .712.

8.28. Study Two - Ethics

Full ethical approval was granted by the University of Sheffield's Management School ethics review board on 10th October 2019 and 3rd July 2020 (an updated ethics application was made to include Organisation D) (Appendix O).

8.29. Study Two - Data Analysis

The data consisted of multiple different data sets (this was because each hosting organisation had a separate Qualtrics study). Moreover, there were two different parts of the study for each organisation (the part that the team leaders completed and the part that the team members completed). Accordingly, after downloading each dataset from Qualtrics into SPSS, firstly the data was cleaned. This cleaning process included removing any

participants who had not fully completed the recruitment and selection task. After this had been completed the team leader datasets from each organisation were then merged into one large team leader dataset and a variable named 'organisation' was added so that the different hosting organisations could be identified in this larger dataset. The data set was then restructured from variables to cases to allow the extraction of the different levels from within each predicting factor (VARSTOCASES). A mean scale score was created for both the Age Culture Scales and the Team Identity Scale and these scales were Z scored.

Next, the data sets for the team members were then cleaned. However, because the questionnaire scale was relatively short, the questions were of a 'forced choice' format in Qualtrics, which meant that missing values were only possible if the study had been closed during completion attempts. As such, any participants that had not fully completed the scale were removed from the study. In addition, because random response could not be assumed by team members, a relatively high response rate was required from team members in order to establish that data collected was representative of a team (Dawson, 2003). As such, it was decided that a 75% cut off would be used, meaning that team member responses would only be used if 75% of team members had taken part in the study. After cleaning the data, a mean scale score was then created for each team member participant and the scores were aggregated to create a team-level variable. Further details, including purpose of aggregation, and the results of the assumption tests that needed to be completed before aggregation could take place, can be seen in the 'Aggregation' section that follows the Data Analysis section in this methodology chapter.

The individual data sets for each organisation were then merged to create one large 'team member' dataset, and the variable that was created for the aggregated team age climate was merged into the team leader dataset (so each team leader participant was assigned a value that was the aggregated climate score for their respective teams.

One of the issues that became apparent quite quickly when cleaning and merging the datasets was that in some cases the team leaders had participated in the study, but none (or not enough to meet the response rate threshold) of the individual team members had responded to the invitation to participate (so I was left with team leader data, but no corresponding team member data). Secondly, in many cases the participating teams had more than one decision-maker (because the host teams had advised that there was more than one person responsible for recruitment decisions in that team/workgroup, thus more than one person had completed Part 1 of the study). Accordingly, to avoid affecting statistical power, it was decided that two separate datasets would be used for the analysis. One dataset would be used to test the hypotheses that did not include the team-level variable (H1, H2 and H3), and a second dataset would be used to test the team-level hypotheses (H4 & H5). By doing this I was left with a much larger sample size for H1, H2, and H3 and it meant that I was able to fully utilise all the data I had collected. Nonetheless, this did not solve the issue that in some instances there were multiple decision-makers in one team. As such, it was decided that one decision-maker from each team would need to be randomly selected to be used in the final analysis. To complete this random selection, ten different versions of the decision maker dataset were created (each dataset randomly selecting a single decision maker), with the first dataset being used for the final analyses.

To test the first 3 hypotheses, a mixed level linear model was used. Mixed level linear models are used for multi-level data and allow the testing of fixed and random effects (Field, 2018). The control variables that were used in this analysis were as follows: the participant's age and gender, the organisation, and the ISCO-08 occupational classification (see below for more details on this classification), with the reason for their inclusion discussed in turn.

As with study one, study two also employed a Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987), assuming that it was feasible that both the participant's age and gender could influence their decision making. Accordingly, these were utilised as control variables (see study one for a more detailed discussion on their inclusion).

Next, because four different organisations were used as hosts, the variable "organisation" was used as a control variable and dummy coded for the purpose of the analysis. This is because as previous posited, it is likely that organisational factors and the industry/sector in which the organisation is located, may influence the likelihood of older workers being selected in a recruitment process (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Staundinger, 2015).

Lastly, in study two, a large variety of different job roles were used for the recruitment and selection short-listing task. As such, it was considered feasible that different job roles used for the recruitment and selection task could have unique factors that may make it more or less likely that an older candidate would be selected for that role (Shore & Goldberg, 2005). Accordingly, it was decided that a standardised occupational classification scale would be used to classify all the job roles that were represented in the study (in an attempt to control

for any job role differences). Thus, the ISCO-08 was utilised for this classification. The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) is one of the most well-known classification structures that is used around the globe for organising jobs into categories (International Labour Organization, 2021). The current version is termed ISCO-08 and has 10 groups, which are as follows: 1) Managers, 2) Professionals, 3) Technicians & Associated Professionals, 4) Clerical Support Workers, 5) Service and Sales Workers, 6) Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers, 7)Craft & Related Trades Workers, 8)Plant & Machine Operators, 9)Elementary Occupations. This classification structure was then provided to the HR contact in each hosting organisation, as well as a list of the job roles used in the recruitment task, and they were asked to classify each role using the ISCO-08.

All the job roles that were included in the study were then classified into the following groups: 1) Professionals, 2) Technicians and Associated Professionals, 3) Clerical Support Workers, 4) Plant and Machine Operators, and 5) Elementary Professions (no roles that were classified as Managers, Service and Sales workers, Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers, or Craft & Related Trades Workers were included in the study). The occupational classification variable was then dummy coded and included as a control variable in the analysis. See below Table 3 of ISCO-08 job role splits by organisation.

Table 2: ISCO-08 Classification of Job Roles Used for Short-listing Task

	Professional roles	Technicians & Associated Professional roles	Clerical Support Worker roles	Plant & Machine Operator roles	Elementary roles
Organisation A			2	12	4
Organisation B	2	3	2	2	
Organisation C	2	24			
Organisation D	20	19	6		3
	24	46	10	14	7

In order to test Hypotheses 4 and 5, a mixed level linear model was also used on the smaller data set that contained data from both team-leader and team-members. This model used the same control variables that were used in the analysis for H1, H2, and H3.
The results from the analyses for all the hypothesis testing can be found in the Results chapter.

8.30. Study Two - Data Aggregation

As previously indicated, to test hypotheses 4 and 5, the scores from individual Team member responses to the age diversity climate scale needed to be aggregated. Aggregation is the process whereby lower level variables (e.g. individual level climate) are combined in some way to create a higher-level variable (e.g. team or organisational level climate). As such, there are various different composition models that can be used as a guide to aggregation, and these include the Additive Model, Referent-Shift Consensus Model, and the Process Model (Chan, 1998). Accordingly, this study used one of the most commonly used and popular composition models, which is the Direct Consensus Model. This model justifies the process of aggregation by firstly establishing that there is consensus among the lower level scores (e.g. that individuals within an organisation or team are broadly in agreement about the measured issue) and secondly that differences exist between the unit of analysis (e.g. that the age diversity climate scores actually differ between teams). This consensus is then understood as being meaningful if we are to consider that higher level conceptualisations of factors such as climate and culture are actually 'shared beliefs' (James, 1982). Accordingly, before aggregation of individual level Age Diversity Climate scores to a

Team level variable could take place, a number of assumption tests needed to be run to confirm the above See Table 4 below for results of these assumption tests.

Table 3: Assumption Tests for Data Aggregation

Assumption	Results	Y or N	Description
ICC (1)	.06	Y	Amount of Individual-level variance that can be explained by group membership
ICC (2)	.39	N	Reliability of group means
rWG	.88	Y	Within group agreement

Results from the ICC(1) showed that this assumption was met. However, results from the ICC(2) were slightly below the acceptable cut-off point of .4. Nonetheless, after running a test for the rWG (with a uniform null distribution used), results from this showed the overall mean to be .88 with only 2 individual teams slightly below the .7 cut-off. Moreover, because also a relatively high response rate was used for the team-members (75%), it was agreed to proceed with aggregation even without meeting the ICC(2) assumption (Dawson, 2003).

9. Results

The chapter that follows is the results of the hypotheses testing for both study one and study, as well as a summary of the results from both studies.

9.1.Study One Results

The analyses for the following hypotheses were conducted on a restructured data set (the process and purpose of this restructuring was explained in the methodology chapter).

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The age of prospective job candidates will be a predictor of their hireability, with older job candidates rated as less hireable than younger or middle-aged candidates.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the candidate's gender, with age having a stronger negative effect on the hireability of female candidates.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the candidate's educational status (as an indicator of social class), with age having a stronger negative effect on the hireability of candidates who are not degree educated (e.g. perceived as being lower class).

Hypothesis 4 (H4): The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the candidate's work experience, with age having a stronger negative effect on those candidates who do not have previous relevant work experience.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the participant's age stereotyping, with age having a stronger negative effect on hireability when the participants agree with the content of age stereotypes.

Hypothesis 6 (H6) – The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the participant's level of affect towards older workers, with age having a stronger negative effect on hireability when participants have lower affect for older workers.

Hypotheses 7 (H7): The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the occupational status of the participant, with age having a stronger negative effect on hireability when the participants are students.

9.2.Study One - Vignette Candidate Statistics

The mean scores for each prospective job candidate (e.g. the vignettes) can be seen below in Table 5. This table also shows the candidate's age, gender, their educational status, and whether previous relevant experience was specified within the vignette.

Table 4: Mean Hireability Scores of Job Candidates (vignettes) for Study one

	*M*ean (*SD*)	Age	Gender	Degree Educated	Relevant Exp.
Joanna	3.19 (*1.44*)	Young	Female	No	No
Jessica	5.77 (*1.24*)	Young	Female	Yes	Yes
Eleanor	5.52 (1.31)	Young	Female	No	Yes
Sarah	4.25 (1.74)	Young	Female	Yes	No
Thomas	5.58 (1.26)	Young	Male	No	Yes
Leo	4.74 (1.63)	Young	Male	Yes	No
Jamie	3.34 (1.66)	Young	Male	No	No
James	6.19 (1.00)	Young	Male	Yes	Yes
Emma	4.17 (1.57)	Middle-aged	Female	No	No
Liz	5.88 (1.22)	Middle-aged	Female	Yes	Yes
June	5.68 (1.08)	Middle-aged	Female	No	Yes
Patricia	3.71 (1.57)	Middle-aged	Female	Yes	No
Ben	5.87 (1.15)	Middle-aged	Male	No	Yes
Robert	3.79 (1.69)	Middle-aged	Male	Yes	No
Steven	3.24 (1.49)	Middle-aged	Male	No	No
Richard	5.86 (1.12)	Middle-aged	Male	Yes	Yes
Theresa	3.07 (1.55)	Old	Female	No	No
Louise	3.61 (1.63)	Old	Female	Yes	No
Mary	5.73 (1.17)	Old	Female	No	Yes
Susannah	3.37 (1.67)	Old	Female	Yes	No
Peter	5.04 (1.48)	Old	Male	No	Yes
Anthony	3.12 (1.63)	Old	Male	Yes	No
Michael	3.21 (1.42)	Old	Male	No	No
David	4.74 (1.49)	Old	Male	Yes	Yes

*Maximum score of 7

Summary statistics of the candidates by overall age group and by age and gender can be seen below in Figure 6 and Figure 7.

Figure 6: Candidate Hireability Scores by Age Group

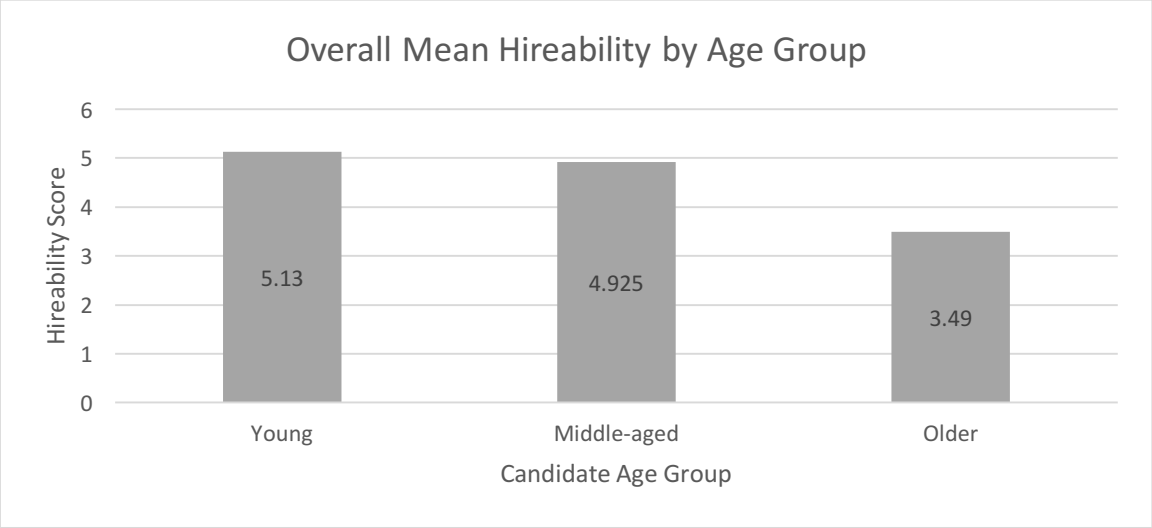
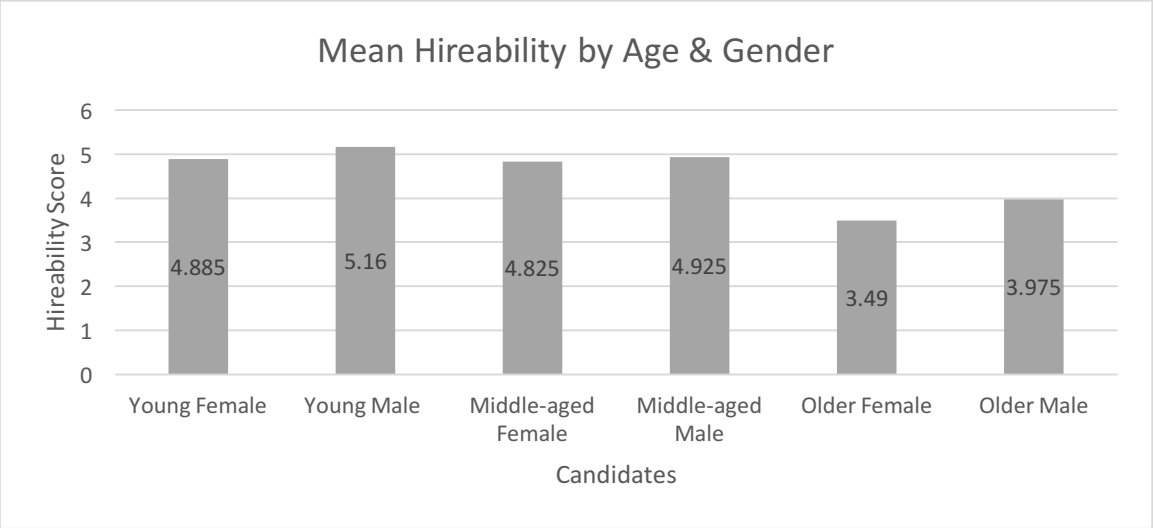


Figure 7: Candidate Hireability Scores by Age & Gender



9.3.Study One Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was then conducted to examine the relationships between the measured variables and can be seen in Table 5 (the variable means and standard deviations are also included in this table) in page 144. Results of this analysis show that with regards to the candidate age dummy coded variables, only the “old” category was significantly

correlated with hireability (the dependent variable in this study), moreover, this was a significant small to medium sized negative correlation. In respect of the control variables that were included in this analysis, the participant's age was significantly correlated with hireability, however, participant gender was not.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix Table for Study One

		Mean (*SD*)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
1.	Candidate Hireability	4.53 (*1.81*)													
2.	Candidate Age – Old Dummy		-.21**												
3.	Candidate Age – Middle-aged Dummy		.10**	-.50**					.						
4.	Candidate Age – Young Dummy		.12**	-.50**	-.50**										
5.	Candidate Gender		.06**	-.06**	-.06**	.12**									
6.	Candidate Education status		-.03	.00	.00	.00	-.08**								
7.	Candidate Work Experience		-.56**	.12**	06**	06**	-.01	-.08**							
8.	**Participant - Stereotype Scale Score (Z)**	4.07 (*.89*)	.10**	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00						
9.	**Participant Affect Scale Score (Z)**	3.41 (*.38*)	.02	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.18**		.			
10.	Participant Occ Status – Dummy Staff		.03	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.20**	09**				
11.	Participant Occ Status – Dummy Student		.03	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.18**	.08**	.99**			
12.	Participant Age	32.93 (*11.67*)	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.31**	.06**	.06**	-.21		
13.	Participant Gender		.04*	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	-.04**	.08**	.04**	.04**	-.08**	

** $p<.01$ * $p<.05$

9.4.Study One Hypothesis Testing

Mixed-level linear models were used to test all seven hypotheses, with this type of test allowing the analysis of multi-level data with both random and fixed effects (Field, 2018). However, when using this type of analysis, certain data assumptions have to be met. Accordingly, see table 6 below for details of these assumptions.

Table 6: Assumption Tests for Mixed Level Model

Assumption	Y or N
Normality for Residuals	Y
Linearity	Y
Homoscedasticity	Y

In addition to the assumption tests and prior to conducting the hypothesis testing, a null model was also run to establish whether the dependent variable of 'candidate hireability' significantly varied between participants (with this also being an assumption test to allow the use of this type of analysis). Results can be seen in Table 7 and showed a significant difference between participants in their hireability ratings of the prospective job candidates (Intercept: Participant ID Estimate = .43, *SE* = .06, $p<.01$) and, as such, provided a justification for the use of this type of analysis.

A hypothesis testing mixed-level analysis was then conducted. The Participant ID variable was entered as subjects (grouping) and Hireability was added as the dependent variable. Next, the control variables (participant age and participant gender), main effect variables (candidate age old dummy, candidate gender, candidate education status (proxy of class),

candidate work experience, participant occupational status (staff dummy), participant stereotype scale mean score, and participant affect scale mean score), and interaction variables (candidate age old*candidate gender, candidate age old*candidate education status, candidate age old dummy*candidate work experience, candidate age old dummy*participant occupational status, candidate age old dummy*participant stereotype mean score, and candidate age old dummy*participant affect mean score). Please note that Interaction variables were created to allow the testing of moderation within the mixed level model.

Results of this model can be seen below in Table 7 and show that as expected the candidate's age was a significant predictor of hireability, with older job candidates less likely than middle aged or younger candidates to be rated as hireable. Moreover, there was a significant interaction between candidate age and candidate gender, their education status, and the participant's level of age stereotyping. However, neither the participant's age nor gender (the control variables) acted as significant predictors, nor did candidate age significantly interact with their previous relevant work experience, the participant's occupational status (staff/student), or the participant's level of affect towards older people in the workplace.

Next, a second mixed level analysis was conducted and for this model, the variables that were not significant in the first model were removed from the analysis (apart from the control variables, which remained for theoretical purposes). The control variables (participant age and participant gender), the main effect variables (candidate age old dummy, candidate gender, candidate education status), and the interaction variables

(candidate age old dummy*candidate gender, candidate age old dummy*candidate education, candidate age old dummy*participant stereotype mean score). Results for this second model can also been seen below in Table 7 and show that again the control variables of participants' age and gender were not significant predictors, but that as with Model 1, the candidate's age was a significant predictor of their hireability, with older candidates rated as less hireable. Moreover, the interaction between age and gender, educational status, and the participant's level of age stereotyping, was significant for older candidates.

Table 7: Results of mixed level analysis predicting job candidate hireability n = 271

	Dependent Variable: Hireability		
	Null Model Estimate (*SE)*	Model 1 Estimate (*SE*)	Model 2 Estimate (*SE*)
Intercept Participant ID – Random	.43 (.06)**	.47 (.06)	.41 (.06)
Candidate Age – Old (Random effect)		.19 (.07)**	.02 (.08)
Control Variables (fixed)			
Participant Age		-.01 (.00)	.01 (.00)
Participant Gender		.18 (.11)	.15 (.11)
Independent Variables (fixed)			
Candidate age – Old (fixed) (H1)		-2.00 (.28)**	-1.76 (.28)**
Candidate Gender		.00 (.06)	.24 (.07)**
Candidate Educational Status (S/C)		-.47 (.06)**	-.44 (.07)**
Candidate Work Experience		-2.01 (.06)**	
Participant Occupational Status – Staff Dummy		.00 (.01)	
Stereotype Scale Mean Score		.12 (.05)*	.12 (.06)*
Affect Scale Mean Score		-.04 (.05)	
Interaction Variables (fixed)			
Candidate Age Old*Candidate Gender(H2)		.41 (.10)**	-.35 (.12)**
Candidate Age Old*Candidate Education (H3)		.52 (.10)**	.99 (.12)**
Candidate Age Old*Candidate Work Experience (H4)		.03 (.11)	
Candidate Age Old*Participant Occupational Status (H7)		.01 (.01)	
Candidate Age Old*Participant Stereotype Scale Score (H5)		.17 (.06)**	.17 (.06)**
Candidate Age Old*Participant Affect Scale Score (H6)		-.06 (.06)	

** $p<.01$ *$p<.0$

As several of the variables produced significant interactions in the multi-level model (e.g. they were moderating the relationship between the candidate's age and their hireability for the older job candidates) these interactions were then plotted on a graph to highlight the direction of these relationships. See Figure 8, Figure 9 and Figure 10 for these plots.

Figure 8:Hypothesis 2 - Plotted Interaction between Candidate Age & Gender

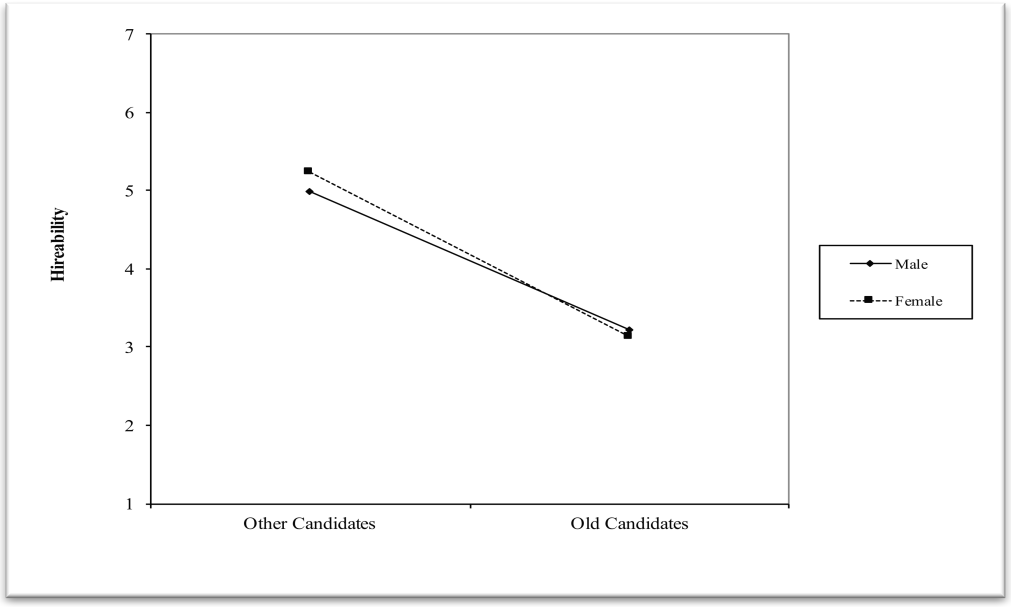


Figure 8 shows the plotted interaction between the candidate's gender and age, with the plot showing age to have a stronger negative effect on hireability for the female candidates.

Figure 9:Hypothesis 3 - Plotted Interaction between Candidate age & education status

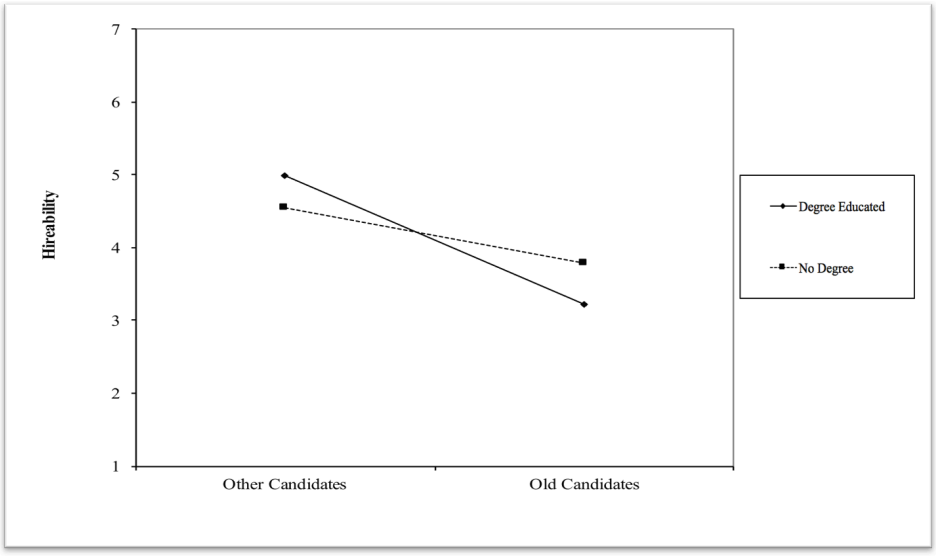


Figure 9 shows the plotted interaction between the candidate's educational level and their age. Results show that contrary to hypothesis 3 age had a greater negative effect on hireability for those candidates who were older and degree educated.

Figure 10: Hypothesis 4 - Plotted interaction between candidate age & participant's level

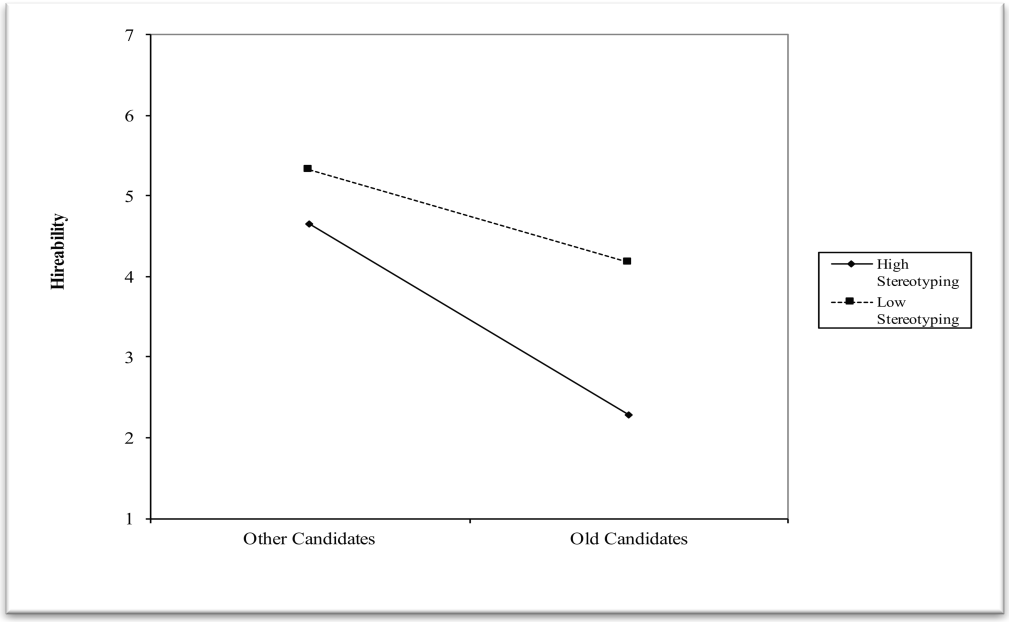


Figure 10 shows the plotted interaction between the participant's level of age stereotyping and the candidate's age, with the results showing that as expected, the candidate's age had a greater negative effect on their hireability when the participants scored high for age stereotyping (e.g. they agreed with the content of age stereotypes in the workplace).

9.5.Study One – Hypothesis Conclusions

Hypothesis 1: The results supported this hypothesis and showed that the age was a significant predictor of their hireability, with older candidates seen as less hireable.

Hypothesis 2: The results supported this hypothesis and found that candidate gender significantly moderated the relationship between age and hireability, with age having a stronger negative effect on hireability for the older female candidates.

Hypothesis 3: Whilst the results did support the hypothesised relationship between the candidate's age and their hireability, this relationship was significantly moderated by the candidate's educational status (as a possible proxy of their social class). It was expected that age would have a greater negative effect on hireability for the candidates who were not degree educated (e.g. who were potentially perceived as being lower social class). However, the relationship was the reverse of what was predicted, and age had a greater negative effect for those candidates who were degree educated (e.g. who were potentially perceived as being higher social class).

Hypothesis 4 – The results did not support this hypothesis and the candidate's previous relevant work experience did not significantly moderate the relationship between their age and their hireability (for the older job candidates). This meant that contrary to expectations age did not have a greater negative effect on hireability for those older job candidates who also did not have relevant work experience.

Hypothesis 5 - – The results supported this hypothesis and found that the participant's level of age stereotyping significantly moderated the relationship between the candidate's age and their hireability. For older candidates, age was found to have a greater negative effect on hireability when the participants scored highly for age stereotyping

Hypothesis 6 – The results did not support the hypothesis that participants' affect towards older workers would moderate the relationship between the candidate's age and their hireability. For the older job candidates, age did not have a greater negative effect on hireability when the participants had low affect towards older workers.

Hypothesis 7 – The results did not support this hypothesis and the occupational status of the participant (staff/student) did not significantly moderate the relationship between the candidate's age and their hireability.

9.6.Results Study Two

The analyses for the following individual-level hypotheses were conducted on a restructured data set from which just one hiring decision-maker was randomly selected (the process and purpose of this data restructuring and the method for which one decision-maker was selected, has been discussed in the Data Analysis section in the Methodology chapter).

Hypothesis 1 (H1): The age of prospective job candidates will be a predictor of their hireability, with older job candidates rated as less hireable than younger or middle-aged candidates.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): The relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability will be moderated by the candidate's gender, with age having a stronger negative effect on the hireability of female candidates (older female candidates will be rated less positively than older male candidates).

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The relationship between the age of the perspective candidate and their hireability will be moderated the hiring decision maker's perception of organisational age culture, with age having a stronger negative effect for those decision makers who perceive their employing organisation to have a culture than is less supportive of older workers.

The analyses for the additional multi-level hypotheses were conducted using only data from those hiring decision-makers for which team level data had also been collected (more details can be found on why this strategy was used in the Data Analysis section in the Methodology chapter).

Hypothesis 4 (H4): The relationship between the prospective candidate's age and their hireability will be moderated by the aggregated team age diversity climate, with those decision makers who are based in teams with a climate that is less positive for age diversity then less likely to rate the older job candidates as hireable.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): The relationship between the prospective candidate's age and their hireability will be moderated by an interaction between the aggregated team age diversity climate and the extent to which decision-makers identify with their team, with those decision-makers who identify more strongly with their respective teams then being more likely to be influenced by the team climate.

9.7. Vignette Candidate Statistics

The mean scores for each prospective job candidate (e.g. the vignettes) can be seen below in Table 8 and summary graphs can be seen in Figure 11 and Figure 12.

Table 8: Mean Job Candidate Hireability Scores for study two

	Mean	*SD*
Older Male	5.51	1.40
Older Female	5.52	1.42
Middle aged Male	5.76	1.20
Middle Aged Female	5.84	1.15
Young Female	5.77	1.13
Young Male	5.77	1.09
Overall Hireability	5.68	1.20

*maximum score of 7

Figure 11: Candidate Hireability by Age Group

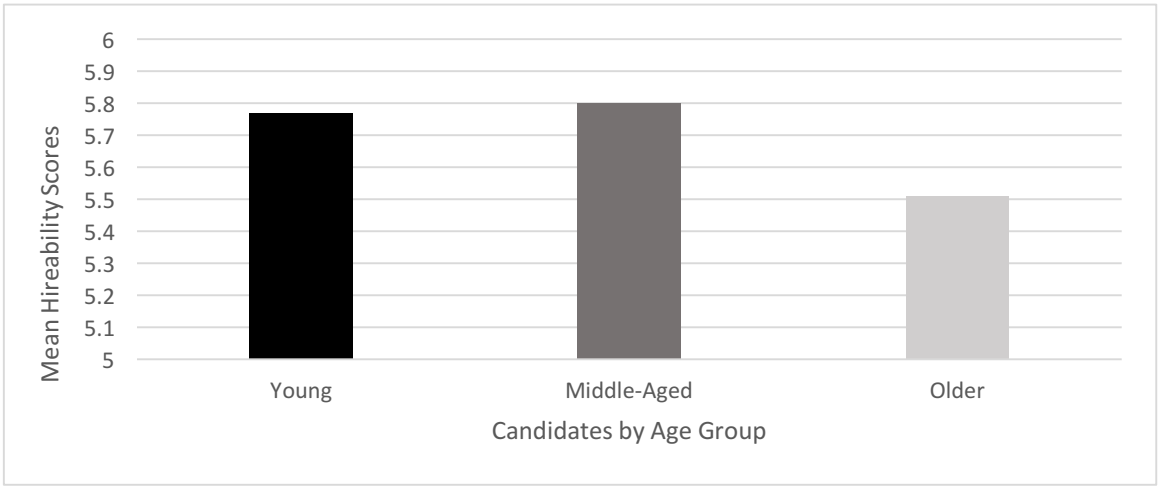
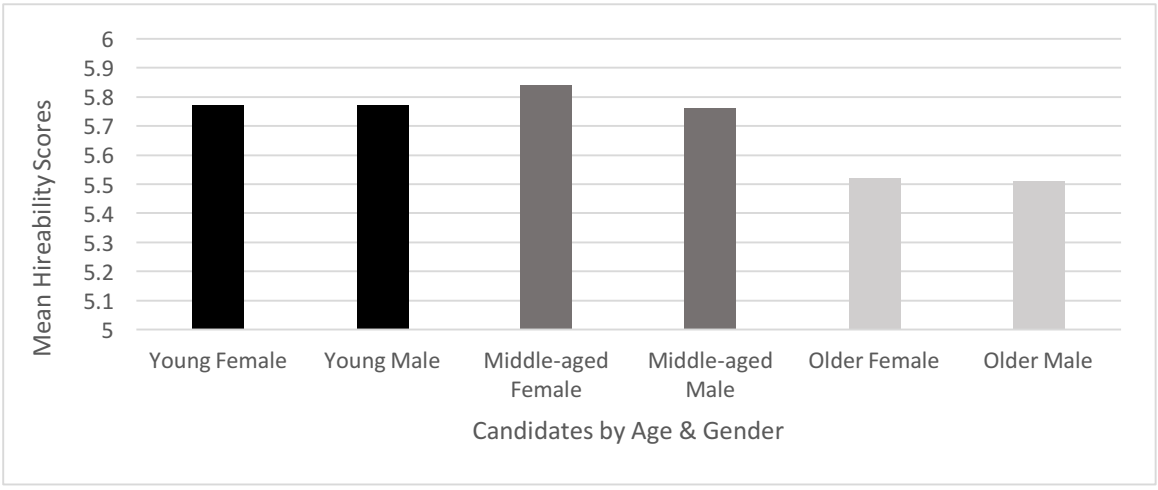


Figure 12: Candidate Hireability by Age & Gender



9.8.Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was then conducted to examine the relationships between the measured variables and can be seen below in Table 9 (the variable means and standard deviations are also included in this table). Results of this analysis show that with regards to the job candidate age dummy coded variables, only the “older job candidate” category was significantly correlated with job candidate hireability (the dependent variable in this study), moreover, this was a significant negative correlation. In respect of the control variables that were included in this analysis, the hiring decision maker’s age was significantly correlated with job candidate hireability, however, hiring decision maker’s gender was not.

Table 9: Correlation Matrix Table for Study Two

		Mean *(SD)*	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)
(1)	Hireability	5.68 (1.20)															.		.		
(2)	Candidate Age – Dummy Old		-.12**																		
(3)	Candidate Age – Dummy Middle Aged		.06	-.50**																	
(4)	Candidate Age – Dummy Young		.06	-.50**	-50**																
(5)	Candidate Gender		.01	.00	.00	.00															
(6)	Participant Age (hirer)	43.78 (9.19)	-.11**	.00	.00	.00	-.01								.						
(7)	Participant Gender (hirer)		.03	.00	.00	.00	.02	.07													
(8)	ISCO Dummy Professional		-.02	.00	.00	.00	.01	.17**	-.20**												
(9)	ISCO Dummy Tech & Ass Prof		.07*	.00	.00	.00	.20	-.10**	.30**	-.60**									.		
(10)	ISCO Dummy Clerical		-.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.03	.05	-.22**	-.30**										
(11)	ISCO Dummy Plant & Machine Ops		.07*	.00	.00	.00	-.02	-.11**	-.13**	-.21**	-.29**	-.10**									
(12)	ISCO Dummy Elementary		-.20**	.00	.00	.00	-.06	-.01	-.15**	-.16**	-.22**	-.08*	-.08*				.				.
(13)	Team Identity Mean	3.82 (.64)	-.14**	.00	.00	.00	-.01	03	-.08*	-.11**	.18**	-.04	.03	-.16**							
(14)	Old Age Culture Mean	4.44 (1.20)	. .20**	.00	.00	.00	-.01	.07*	.05	-.10**	.11**	.14**	-.20**	.02	.15**						
(15)	Young Age Culture Mean	4.73 (1.07)	.23**	.00	.00	.00	.00	-.09**	.07	.13**	.04	.07*	-.33**	00	.06	.57**			.		
(16)	Organisation D – Dummy		-.04	.00	.00	.00	.03	.18**	.16**	.34**	-.16**	.13**	-.45**	.04	-.23**	.08*	.20**				
(17)	Organisation C – Dummy		.11**	.00	.00	.00	.01	-.14**	.01	-.23**	45**	-.15**	-.15**	-.11**	.12**	.06	06	-66**			

(18)	Organisation A - Dummy	. .09**	.00	.00	.00	-.07	-.11**	-.13**	-.21**	-.29**	-.10**	.83**	.14**	-.00	-.18**	-.30**	-.45**	-.15**	
(19)	Organisation B - Dummy	-.32**	.00	.00	.00	.01	.02	-.16**	.00	-.14**	.06	.07*	14**	.19**	-.15**	-.16**	-.24**	-.15**	-.10**

9.9.Study Two Hypothesis Testing

Mixed-level linear models were used to test the first three hypotheses, with this type of test allowing the analysis of multi-level data with both random and fixed effects (Field, 2018). However, when using this type of analysis, certain data assumptions have to be met. Accordingly, see Table 10 below for details of these assumptions.

Table 10: Assumption Tests for Multi-Level Analysis Study Two

Assumption	Y or N
Normality for Residuals	Y
Linearity	Y
Homoscedasticity	Y

In addition to the above assumptions tests, and prior to conducting the hypothesis testing, a null model was also run to check that the dependent variable of 'candidate hireability' showed sufficient variation between the decision maker participants (with this also being an assumption that needed to be met in order to allow the use of this type of analysis). Results can be seen in Table 11 and showed a significant difference between participants in their hireability ratings of the prospective job candidates (Intercept: Participant ID Estimate = 1.22, *SE* =.18, *p*<.01) and, as such, justified the use of this type of analysis.

A hypothesis testing mixed level analysis was then conducted. First, job candidate hireability was added as the dependent variable. Following this, the control variables (hiring decision maker's age, hiring decision maker's gender, ISCO-08 job role classification dummy variables 1,3,4,5 with 2 being used as the comparison category, and Organisation dummy variables

(Organisation A, Organisation C, Organisation D, and with Organisation B being used as the comparison category), the main effect variables (candidate age 'old dummy', candidate gender, hiring decision maker's age culture score (both old age culture and young age culture), and lastly the interaction variables (candidate age old*candidate gender, candidate age old*old age culture, candidate age old*young age culture). Please note that Interaction variables were created to allow the testing of moderation within the mixed level model.

Results of this first model can be seen in Table 11 (Model 1) and show that age was a significant negative predictor of hireability and older candidates were rated as less hireable than younger candidates. However, the job candidate's age did not significantly interact with either their gender, or with the hiring decision maker's perception of the age culture in their employing organisation. In addition, with regards to the control variables, only the host organisations (the organisation in which the hiring decision maker was based) explained a significant amount of the variance in candidate hireability, indicating that organisational factors may influence selection decision-making.

Next, a second mixed-level analysis was conducted with the variables that were not significant in the first analysis removed from the model (apart from the control variables which for theoretical purposes remained in the analysis). Job candidate hireability was entered as the dependent variable. The control variables, hiring decision maker's age, hiring decision maker's gender, ISCO-08 1,3,4, and 5 job role classifications, and Organisation dummy variables Organisation, A, C and D), and the single main effect variable of job candidate age 'old' dummy were then added. Results of this second model can also be seen in Table 11 (Model 2) and show that age was a significant negative predictor of hireability,

with older candidates significantly less likely to be rated as hireable. In this second model, none of the control variables explained a significant amount of variance.

Table 11: Results of mixed level analysis predicting job candidate hireability n=100 (H1, H2, H3)

	Dependent Variable: Hireability		
	Null Model Estimate (*SE)*	Model 1 Estimate (*SE*)	Model 2 Estimate (*SE*)
Intercept Participant ID – (Random effect)	1.22 (.18)**	.93 (.14)**	1.00 (.15)**
Candidate Age – Old (Random effect)		.64 (.11)**	.65 (.11)**
Control Variables (fixed)			
Hiring Participant Age		-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Hiring Participant Gender		.09 (.21)	.08 (.22)
ISCO-08 - 1		-.03 (.30)	-.03 (.31)
ISCO-08 - 3		.06 (.41)	.13 (.42)
ISCO-08 - 4		.36 (.60)	.17 (.62)
ISCO-08 - 5		-.78 (.54)	-.75 (.56)
Organisation D		.78 (.40)*	.92 (.41)
Organisation C		1.02 (.43)*	1.16 (.45)
Organisation A		1.14 (.57)*	1.16 (.59)
Independent Variables (fixed)			
Candidate age – Old Dummy (fixed) (H1)		-.26 (.13)*	-.33 (.09)**
Candidate Gender		.02 (.04)	
Hiring Participant - Old Age Culture		.09 (.13)	
Hiring Participant - Young Age Culture		.22 (.13)	
Interaction Variables			
Candidate Age Old*Candidate Gender (H2)		-.04 (.06)	
Candidate Age Old*Old Age Culture (H3)		-.02 (.11)	
Candidate Age Old*Young Age Culture (H3)		.09 (.11)	

** $p<.01$ *$p<.05$

9.10. Study Two Hypothesis Testing for H4 & H5

For Hypothesis 4, a mixed-level linear analysis was conducted to establish if the team Age Diversity Climate (aggregated team climate) moderated the relationship between the age of the prospective job candidate and their hireability. To begin, a null model was conducted to establish if the dependent variable of candidate hireability significantly varied between

teams. Results can be seen in Table 12 and showed a significant difference in the dependent variable between teams (Intercept Team ID Estimate = 1.04, *SE* = .24).

Next, a mixed level analysis was conducted with the following variables entered into the model as fixed effect control variables: hiring decision maker's age, hiring decision maker's gender, the dummy coded ISCO-08 job role categories (ISCO1, ISCO3, ISCO4, and ISCO5, with ISCO2 being used as the comparison category), and the dummy coded organisation variables (Organisation A, Organisation C, and Organisation D, with Organisation B being used as the comparison category). The candidate age 'old dummy' variable was then added to the model as a random effect with the intercept slope being allowed to vary between teams. Finally, the aggregated team Age Diversity Climate was then added as a fixed effect, and the interaction between the candidate age (old dummy) and the aggregated team Age Diversity Climate added as a fixed effect. Results of this model can be seen in Table 12 and show that again (as with the previous models for hypotheses 1,2 and 3), age was a significant negative predictor of hireability, with older candidates seen as significantly less hireable. However, contrary to what was predicted, this relationship was not significantly moderated by the team Age Diversity Climate. Yet, it should be noted that in terms of the .05 significance cut-off, this variable was only slightly above that cut-off (at .075) and, as such, may indicate that there are factors that moderate this relationship which were not measured in the current study.

For Hypothesis 5, a multi-level linear model was used to explore whether Team Identity significantly interacted with the aggregated team Age Diversity Climate, to moderate the relationship between age and hireability. Accordingly, this hypothesis was tested using a 3-

way interaction between the independent variable (candidate age) and the two-moderating cross-level variables (the aggregated team climate and hiring decision maker's level of team identity). A mixed level analysis was conducted (as with H4), with the following control variables being added as fixed effects: hiring decision maker's age, hiring decision maker's gender, the dummy coded ISCO-08 job classification categories, and the dummy coded organisation variables (which organisation the hiring decision maker was based in). The job candidate age (just the 'old' category) was added as a random effect. Then team Age Diversity Climate and Team Identity were added as fixed effects. Finally, interaction effects were created (as fixed effects) between the aggregated team Age Diversity Climate, hiring decision maker's level of Team Identity, and job candidate age 'old' category (3-way interaction), level of Team Identity and aggregated team Age Diversity climate (2-way), level of Team Identity and candidate age 'old' category (2-way), and aggregated team Age Diversity Climate and candidate age 'old' category (2-way).

Results can be seen below in Table 12 and show that age was a significant negative predictor of their hireability, with older candidates seen to be less hireable, however, contrary to expectations this relationship was not moderated by an interaction between the aggregated team Age Diversity Climate and hiring decision maker's level of Team Identity.

Table 12:Results of mixed level analysis predicting job candidate hireability n = 50 (teams & decision makers) (H4 & H5)

	Dependent Variable: Hireability		
	Null Model Estimate (*SE*)	Model 1 Estimate (*SE*)	Model 2 Estimate (*SE*)
Intercept Team - Random	1.04(.24)**	.69 (.16)**	.60 (.14)**
Candidate Age Old Dummy (Random effect)		.71 (.18)**	.70 (.17)**
Control Variables (fixed)			
Hiring Decision Maker Age		-.00 (.02)	-.01 (.01)
Hiring Decision Maker Gender		.25 (.32)	.40 (.31)
ISCO-08 1		.47 (.52)	.64 (.50)
ISCO-08 3		.88 (.93)	.64 (1.02)
ISCO-08 4		.49 (1.01)	-.35 (1.03)
ISCO-08 5		-.06 (.70)	-.85 (.73)
Organisation D		-.88 (1.00)	-1.96 (1.05)
Organisation C		.14 (.98)	-.70 (.99)
Organisation A			
Independent Variables (fixed)			
Candidate age – Old Dummy (fixed)		-.44 (.14**)	-45 (.14)**
Team-level Age Diversity Climate (level 2)		-.19 (.16)	-.29 (.16)
Decision Maker's Team Identity (level 1)			-.24 (.17)
Interaction Variables			
Candidate age old*Team Age Div Climate (cross level) (H4)		.24 (.13)	.24 (.13)
Candidate age old*Team Age Div Climate*Team ID (3-way cross level interaction) (H5)			-.05 (.14)
Candidate age old*Team ID			.10 (.15)
Team ID*Team Age Div Climate			.23 (.14)

** *p*<.01 **p*<.05

9.11. Study Two – Hypothesis Conclusions

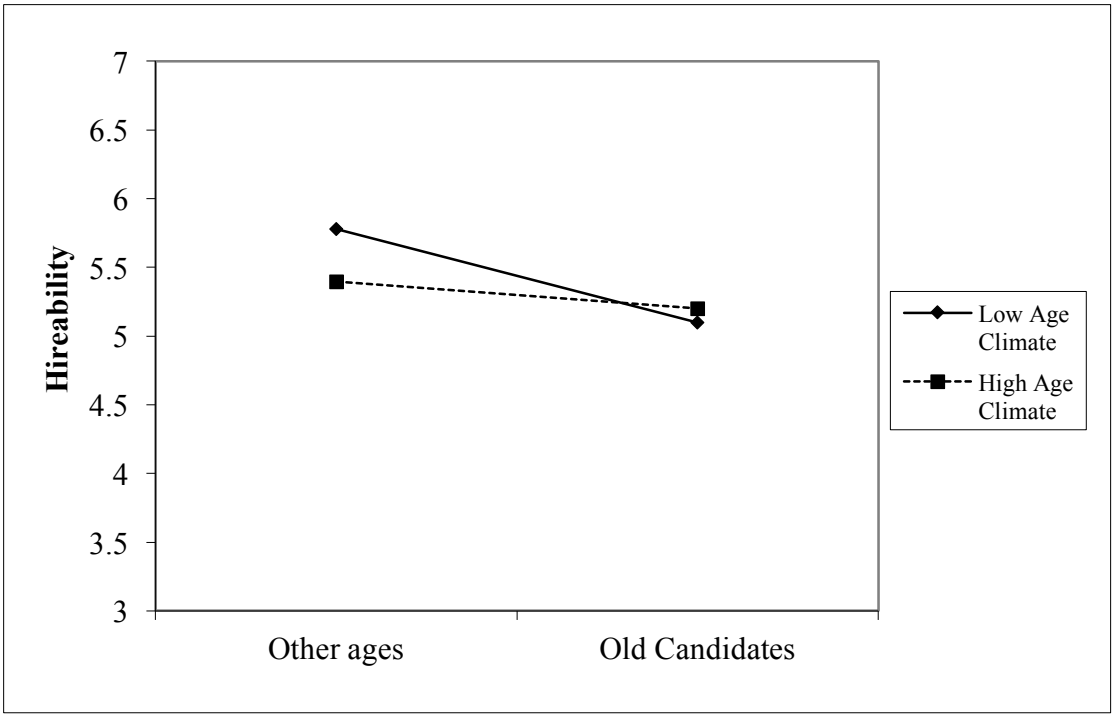
Hypothesis 1: Results from the multi-level analysis supported Hypothesis 1 and found that age was a significant negative predictor of hireability, with older job candidates more likely to be rated as less hireable compared to younger or middle-aged job candidates.

Hypothesis 2: Results did not support hypothesis 2 and the job's candidate gender did not moderate the relationship between age and hireability (with the prediction being that age would have a greater negative effect on hireability for the older female candidates).

Hypothesis 3: Results did not support hypothesis 3 and the relationship between candidate age and hireability was not moderated by the hiring decision maker's perception of the age culture in their employing organisation.

Hypothesis 4: Results did not support hypothesis 4: the relationship between candidate age and hireability was not moderated by the team Age Diversity Climate in which the hiring decision maker was based. However, it is important to note that the results for this hypothesis were close to the significance cut-off (p=.075) and, as such, this potentially provides some evidence that team climate could influence hiring decision makers, and, moreover there could be additional factors that potentially moderate this relationship. Accordingly, while the result was above p<.05, it has been plotted below (Figure 13) to assist with discussion in the next chapter, and shows that hiring decision makers who were based in teams with age climates that were less supportive of age diversity, then rated the older as less hireable.

Figure 13: H4 Plotted Interaction Candidate Age & Team Age Climate



Hypothesis 5: Results did not support hypothesis 5, and the relationship between the prospective candidate's age and their hireability was not moderated by an interaction between the aggregated team age diversity climate and the decision-maker's team identity.

9.12. Overall Summary of Results – Study One & Two

The hireability of older job candidates: Results from both study one (S1:H1) and study two (S2:H1) supported the hypotheses that, in a simulated recruitment and selection setting, the candidate's age would have a significant negative effect on their hireability (with the older job candidates being rated as less hireable than the younger and middle-aged job candidates in both studies).

The interaction between older job candidate's age & gender: Results were mixed as to whether the candidate's gender significantly moderated the relationship between their age and hireability (for the older job candidates). Study one (S1:H2) found a significant interaction between age and gender, and, as expected, age had a greater negative effect on hireability for the female job candidates (with older female candidates rated as less hireable than older male candidates). However, for study two (S2:H2), no significant interaction was found. The explanation and implication of these mixed results will be discussed in the Discussion chapter that follows.

The interaction between older job candidate's age & educational status: Study one (S1:H3) found that the candidate's educational status (which was used as a proxy of their social class) significantly moderated the relationship between their age and hireability, with older and degree educated candidates (e.g. higher social class) seen as more hireable than other groups, which was the converse of what was predicted (that older non degree educated or lower social class candidates would be seen as less hireable).

The moderating effect of previous work experience on the hireability of older job candidates: In respect of the candidate's previous work experience, it was predicted in Study one (S1:H4) that the candidate's previous work experience would moderate the relationship between their age and hireability (with the prediction being that not having relevant work experience would result in age having a greater negative effect on hireability). However, the results did not support this hypothesis.

The impact of the occupational status of the decision maker (staff/student) on the hireability of older job candidates: It was also predicted, for study one (S1:H7), that the occupational status of participants would moderate the relationship between the candidate's age and their hireability (with the prediction being that age would have a greater negative effect on hireability if the participant was a student). However, results from study one did not support this hypothesis.

The impact of age stereotypes on the hireability of older job candidates: Results from study one (S1:H5) found that the participant's level of age stereotyping significantly moderated the relationship between the candidate age and hireability. For those participants who scored higher for age stereotyping, age had a stronger negative effect on hireability, with older candidates seen as less hireable than other groups.

The impact of affect towards older workers on the hireability of older job candidates: Results from study one (S1: H6) did not support the hypothesis the participant's level of affect towards older workers would moderate the relationship between the candidate's age and hireability, and no significant interaction was found.

The impact of organisational age culture on the hireability of older job candidates: Results for the hiring decision maker's perception of the age culture in their employing organisation found, that contrary to what was hypothesised (S2:H3), this perception did not moderate the relationship between the candidate's age and their hireability. This meant that age did not have a greater negative effect on hireability when the participants perceived their employing organisation to have a culture that was less supportive of older workers.

The impact of team age diversity climate on the hireability of older job candidates: It was hypothesised, for study two (S2:H4), that the aggregated team age diversity climate would, for the older job candidate, moderate the relationship between the candidate's age and their hireability (with the specific prediction being that for those hiring decision makers who were based in teams that had a less positive age diversity climate, age would have a greater negative effect on hireability). Accordingly, whilst the results did not find a significant interaction between team-level age diversity climate and candidate age, it should be noted that the results were relatively close to the significance level cut-off (p=.075), and, as such, this then could be possibly interpreted as providing some evidence that team age climate had an influence on hiring decision makers.

The impact of an interaction between team age diversity climate and the hiring decision maker's level of team identity on the hireability of older job candidates: It was also hypothesised, for study two (S2:H5), that there would be an interaction between the team age diversity climate and the extent of hiring decision maker's identification with their respective teams (with the hypothesis being that team age diversity climate would have a

greater effect the more strongly the decision maker identified with their team). However, results did not support this hypothesis.

10. Discussion Chapter

The aim of this thesis was to attempt to establish a better understanding of the different factors that, with regards to recruitment and selection of older workers, may influence hiring decision makers. This is because previous research has found that older workers are a group that could find it particularly difficult to find and secure work (Francioli & North, 2021; Neumark et al, 2015), which is troubling given the demographic changes that are seemingly taking place in both wider society and the labour market (Hertel & Zacher, 2018).

Two studies were undertaken for this thesis, both of which were underpinned by a Social Identity approach to behaviour (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987). This means that how hiring decision makers categorise themselves and others were considered key factors in understanding why they may be more or less likely to select an older job candidate. Both studies took an intersectional approach to age discrimination, to explore if some of the older job candidates' other social and demographical characteristics, such as their gender and/or social class, were negatively intersecting with their age.

Study one was based in a higher education setting and was an experimental vignette design, which attempted to establish if individual-level factors, such as age stereotypes and affect towards older workers, were influencing hiring decision makers. It also examined the intersection of older job candidate's age with their gender and social class.

Study two was also an experimental vignette but was based across four external host organisations (a large retail organisation, a manufacturing company, a government office, and a university). The second study attempted to explore the impact of organisational and team level factors on hiring decisions. It also explored the intersection of candidate age and gender.

10.1. Supported Hypotheses

10.2. The Hireability of Older Job Candidates

Results from both study one and study two found that older age had a significant negative effect on candidate hireability. As such, these findings support the overall proposition that, in recruitment and selection scenarios, when compared against equally matched, but younger job candidates, older job candidates are rated less positively. Moreover, the findings add weight to claims that the age discrimination older workers experience in the workplace, may be particularly prevalent in recruitment and selection situations, with older workers finding it particularly difficult to secure employment in later life (due to a preference in workplaces for younger over older employees) (Francioli & North, 2021; Neumark et al, 2015).

The findings also appear to be particularly robust when differences between the two studies are explored in more detail. For example, study one, used only a single job role (an administrative role) for the recruitment and selection task, based in a fictitious frozen foods

company. Study two, in contrast, was hosted across four organisations (based in retail, manufacturing, government, and higher education sectors), and used nearly 100 different real job roles for the recruitment and selection task (which were classified using a standard occupational classification system). Study one included in each vignette candidate profile an explicit statement about the candidate's age (e.g. the participants were told the candidate's age). However, for study two, the participants were left to implicitly infer the candidate's age from information included in each vignette (e.g. the dates of the candidate's schooling and a photograph of each candidate). Nonetheless, even considering these crucial differences, the results across the two studies were consistent, in that they both found older candidates were rated as less hireable, than the younger or middle-aged job candidates.

Even so, a preference for younger job candidates over older candidates has been found in previous studies (Bendick et al, 1999; Rosen & Jerdee, 1976). However, studies have tended to be either correspondence-type studies or lab-based, with the former providing limited information regarding the different factors that may explain this phenomenon. On the other hand, lab-based studies which have utilised artificial scenarios that bear little resemblance to the actual workplace, and, have been reliant on students as a sample population (Morgeson et al, 2008). Then then means that they have been criticised for lacking ecological validity (Avolio & Barett, 1987). Accordingly, a meta-analysis by Gordon and Arvey (2004) found that students in lab-based scenarios had a tendency to rate older people less favourably, implying that many of these previous lab-based studies may be overemphasising the reality of any age discrimination in the workplace, and in actual fact it

could be an artefact of study designs and not as prevalent as some researchers claim (Avolio & Barett, 1987; Gordon & Arvey, 2004; Morgeson et al, 2008).

The results from the correlation analyses that were conducted for both studies, found a larger negative correlation between candidate age (for the older candidates) and hireability in study one, than study two. Potentially then, this result adds some support to the argument that artificial settings may magnify any age effect or possibly make 'age' somehow more salient to participants, than in real-world organisational settings.

Nevertheless, it should also be emphasized that study one used a sample population that consisted of both students and employees within an organisational setting. This meant that the study was able to examine whether the occupational status of the participant (e.g. staff/student) would moderate the relationship between the candidate's age and their hireability, with the hypothesis then being that age would have a stronger negative effect on hireability when the participant was a student (consistent with the argument that student samples may amplify any age effect). However, the results suggest that the status of the participant did not significantly interact with the candidate's age on the hireability decision and, as such, provided some evidence that student samples may not be more likely to exhibit bias against older workers. Instead, such bias may emerge from a relatively young age (assuming that most students are in young adulthood) and endures as people age and enter the workplace. This suggestion can also be supported by the findings from study two, which was based in four different host organisations (all in different sectors, with two of the organisations being in the public sector and two in the private sector) and which utilised participants who, within their respective employing organisations, were actually responsible

for recruitment and selection decisions. Accordingly, study two found, that even though candidates were carefully matched to ensure that differences in work experience and qualifications were controlled, older age had a significant negative effect on candidate hireability. Collectively these findings suggest that while study one may have produced a larger effect size than study two, that age discrimination is not something that is apparent only in lab based studies and utilising student populations.

However, while these results provided evidence that in a recruitment and selection process, older candidates may find it harder than other age groups to secure employment, in isolation they do not explain why this is occurring. However, some of the additional findings from study one and two provide some insights into the reasons why older job candidates may be less likely to be selected in hiring scenarios.

10.3. Intersectionality: The Intersect of Candidate Age & Gender

As previously indicated, this thesis attempted to take an intersectional approach to the study of age discrimination, to establish if some of the older job candidates' other social and demographic characteristics were interacting with their age. As such, the first intersectional variable that was proposed could be having an impact was the candidate's gender. Accordingly, after reviewing previous literature that explored the intersect of age and gender (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Neumark et al, 2015), it was predicted that age would have a greater negative effect on hireability for the older female candidates. Results from study one supported this hypothesis and the older female candidates were rated as less

hireable than the older male candidates. However, this finding was not replicated in study two, and a significant interaction was not found between age and gender.

The difficulty with deciphering these mixed results is that firstly study one had more controls than study two, in as much as for study one, the hiring decision focused on a single job role, based in a fictitious frozen foods company. In contrast, in study two, hiring decisions were made across four real world organisations, using multiple job roles (which were actual roles in the teams in which decision-makers were based). In consequence, there were a huge number of factors that could have potentially confounded the participant's decision-making in study two. These include, who was incumbent in the role that was used for the recruitment task (i.e. if it was a female then they could have been more likely to rate the female candidates as more hireable), and whether there were gender-typed elements of the role (e.g. if it was a role that tends to be associated with a certain gender). Accordingly, then, the results from study one should not be discounted. This is because they do provide evidence that while older workers as a collective may find it difficult to secure employment, in reality, they perhaps should not be treated as a homogenous group (as female older workers may find it even harder than older males to find work in their later years). Moreover, this finding is particularly concerning as it potentially shows another way in which females may face inequality in the workplace, with factors such as their age having more of a negative impact on them, than men.

Some of the potential reasons why older females may find it harder than older men to secure employment were discussed in the opening chapters, and include the Double Jeopardy hypothesis (Beale, 1970). This is based on the proposition that when individuals

are members of two minority groups, they are subject to stereotypes about both groups. Accordingly, for study one, the older female candidates could have been stereotyped, for example, as being less adaptable in the workplace (age stereotype) and overly emotional (gender stereotype). Moreover, this claim is supported by research from Irni (2009) which found older women are often stereotyped as being 'difficult and cranky' in the workplace, which could be perceived to be a combination of both age and gender stereotypes. Consequently, it is easy to see why a participant decision maker, that subscribed to these views (e.g. they potentially viewed older woman as being out-group and so relied on stereotypes to inform them about potential behaviour on the job), may have then have rated older female candidates to be a poorer choice of hire than older males.

Even so, the Double Jeopardy hypothesis (Beale, 1970) is limited in its ability to explain why stereotyping is occurring in the first place. As such, a different theoretical explanation, Intersectional Invisibility (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008) may be more appropriate in this instance. This perspective, which is based on Social Identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), posits that when an individual is a member of two disadvantaged groups, they become marginal members of both groups (e.g. they are not seen as a prototypical member of either group). Thus, the notion that social collectives have prototypical members, would suggest that even if the hiring decision maker also identified as female, they might not have categorised an older female candidate as being in-group, because the candidate's older age rendered them as an invisible member of the female collective. This, therefore, potentially provides an alternative explanation for why, in study one, age had stronger negative effect on hireability for the older female candidates.

Study one provided evidence that older females may be more likely to face age discrimination than older men, however, the findings from study two did not support an interaction between gender and age, suggesting that more evidence/future studies are needed to clarify this effect. Moreover, it should also be noted that on its own (e.g. as a main effect) results were also mixed as to whether the gender of the candidates had a significant effect on hireability. This could then possibly suggest that while there are instances in which a candidate's gender may intensify the negative impact of their age, that in actuality it could be older age per se, that has a greater negative impact on the likelihood of being hired.

10.1. Intersectionality: The Intersect of Candidate Age & Educational Status (Social Class)

Study one also explored whether the job candidate's educational status, as an indicator of their social class, would moderate the relationship between their age and hireability. However, due to the number of different job roles included in study two, which often had differing educational requirements, it was not possible to include this variable in the second study. The hypothesis for study one was that candidates who were not degree educated (e.g. perceived as lower social class), older age would have a greater negative effect on their hireability. Results from study one found, as predicted, that the candidate's educational status significantly moderated this relationship. Yet, this was converse to expectations, in as much as age had a greater negative effect on hireability for those older candidates who were degree educated and potentially perceived as higher social class.

On the surface, these results appear surprising given that previous research by Schilling (2016), found that older workers with low socio-economic status (a term sometimes used interchangeably for social class) may be considered one of the most disposable groups in the labour market. Furthermore, other researchers have claimed older people who are lower social class are much more likely to face inequality, in various areas of life, and that this inequality often begins in the workplace (McCann & Giles, 2002; Walker, 1981). There are a number of possible explanations for the finding that age had a greater negative effect on hireability for those older candidates who were degree educated, which include some methodological issues. Originally, it was intended to examine the intersect between social class and age. However, the difficulty of how to include social class as an implicit variable in the candidate vignette profiles was explored. As such, because educational status is often seen as a proxy for social class (Hollingshead, 1975), it was decided to include educational status in the vignettes (as a binary variable of degree educated or not) as an indicator of their social class. However, in a society in which around 20% of the population are currently degree educated (Department of Education, 2022), the saliency of a degree as a plausible indicator of social class could be in doubt. Moreover, if it is not a plausible indicator of social class, then what should be explored, with regards to these results, is whether the possession of a degree is the critical variable.

An explanation that warrants further discussion is that in study one, the participants possibly perceived a degree to be unnecessary for the job role, and certainly there was no mention in the job advertisement of needing to be degree educated. Yet, although it is perhaps understandable that the decision-makers perceived having a degree as unnecessary prerequisite for the role, it is difficult to understand why having a degree would be

perceived as a negative feature. However, previous research (Erdogan et al, 2011; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021) has shown that overqualified job candidates are often evaluated negatively by employers, due to perceptions that that they may be less committed to a role and more likely to leave sooner. Moreover, this could also be linked to a common age stereotype, which is that because older workers are closer to retirement than younger workers, they may have a shorter tenure (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Thus, this could indicate that being older and perceived as overqualified was a particularly damaging combination for job candidates.

There is also a potential link to another age stereotype, in that if a candidate was older and overqualified, then they could have been perceived as difficult to manage, which could impact their hireability. This is because a common age stereotype is that older workers are inflexible and resistant to change (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Likewise, it has been claimed that overqualified workers may express an attitude of superiority (Deng et al, 2018), which leads to relational problems with both supervisors and co-workers (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Accordingly, this could explain why hiring decision makers considered older overqualified candidates, as being a poorer choice of hire, than older candidates who were not degree educated.

Nonetheless, while it is plausible that the candidate's educational status was not the strongest indicator of their social class (due to the amount of the population that are degree educated), it should still be considered that the decision maker participants may have made an interpretation about the prospective candidate's social class. As such, this would suggest that the participants perceived the older candidates who were higher social class as less

hireable than the older candidates who were lower social class. This is unexpected finding, given that the proposal from some researchers that older lower social class workers are often being forced to exit the labour market prematurely due to the difficulties they face in obtaining work (Schilling, 2016). However, while further research would need to be conducted to explore and clarify this result, it could be possible that the participant's own social class was having an impact on their decision making, with those participants who categorised themselves as lower or working class, then more likely to categorise the higher social class candidates as out-group, triggering negative out-group processes, such as stereotypes and affect (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987).

10.2. Individual Level Influencing Factors

The results from the two studies that have been discussed so far, have been related to characteristics of the prospective job candidates (e.g. their gender and education status) that intersected with their age. What follows next is a discussion regarding the results of some of the factors at the individual, team, and organisational levels that may have influenced hiring decision makers, when they were faced with an older job candidate. In study one work-related age stereotypes were found to significantly moderate the relationship between the job candidate's age and hireability. As such, for the older candidates, their age was found to have a stronger negative effect on hireability when the participants scored high for age stereotyping.

When evaluating the content of age stereotypes (e.g. that older workers are less productive, less competent with technology, less able to cope with change in the workplace etc.) it is

clear to see that if a decision-maker shared those views about older workers, that it could have had negative implications on their rating of older job candidates. Nonetheless, what these results do not explain in isolation, or without further interpretation, is why some individuals seemingly ascribe to the content of age stereotypes, when previous research (Ng & Feldman, 2012), has found these views to be overgeneralisations at best, and outright myths at worst. Moreover, while the results from study one cannot explain in which scenarios age stereotypes are more likely to be enacted, they may provide some clues as to when hiring decision-makers may be vulnerable to their influence.

It was suggested in the opening chapters that when a person identifies with a social group, that they may view people in the same social group as being an in-group, and people in other relevant social groups as being out-group. An example could then be that a student will view other students as 'in-group' and their lecturers as being 'out-group'. Individuals are then said to be biased towards in-group members, and biased against people who are out-group (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Moreover, when they perceive a person as being out-group, they may also have a tendency to rely on stereotypes to inform them about the other person's behaviour (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Thus, the results from study one, could indicate that the participants potentially viewed the older job candidates as being out-group, and, because of this, were then more likely to agree with the content of age stereotypes, which led to them to rate the older candidates as less hireable (as age stereotypes are generally negative).

The most obvious social category implicated in these findings, is the 'older worker' category. This is because the stereotypes that were used in study one were age stereotypes

specifically about older workers (rather than older people in general). As such, if the participant did not also identify as an 'older worker', then they could have viewed the older candidates as being out-group, which made them more likely to age stereotype. Thus, the results from study one found that the participant's level of age stereotyping moderated their decision-making and social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) provides a plausible explanation why this occurred (due to their 'out-group' status).

Nonetheless, what could also be considered is whether there were elements of the study design (and recruitment and selection processes more generally) that made a reliance on stereotypes more likely. For example, previous research (Lippens et al, 2020) has found that stereotypes may have more of an influence when people are in time sensitive situations and/or provided only with limited information. This is because it is claimed that stereotypes are used as a mental short-cut, which allows us to quickly predict how another person may or may not behave in social situations (Allport et al, 1954). This proposal is also consistent with the economic theory of statistical discrimination (Arrow, 1972), which posits that in employment settings, when individuals are provided with imperfect information about a person who is a member of a minority group, that they use statistical information about how others perform in that group to make a judgement on that person's productivity/performance. Moreover, this statistical information has been found to be sometimes based on stereotypes and generalisations (Lane, 2016). As such, it could be that short-listing processes (with the decision-making task designed as a short-listing task) may be particularly vulnerable to the influence of stereotypes, because decision-makers receive only limited or imperfect information about prospective candidates. Accordingly, the findings from study one potentially provides an insight into why previous research (Ahmed

et al, 2012), has found that older candidates receive significantly fewer invitations to interview, with the proposition being that when decision-makers rely on age stereotypes when making evaluations about older candidates, it puts older candidates at a disadvantage especially at the short-listing stage.

10.3. Team-level Influencing Factors

The discussion so far has explored some of the significant findings from both studies, with a key finding, that older age was found to be a significant negative predictor of hireability. Additional findings that have been explored were in relation to some of job candidate's other social and demographic characteristics, which moderated the relationship between their age and hireability (e.g. the candidate's gender and educational status), and individual influencing factors, which potentially explain why the older candidates were rated as less hireable.

This next section will examine the influence of team-related factors on hiring decision makers. Accordingly, it was hypothesised for study two, that team age diversity climate would moderate the relationship between the candidate's age and their hireability. As such, the specific prediction was that for those decision makers who were based in teams that had less positive age diversity climates (e.g. perceived their teams to be teams that were less supportive of older workers), older candidate age would have a greater negative effect on hireability.

Results from study two found that team age diversity climate did not significantly moderate the relationship between age and hireability. However, while there was no statistically significant interaction between team climate and candidate age, it should be emphasised that the results were relatively close to the generally accepted significance value cut-off (p=.07). Thus, given the relatively small sample size, the closeness to the cut-off could imply that it cannot be ruled out that team climate did not have an influence on decision makers. Furthermore, the use of the p=05 significance cut off level, is in itself a contentious issue, with many researchers calling for the abandonment of its use (Wasserstein & Lazar, 2016). This is because it is claimed that p values do not actually measure the probability that a hypothesis is supported, and that conclusions should not be drawn from results that fall either side of an arbitrary line. In consequence, the results from study two could be interpreted as providing some limited, and, albeit not unequivocal, evidence that team age diversity climate impacted on hiring decisions, with the results indicating that decision makers who were based in teams with climates that were less positive regarding age diversity, then rated older candidates as less hireable.

While the lack of support for this hypothesis cannot be ignored, this is potentially an important finding, as it shows that while individual level factors, such as age stereotypes, acted as a significant influence on hiring decision makers, the organisational environment in which the decision maker was based (e.g. their work group/team) may have also influenced their hiring decisions. When attempting to understand why team age diversity climate may have influenced decision makers in study two, then it could be useful to refer back to the opening chapters of this thesis. Here it was posited that if age diversity was a relevant feature for teams, then team members may interpret their team as either having a climate

that is more, or less, supportive of age diversity. Moreover, it was also posited that if a team leader then identified strongly with their team, then they may try to enact their team identity by behaving in way that is consistent with that climate. Accordingly, it was also hypothesised for study two, that team identity (which was measured in the decision makers) would interact with team age diversity climate (the aggregated team member responses to the climate questionnaire), with those decision makers who identified more strongly with their team, then being more influenced by the climate in their team. However, a significant interaction between team age diversity climate and the participant's level of team identity was not found. As such, this suggests that hiring (or not hiring) an older worker, may not be illustrative of the enactment of team identity, and there may be other potential reasons why team climate may act as an influencing factor.

To understand how and why team age diversity climate could influence decision makers, it may be beneficial to reassess the concept of 'climate'. Team climate can be understood as team-members' perceptions of the policies, practices and procedures within that team (Wilson, 2000). Moreover, for study two, a measure was used that was specific to age diversity, which was then aggregated to make it a team level variable. As such, in this instance, team age diversity climate can be understood as the aggregated perceptions of team members, with regards to the policies, practices, and procedures in relation to age diversity. Therefore, what will now follow is a discussion regarding who the potential instigator or creator of such policies and practices may be.

In respect of the team climate, it is certainly plausible that the team leader was the person who had a strongest influence on creating, developing and maintaining relevant practices

and policies. Moreover, this is supported by previous research that shows a strong link between team leadership and team climate (Pirola-Merlo et al, 2002). This is because it is likely that the leader is responsible for potentially relevant practices, such as hiring decisions, and choosing which employees will be put forward for training and development etc. Thus, it could well be that it was the team leader's previous actions/behaviours which influenced the current climate in a team.

If a team leader held negative attitude towards age diversity (and possibly in particular older workers), then this could have resulted in a preference for hiring younger workers (or workers who are less age diverse) and, prioritising them, over older workers, for development. Clearly, this negative attitude could be linked to the out-group bias that has been discussed previously (e.g. if the team leader categorises older workers as out-group then they may be relying on stereotypes to predict how they will perform in the team etc.). However, an additional possibility is that a relational demography/homophily paradigm (Lawrence, 1988) could have been having an influence in this instance. This is because if the team leader was managing a team that was all young (or just less age diverse) then they may have believed the team to be more cohesive if the team members were all demographically similar. Moreover, this could mean that the team leader was not actually biased against older workers as a group, but that they believed their team would perform better if the team members were all similar, and that a demographically different person may have struggled to fit in (and disrupt the cohesiveness of the team). As such, this could indicate that it is the actual level of current age diversity in a team, which influenced the team leader (and by extension the team climate). Yet, what this explanation does not consider is, what may happen if/when a team gets a new leader, will the team climate still

persist or will the new leader make the current climate less influential? As such, this is something that could be examined in future research to establish whether team climate changes with new leadership or remains relatively stable.

10.4. Unsupported Hypotheses

The results that have been explored so far largely supported the hypotheses that were developed for testing in study one and two, and provided good evidence for the proposition, that, in recruitment and selection processes, older candidates are considered less hireable than their younger counterparts. Moreover, the results also provide evidence that as well as individual level factors, such as age stereotypes, the environment in which hiring decision are made (e.g. team), may be important when considering why older workers are less likely to be selected in recruitment processes. Nevertheless, while support for some hypotheses was found, there were other hypotheses that were not supported, and these findings will now be explored.

10.5. The Moderating Role of Previous Work Experience

Study one attempted to establish if a job candidate's previous relevant work experience (with relevant being defined in relation to the role that was being recruited), moderated the relationship between age and hireability. The hypothesis was that older candidates who did not have relevant work experience would be rated as less hireable. This hypothesis was developed to explore issues surrounding the influence of an emerging labour market

phenomenon termed 'Bridge Employment'. Bridge employment is a type of employment which allows older workers to transition from their main career job to retirement, while still remaining active members of the labour market (Beehr & Bennett, 2014; Zhan, Wang & Shi, 2015). Moreover, it has been proposed that some individuals may choose to seek work in the area of their career jobs, while for others an entirely new sector may be more appropriate (e.g. someone with a very physical job may decide to look for work in a new field etc.) (Zhan & Wang, 2015). Thus, bridge employment has the potential to allow people to extend their working lives.

Nonetheless, while bridge employment could be a solution to mitigate against the possible impact of an ageing population, it is also potentially a way in which age norms may be violated (as older workers may naturally be expected to be more experienced than younger workers). Accordingly, it was suggested in the opening chapter that Career Timetable Theory (Lawrence, 1988) posits that individuals who violate age norms tend to be evaluated negatively in the workplace. As such, the purpose of including this hypothesis was to establish if it is more difficult for older workers to secure employment in later life, when they lack work experience that is relevant to the role for which they are applying. However, results did not support this hypothesis, and while on its own (e.g. as a main effect) having relevant work experience was a significant predictor of hireability, relevant work experience did not significantly moderate the relationship between older age and hireability.

Yet, there are two ways in which these results could be interpreted. Firstly, it could be viewed as a discouraging finding, because it shows that regardless of whether the older candidates had relevant work experience or not, their age still had a significant negative

effect on their hireability. However, from an alternative and more positive perspective, it suggests that encouraging older people to remain in the labour market, by searching for bridge employment (instead of fully retiring), may not put those candidates at an automatic disadvantage. This is because a lack of relevant experience did not worsen the impact of age (clearly their older age put them at a disadvantage, but their lack of experience did not make this disadvantage any worse).

Nonetheless, there are also some methodological concerns with the testing of this hypothesis, which are that for study one the candidate profiles included just one previous job role (a single job role and the industry in which it was based) and the length of this experience was not given. As such, it should be emphasized that this is an aspect of the study that did not mirror a real-life recruitment and selection process. This is because firstly, older candidates would likely have had more than one job in their work history, and, lengths of tenure would also tend to be stated in a real-life situation. Likewise, secondly, even though some candidates may have work experience that is not directly relevant to a role, it is likely that their previous work experience could provide them with transferable skills, that in a CV (or application form) would furnish the decision-maker with more information. Accordingly, the lack of support for this hypothesis should be interpreted with caution due to these methodological weaknesses.

Nevertheless, it is still beneficial to explore why having relevant work experience did not, for the older candidates, decrease the negative impact of their age. A possible explanation could be that for the older candidates, their age was the most salient part of their application. This means that other aspects, such as their work history, were overlooked by

decision-makers. The reason why age was so salient, could again be linked to the decision-maker's own social identity, with age likely to be more salient when the decision-maker viewed the older candidates as being a member of an out-group.

A further reason why, work experience did not moderate the relationship between age and hireability, is that with regards to the job that was being recruited for (e.g. an administrative assistant), the decision-makers did not perceive work experience to be an essential criterion. Moreover, if relevant work experience was not deemed necessary by decision-makers, then perhaps the ability or capacity to be trained to meet the role requirements was more important. Consequently, this could again be linked to age stereotypes, as there is a stereotype that older workers are less willing/able to engage in training and development activities (Ng & Feldman, 2012), meaning that decision-makers could have evaluated the older candidates that lacked work experience as potentially being difficult to train. In contrast, decision makers may have evaluated the younger candidates without experience to be easier to train and develop and, thus, to be a better choice of hire.

10.6. Individual Level Influencing Factors (Unsupported Factors)

The variable that will next be explored is affect towards older workers, with affect being proposed, like stereotypes, as a key element of bias, and, as such, likely also implicated in our social identities (Finkelstein, 2015; Fiske, 2004). Accordingly, it was hypothesized that affect towards older workers would moderate the relationship between candidate age and hireability. However, results from study one did not support this hypothesis and no significant interaction was found.

On the surface, this lack of support for affect as an influencing variable is quite surprising. This is because support was found for the hypothesis that age stereotypes act as a moderating variable. Accordingly, if bias supposedly consists of a cognitive element (e.g. stereotypes) and an affective element, then it may be expected that support would also be found for the moderating influence of affect. How then can these seemingly inconsistent results be reconciled?

The first explanation is that affect was actually influencing decision makers, but that it was not accurately measured in study one, due to socially desirable responding. Socially desirable responding can be described as a tendency by individuals to alter their natural behaviour to conform to social norms and standards (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). As such, when looking at some of the wording that was used in the affect scale (e.g. to what extent do you feel contempt towards older people in the workplace and to what extent do you feel disgust towards older people in the workplace), expressing views such as 'disgust' towards a group of people in the workplace could be seen as a violation of current social norms, and, as a consequence, people may naturally curb any tendency to express such views (as they understand that these views would be socially disapproved). Moreover, this explanation is supported by a body of research (Krumpal, 2013) which suggest that individuals have a strong tendency, in self report scenarios, to under-report attitudes that they believe may be not socially desirable (e.g. such as prejudice towards a minority group). Furthermore, with regards to stereotyping and the stereotype scale, the wording used in this scale was far less controversial (e.g. how comfortable are older people using technology in the workplace or how adaptable are older people in the workplace). Therefore, agreeing to the content of

age stereotypes may have been less of a violation of social norms/standards, and, as a result, allowed the participants to express their actual attitudes and feel less need to temper such views.

An alternative explanation is that the tripartite model of bias (Fiske, 2004) may not be applicable with respect to bias towards older workers. For example, it has been claimed that while the impact of age stereotypes has been explored in the workplace (Posthuma & Campion, 2009), little is known about whether affect towards older workers also has an influence (Finkelstein, 2015). However, the results from study one could be interpreted as indicating that affect towards older workers is not a key influencing factor, with regards to hiring decisions, and instead the focus should remain on age stereotypes, as well as the environment in which the hiring decision maker is based.

A further explanation is that taking a bipolar approach to the conceptualisation and measurement of affect in study one could have impacted on the results. As discussed in the literature review chapter, there remains some disagreement as to whether 'affect' is best conceptualized as a spectrum running from positive to negative (e.g. bipolar perspective) or whether positive and negative affect should be treated as independent constructs (Russell & Carroll, 1999). As a result, it could be that using separate independent scales for both positive and negative affect (instead of one single scale) could have produced different results, and, therefore, provides scope for future studies.

10.7. Organisational Level Influencing Factors (Unsupported Factors)

The last hypothesis that was examined in study two was the participant's perception of the organisational age culture in their employing organisation. Thus, it was hypothesised, that participants' perception of the age culture within their employing organisation would moderate the relationship between age and hireability. However, findings from study two did not support this hypothesis and no significant interaction was found.

Before attempting to interpret the lack of support for this hypothesis, it may be relevant to highlight some methodological shortcomings that could impact these results. Firstly, organisational age culture was not actually measured or analysed at the organisational level. This is because due to the time and resource constraints of a PhD, it was apparent that collecting data from the number of organisations that would be needed to use the organisational culture scale at that conceptual (and statistical) level was not feasible. As such, the construct that is discussed in this section is an organisational-level variable that, for study two, was measured at the individual level (e.g. participant's individual perception of the organisational culture) and termed 'perception of organisational age culture'.

Furthermore, while using an organisational scale at the individual level, may provide an indication of what may be occurring in an organisation, Hofstefe (1985) caution against making assumptions about a higher-level collective (e.g. an organisation) from a lower level variable (e.g. individual level variable). This is because making such assumptions can lead to a flawed understanding, as it is problematic to assume that an individual's views are shared among all employees, and, therefore, considered representative of an entire organisation.

As such, it could firstly be questioned whether the views of the participants in this study were truly representative of a shared consensus in their employing organisations. In addition, there are a number of factors that could have made age (and the organisational age culture) more or less meaningful to the participants. These include, but are not limited to, their own age, whether they personally identified as an older worker, and even the length of their tenure at their employing organisation, with some participants potentially not being employed long enough to have a strong view regarding the age culture in their organisation. This means that interpreting the results of this hypothesis as evidence that organisational factors, such as age culture, did not influence decision makers may be problematic.

A further methodological concern, that should also be explored before interpreting the lack of support for perception of organisational age culture, is related to the way in which this variable was measured. Schein (1990, 1996) suggests that the term 'organisational culture' can be used to understand the shared beliefs and values that employees hold both consciously and unconsciously regarding their employing organisation. Study two then utilised a short four item scale, which was employed previously by Zacher and Gienik (2014) to measure this construct. Yet, using the classical definition that Schein adopts to understand an organisation's culture, it seems possible that a self-report measure (such as the one utilised for study two) was perhaps not in-depth enough to access an organisation's true culture and certainly there exists an argument in the literature about whether culture can actually be measured using techniques such as surveys due to the complexity of this construct (Schein, 1990; Westrum, 2004). Moreover, if elements of culture include the unconscious beliefs held by employees, then an explicit self-report measure potentially only

accessed part of the culture. As such, caution should again be used when interpreting the lack of support for this hypothesis.

However, while some of the methodological concerns regarding the use of organisational age culture as a variable in study two have been highlighted, the finding that age culture did not significantly moderate the relationship between candidate age and hireability should still be explored. This is because it is entirely plausible that the participant's views regarding the culture in their employing organisation, were consistent with the actual culture in that organisation. Furthermore, this could suggest that culture was not as influential to decision makers as other factors, such as age stereotypes and team climate.

A possible consideration is that aspects of organisational culture may relate to the treatment of older workers e.g. they may show they value older workers by rewarding service or, they may have a tendency to invest only in training and developing younger workers. Yet, the participants were unwilling to state what they believed to be the shared views about a minority group within their employing organisation (e.g. older workers), due to socially desirable responding (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). As such, this could have motivated employees to engage in 'reputation management' with respect to their employer. This means that just as individuals may have been unwilling to express their personal views about a minority group, this same motive could have influenced responses with respect to the organisation's reputation. Moreover, this reputation management might have been more likely to occur if the employee identified more strongly with their employing organisation (e.g. organisational identity). This is because identity is linked to the maintenance of self-esteem and the need for relatedness (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner,

1986; Turner et al, 1987) and a decision-maker (e.g. employee) may have wanted to feel proud of their employing organisation. Moreover, Zerbe and Paulus (1987) support this notion by claiming that employees engaging in socially desirable responding, with regards to their employer, may actually be engaging in self-deception about their employer as a potential means of protecting their ego and upholding their public image.

An additional suggestion could be that if the participant did not personally identify as an older worker, then the age culture (if one exists) within their employing organisation may not have been a meaningful feature for them. This could then mean that even if an organisation engages in practices which suggest it does value older workers, this element of its culture may not always influence hiring decision makers, unless it is something that is personally relevant to them.

In the opening chapter, it was highlighted that researchers had previously called for the narrowing of the concepts of organisational culture and climate to more specific constructs. This is because it is proposed that specifying these concepts more precisely (e.g. safety culture, diversity culture etc.) improves their predictive validity and renders them more useable for practitioners (Schnieder et al, 2013; Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). As such, this has led to a variety of age-related culture scales being developed, including the scale that was used in this study. (Appannah & Biggs, 2015; Zacher & Gielnik, 2014). Nevertheless, it could be posited that organisations exhibiting particularly strong or weak presence of such cultures are those where we are most likely to see a strong influence of age culture on recruitment and selection decisions. This means that if an organisation had a very positive or negative age culture, then age would have been a relevant and meaningful

factor for the decision makers. However, in reality, the organisations in study two may actually have fallen into the moderate range and had neither a very positive nor very negative organisational age cultures. Moreover, they may have individual employees who held strong views, either positive or negative, towards older workers, but that collectively as an organisation, the shared views among employees were more moderate.

Nonetheless, the problem with the suggestion that the shared views about older workers within the host organisations were actually relatively moderate, is the finding that the older job candidates were rated as less hireable than other age groups, in all of the host organisations. This is suggestive that organisational heterogeneity, with respect to the strength of age cultures, does not play a significant role in influencing hiring decisions. This then leads to the question of whether bias against older candidates, was due to individual employees within these organisations rather than some overall cultural issue. On the other hand, an alternative explanation for the findings could be that there may be some collective level issues that this study has not been able to identify.

With regards to how the lack of support for organisation age culture as a moderating variable, then links to the theoretical propositions that were posited in the opening chapters, further issues around organisational identity will now be explored. It was previously proposed that social identities can also consist of work-related identities such as organisational identity and team identity (Miscenko & Day, 2016). Moreover, organisations may develop ideas about prototypical employees who embody what it means to be an employee in that organisation, and prospective employees may then be compared to this prototype. What then is the relevance of organisation culture to organisational identity? If

enacting an organisational identity consists of behaving in accordance with the norms and values of an organisation, then by extension an organisation's culture, and particularly the values and beliefs which comprise it, is part of what is being identified with and internalised. Accordingly, this led to the hypothesis that perception of organisational age culture would moderate the negative relationship between older candidate age and hireability. However, the results from study two did not support this hypothesis. Yet, it seems unlikely that organisational culture did not have some influence on decision makers. As such, some of the reasons why this study may have failed to access this element will be briefly explored.

Firstly, it should be noted that all the organisations that took part in study two were relatively large organisations, with the smallest employing approx. 1500 employees and the largest around 40,000 employees. Moreover, all these organisations were dispersed across various geographical locations. Thus, it could be considered (and as was suggested in the first chapter) that the decision-makers may have been less influenced by the culture in their employing organisation, because the organisations were very large and/or geographically dispersed. Moreover, this claim is supported by research from Helms and Stern (2001) and Martin (1992) which shows that when organisations have a number of dispersed units (such as offices in different locations etc.) these units have a tendency to develop sub-cultures, and that perceptions of culture then differ between units, illustrative of intra-organisational cultural homogeneity. Furthermore, support for this proposition can also be found from the results of study two, which found some evidence that team climate influenced hiring decisions, suggesting that the culture in smaller more proximal units was more influential, which is a finding also in line with previous research (Ashforth et al, 2008).

Lastly, before summarising the findings and moving on to discuss the implications of these results, as well as any limitations of the two studies, some of the control variables will be briefly explored. For studies one and two, both age and gender of the participants were used as control variables. Moreover, while the use of these variables as controls is relatively common place, with regards to the age of participants and using a social identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986, Turner et al, 1987), it could have been expected that the younger participants would favour the younger job candidates, and the older participants would favour the older candidates etc. Yet, meta analytical research from Kite et al (2005), found that older people are just as likely as younger people to engage in age stereotyping. Moreover, it was also proposed in the opening chapters that people who, from a chronological perspective, could be perceived as an older worker, may not actually categorise themselves as an older worker, because they do not see it as a valued social group. Accordingly, results from both study one and study two found that the participant age was not explaining any variance in candidate hireability, which potentially provides some support for this notion and shows that hiring decision makers may be biased against older job candidates, regardless of their own age and whether they could also be perceived as an older worker or not.

10.8. Summary of Discussion

To summarise the findings from studies one and two, it was found that in recruitment and selection scenarios, older job candidates were evaluated as less hireable than younger or middle-aged candidates. In addition, findings also indicated that older workers were not a homogenous group and, for some candidates (e.g. the older female candidates and older

candidates who were more educated), age had a greater negative effect on their perceived hireability.

In relation to the elements of the studies which attempted to establish the reasons why older workers were considered less hireable, study one found that age stereotypes influenced hiring decision makers. Moreover, theoretical explanations were suggested for this finding, with it being proposed that decision makers were potentially influenced by age stereotypes, when they perceived the older candidate as out-group. In addition, while it was not specifically investigated, it was also suggested that there may have been features of the recruitment and selection process (e.g. the short-listing of candidates) that increased the likelihood of stereotypes having an influence on decision-makers.

This thesis also proposed that hiring decision makers may be influenced by multiple different factors (e.g. at the individual, team, and organisational levels) with regards to whether they hire or do not hire an older job candidate. As such, study two also provided some evidence to support this proposition, by showing that team hiring decisions may have been influenced by team climate, which indicates that hiring decision makers are potentially being influenced by their organisational environment not just their individual attitudes towards older workers.

Lastly, affect towards older workers or perception of organisational age culture were not found to have acted as a significant influence on hiring decision makers. Even so, there were methodological shortcomings with both studies, which meant that some of the results should be interpreted with caution.

10.9. Theoretical Contributions

Research has shown that older workers are a group that is at risk of marginalisation in the workplace (Bal et al, 2011; Shore & Goldberg, 2005). Moreover, that inequality is particularly focused in the area of recruitment and selection, with older workers statistically less likely to be short-listed or invited for interview than younger workers (Francioli & North, 2021; Neumark et al, 2015). Accordingly, the results from both study one and two are consistent with previous findings, as they showed that older job candidates were consistently rated as less hireable than younger or middle-aged applicants.

Previous studies that have attempted to explore age discrimination have been criticised for lacking ecological validity, as they tended to employ research techniques that bear little resemblance to the actual workplace (e.g. artificial lab-based settings, students as sample population etc.). This practice may have magnified the occurrence of any discrimination (Gordon & Arvey, 2004; Morgeson et al, 2008). Alternatively, while field and/or correspondence type studies may be considered more naturalistic than lab based or employment simulation designs, they have been limited in the information they have been able to provide about why age discrimination may occur (Neumark et al, 2016).

In relation to the approach of this thesis, Study One took a simulated employment approach to the study of hiring decisions, with participants being asked to imagine they were recruiting for a fictitious role and then presented with candidates, who were carefully matched to ensure that they differed only by relevant characteristics. Study Two, in

contrast, adopted a more field-based approach (while still retaining some simulated employment elements). The results of the correlation analysis showed study one to have a larger effect size (for the correlation between candidate old age and hireability), than study two. This then possibly indicates some support for the argument that age is more salient in artificial settings. Nevertheless, Study One adds to the literature in this area, as it also examined whether the occupational status of participants impacted on their decision making, and no differences were found between student and employee participants in their ratings of the older job candidates. This challenges the claim that student populations would rate older workers less favourably (Gordon & Arvey, 2004).

Study Two was set in four real-world organisations, used a sample of employees who were actually responsible for selection decisions, and presented them with a short-listing exercise for a real role in their respective organisations (with fictitious candidates). Consequently, as indicated, this approach has the advantage of being more field based than Study One (e.g. it may potentially have more ecological validity). Even so, the older job candidates were again consistently rated as less hireable than other aged candidates. As such, collectively, these findings provide evidence that while artificial research settings may possibly magnify age discrimination, or make age somehow more salient to decision makers; age discrimination is still also occurring in research in organisational environments.

This thesis also contributes to the literature on older workers regarding the use of implicit and explicit identity markers on CVs and applications forms. It has been suggested that having a date of birth on a CV is a highly visible identity marker, and could explain why age stereotyping is occurring in the workplace (Perry & Finkelstein, 1999). As such, this

suggestion is consistent with previous research that has found including an explicit statement about age has a negative impact on older job candidates (Neumark et al, 2015). However, legislation such as the 2010 discrimination act (which made it unlawful to discriminate on the basis of age), has organisations are increasingly using blind applications (removing key protected characteristics from application forms/CVs) (Foley & Williamson, 2018). Yet, not only have age discrimination cases continued to rise (Ministry of Justice, 2020), but, also, a study by Derous and Decoster (2017) found that the rating of older job candidates was actually lower when their age was concealed. As such, study one provided decision makers with an explicit statement regarding the job candidates' ages, whereas for study two the decision makers were given implicit information which could allow them to infer the candidate's age. Accordingly, the results from both studies found that the older candidates were rated as significantly less hireable, than younger or middle-aged candidates regardless of whether age was made implicit or explicit. This then provides evidence that the removal of protected characteristics (such as age) from job applications does not necessarily lead to less actual discrimination.

This thesis employed an intersectional approach to age discrimination, with Ramajaran (2014) claiming that the impact of the intersection of different social and demographic characteristics (such as age and gender etc.) is still in its infancy with regards to quantitative organisational studies. As such, the aim of this approach was to establish if, in recruitment and selection scenarios, additional characteristics of the older job candidates were intersecting with their age. Accordingly, the results from study one found that gender and age were significantly interacting, with the older female candidates rated as less hireable than the older male candidates. However, this finding was not replicated in study two (with

explanations for these mixed results considered in more detail in the discussion chapter). Nonetheless, it indicates that older workers should potentially not be thought of, or treated, as a homogenous group. This is an important finding as much of the previous research in this area has tended to focus on the impact of age in isolation (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Özbilgin et al, 2011). Yet, in reality it may be that employees, and/or prospective employees, are not being categorised as simply 'younger' or 'older'. Instead, different characteristics, such as their gender, may be interacting with their age, which then means that theoretical explanations for any discrimination need to account for this intersectionality (instead of solely focusing on the age of older workers).

This thesis proposed that when rating the hireability of older job candidates, that decision makers would likely be impacted by a number of influences (that exist at different conceptual levels), and, that as a result, it is difficult to divorce these factors from one another. Study one found as expected that decision makers were being influenced by age stereotypes, with those decision makers who scored more highly for age stereotyping then more likely to rate the older candidates negatively. As such, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) was used to posit that this occurrence was due to the decision makers viewing the older candidates as out-group (with the explanation being that when a person categorises another person as outgroup then they have a tendency to use stereotypes as a means of predicting behaviour).

Study two found some, albeit imperfect, evidence that the organisational environment in which the decision maker was based may have influenced their hiring decisions (in relation to the hireability rating of the older job candidates). Results indicated that team age

diversity climate may have acted as an influence on decision makers, with those decision makers who were based in teams with climates that were negative towards age diversity then rating the older candidates as less hireable. While there are obvious limitations to this evidence (due to not quite achieving the *p.*05 significance level), this has the potential to be a key finding as it shows that although, as suspected, individual biases (such as age stereotypes) may be influencing hiring decision makers, that also, factors such as the team in which the decision maker is based, may also influence the likelihood of them hiring or not an older worker. This result also potentially explains why theories such as Terror Management Theory (Becker, 1971, 1973, 1975) and Career Timetable Theory (Lawrence, 1988) have been limited in their ability to adequately explain the prevalence of age discrimination in the workplace, due to fact that these theories do not take into that there are multiple different influences on hiring decision-makers, that exist at different levels.

A further noteworthy finding from this thesis is that for both studies, the age of the participants themselves was not acting as a significant predictor of hireability for the older job candidates (meaning that older participants were just as likely to rate the older job candidates as less hireable as the younger participants). This is an interesting finding, as from one perspective it is consistent with research that has found older workers are just as likely to engage in negative age stereotyping as younger workers (Kite et al, 2005). Yet, also, this finding could be considered somewhat at odds with a Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987), which is the theoretical framework which underpins this thesis (as this approach would suggest that older participants may view older candidates as 'in group' and potentially be biased towards those candidates etc.). How then can this finding be explained? A potential explanation could be based on a notion that was

raised in the opening chapters, which is just because from a chronological perspective a person could be classified as an 'older worker', that in actual fact they may not perceive themselves to be an older worker (Jackall, 1978). This is because in the context of the workplace it could be deemed an identity that is detrimental to their self-esteem (and so they distance themselves from that identity role). As such, this could mean the potential benefits that in-group members receive (e.g. less likely to be stereotypes and higher affect etc.) are less likely to be experienced by older workers (as the likelihood of them being categorised as outgroup is high). Accordingly, the findings from study one and two could indicate that it is not only younger workers who may be biased again older workers, and that instead older workers may also be classifying prospective older job candidates as out-group.

While findings from both studies make notable contributions to the literature on older workers, there were other hypotheses that were not supported, but may still make a contribution. For example, it has been claimed that the lack of understanding about how affect towards older workers may be impacting on the position of older workers, constitutes a significant gap in the literature on age discrimination (Finkelstein, 2015). Accordingly, study one explored whether affect towards older workers was influencing the hireability ratings of older workers (with the prediction being that those participants who lacked affect for older workers would then be more likely to rate the older candidates as less hireable). However, results did not support this hypothesis. As such, while explanations for these results were explored in detail in the discussion chapter, this finding could contribute to the literature on age discrimination, as it indicates that affect is possibly not a key influencing

factor (with respect of older workers), or that it was not sufficient accessed in this study. Nonetheless, both these possibilities warrant further investigation.

Study two did not find support for organisational age culture (or individual perception of organisational culture) to be influencing hiring decision makers. Does this then mean that if an organisation has a culture that is more, or less, supportive of older workers that this does not influence hiring decisions in these organisations? This seems unlikely. Firstly, there were certain methodological weaknesses, which suggest that these findings should be interpreted with caution (e.g. it is possibly that the organisations' true cultures may not have been accessed). Furthermore, the sizes and types of organisation that were used in study two (e.g. large and geographically dispersed organisations) could also explain why culture was less influential. As such, the lack of support in study two for organisational factors to be acting as a significant influence, should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence that these factors are not influencing hiring decision makers.

10.10. Practical Implications

The findings from study one and two provide strong evidence, that in recruitment and selection scenarios, decision-makers may be less likely to hire older candidates (with older candidates rated less hireable than other aged candidates in both studies). Consequently, and assuming the older candidates were rated less hireable because of their age, this constitutes as age discrimination, and contravenes the 2010 Equality Act (which protects people from discrimination on the basis of their age). Thus, this then leaves organisations vulnerable to the costly and reputation damaging process of age discrimination tribunals,

which means that reducing the likelihood of age discrimination occurring should be a priority for all organisations.

An additional implication of favouring younger over older candidates, is that by avoiding employing older workers, organisations could be denying themselves access to a rapidly increasing pool of candidates (as they will only be selecting from a limited pool of younger candidates). In consequence, this could mean that they are limiting the likelihood of them hiring the 'best candidate', as the most suitable candidate for a particular job could be an older worker. Moreover, this may be even more important, as it has been claimed that organisations are potentially going to face a skills shortage when the baby boomer generation retires (Ng & Law, 2014). Thus, recruiting older candidates, or simply not being averse to employing older candidates, could be a way to mitigate against a potential impending skills shortage, and give organisations access to a wider choice of candidates.

How then can organisations be less averse to hiring older workers? This thesis found that the hireability ratings of older job candidates were influenced by a number of different factors, including the decision makers' personal attitudes toward older workers (e.g. whether they ascribed to age stereotypes etc.), and their organisational environment (such as the climate of the team in which they were based).

Beginning with age stereotypes, there are potentially a number of ways that organisations can mitigate against their influence. For example, organisations may need to engage specific diversity management strategies, such as employee training etc. This training could then assist those who are responsible for hiring decisions, to challenge their own

stereotypical beliefs about older workers by showing them that the content of age stereotypes has been found to be spurious. A further way that organisations could potentially limit the likelihood of age stereotypes influencing decision-makers, is to allow the decision-makers adequate time to evaluate prospective candidates (or encourage them not to rush this process). This is because it has been suggested that individuals may be more influenced by stereotypes in time limited situations (due to the fact that we engage them as a cognitive short-cut) (Karpinska et al, 2011). Moreover, decision-makers should also be encouraged to evaluate the entirety of a candidate's application and not, to make a decision on a candidate from just part of their application (e.g. based on limited information). Accordingly, by taking adequate time, and basing their evaluation on all the available information about a candidate to decision-makers may be less influenced by age stereotypes.

Organisations can potentially also reduce the likelihood of age stereotypes having an impact on decision-makers, by utilising diversity focused recruitment methods like panel selection (e.g. using multiple people to evaluate prospective candidates). This is because it was proposed that the tendency, in both study one and two, of hiring decision makers to rate older job candidates as less hireable, could be because the decision-makers categorised the older candidates as out-group. This then made a reliance on stereotypes to predict behaviour more likely. However, utilising panel selection means that organisations can create panels of decisions makers that represent the potential diversity of a candidate pool. This would hopefully mean that members of the panel challenge each other's biases (because who they view as in group and out group will naturally differ) and that no single person makes a definitive choice about the candidates (a choice which could be influenced

by their social identity). Nonetheless, it should be highlighted that firstly, the use of panel selection is far more feasible in larger organisations, which have the resources to engage multiple people in selection decisions. As such, smaller organisations may be less able or willing to utilise this method. Secondly, some organisations may choose to only adopt this method for high value recruitment, but deem it a costly and unnecessary process for lower level recruitment. Accordingly, it could then be that smaller organisations, and the recruitment of job roles which could be considered as lower skilled, may be situations that are particularly vulnerable to the impact of age stereotypes.

A further consideration, in relation to the use of panel selection, is that the aim of the panel is to ideally be representative of a candidate pool (e.g. male, female, BAME etc.) (Shen et al, 2009). Yet, the findings from study one and two found that the age of the decision maker was not influencing the hireability ratings of the older job candidates (with it being posited that older people may actually distance themselves from the identity of 'older worker' due to its negative connotations). This means that simply including a person who from a chronological perspective could be classified as an older worker, may not produce the desired effect of that person perceiving older candidates as in-group. Thus, panel selection methods may be less effective for older workers than other minority groups and organisations could have to adopt more radical methods to encourage greater age diversity (and avoid the costly process of age discrimination tribunals). These could include automatically inviting all older candidates to interview (so as to avoid older candidates failing at the short-listing stage), or specifically targeting older workers in recruitment drives.

Nonetheless, while individual level factors such as age stereotypes were found to influence hiring decisions, the organisational environment in which decision makers were based was also found to have potentially influenced hiring decision makers. This is because the results from study two, provided some indication that team age diversity climate was influencing the hiring decisions within teams (e.g. influencing the team leaders). As such, if organisations want to attempt to reduce the likelihood of age discrimination occurring in teams, then it may be helpful for them to look at the amount of actual diversity within teams. If they then identify teams that lack age diversity (either the members are all young or of a similar age) then organisations can potentially direct diversity management strategies (and resources) towards teams that may need these interventions. Interventions could then be stereotype training for the team leader (to reduce the likelihood of out-group bias having an impact on their decision-making); or an examination of the formal practices utilised in the team (such as who is being put forward for training and development in that team); and informal practices that are taking place within that team (social events etc.). A further possible strategy that organisations could employ to reduce the impact of team-related factors is to include an additional decision maker who resides outside of the team. This would then mean that the actions and attitudes of the team leader, and the climate within a specific team, may be less likely to influence a decision-maker who is not based in that team. This suggestion is however, clearly more feasible in organisations that are larger or that have separate Human Resource departments, and may be more difficult to implement in smaller organisations.

As well as providing evidence regarding some of factors that may be influencing hiring decision makers (in relation to older job candidates), there were also other findings from

the study one and two that may have important implications for organisations. For example, study one found age had a greater negative effect on the hireability of the older female candidates (e.g. they were rated as less hireable than the older male candidates). However, while this finding was not replicated in study two, and, as such, more evidence may be needed to clarity this effect, it could suggest that older females may be more disadvantaged than older males. This is a worrying finding, as research has long shown than women face widespread inequality in the workplace (Hideg & Krstic, 2021), and the findings from study one could suggest that, as they age, they may then be more likely than older males to also face age discrimination. Thus, organisations will need to ensure that older women do not become a marginalised group in the workplace, and that any strategies or interventions they implement to try to reduce age discrimination, benefit both older men and older women.

Evidence was also found in study one that age had a stronger negative effect on the hireability of the candidates who were degree educated, with it being proposed that a potential reason for this could be because those candidates were perceived as being over-qualified (as there was no mention of a degree being necessary for the job that was being recruited). Accordingly, this finding was linked to previous research on over-qualified job candidates, which shows that they tend to be evaluated negatively and perceived as difficult to manage (Erdogan et al, 2011; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). As such, the combination of being older and over-qualified could be a particularly damaging combination for some job candidates and organisation needs to be aware of the increased potential for discrimination against these candidates.

Lastly, study one used an explicit marker of age in the candidate profiles (e.g. the candidate's age was stated in the vignettes), whereas for study two ages were not given and the decision makers were left to infer the candidate's age from other information that provided (dates of schooling etc.). Nonetheless, the results from both studies found that older job candidates were rated as less hireable than the other aged candidates. Thus, this finding is consistent with previous research which found the concealing of age resulted in older applicants being rated as even less hireable than when it was explicitly provided (Derous & Decoster, 2017). This is an interesting finding for organisations, as since the creation of legislation such as 2010 equality and diversity act, it has become more common for protected characteristics to be removed from job applications (Foley & Williamson, 2018). Yet, these results suggest that hiring decision makers take cues about age from other identity markers, which suggests that application processes need to be explored to see how different identity makers could be practically removed from applications to make them fairer. Likewise, the removal of identity markers could be more feasible in more formalised recruitment processes, but raises the question of how that could happen in less formalised recruitment. Accordingly, once again this shows that while there may be various potential practical solutions that organisations can implement to encourage hiring decision makers to be less averse to hiring older candidates, that these solutions may be difficult to implement across all organisations and sectors. Consequently, this could then add to occurrence of age discrimination being more prevalent in certain organisations/sectors.

10.11. Weaknesses/Limitations

This thesis adds to a body of literature, which indicates that older workers are a disadvantaged group in the workplace (Bal et al, 2011; Harris et al, 2018; Shore & Goldberg, 2005). This is because as people age, it is seemingly much harder for them to secure employment (Francioli & North, 2021; Neumark et al, 2015). As such, both study one and two found that when compared to equally matched younger and middle-aged candidates, that older job candidates were rated as less hireable. However, while there are various theoretical and practical contributions from these studies, they also both have some weaknesses and limitations, which will now be explored in more detail.

A key limitation of both studies stems from the difficulty with emulating a recruitment and selection process within a research design. This is because in reality, recruitment and selection processes are heavily context dependent, which means that there is considerable heterogeneity between and within organisations with respect to their enactment (Redman & Wilkinson, 2009). For instance, some organisations engage in short-listing processes, before progressing to methods such as interviews or psychometric type tests, while other organisations go straight to interviews (Cook, 2016; Newell, 2005). Likewise, some organisations have dedicated Human Resource departments, that include teams that are solely responsible for recruitment and selection decisions. Whereas In other organisations, recruitment happens in a much less structured way, with line managers and/or supervisors having the autonomy to make hiring decisions. As such, it is immensely challenging to recreate a recruitment and selection process that mirrors how this process would take place in the real-world. In addition, the two studies provided space for qualitative comments from

participants, some of whom commented that in their organisation, recruitment and selection took a particular form which was not matched by the process used in the study. Thus, this should be taken into account when seeking to make generalisations about what may (or may not) be occurring in workplaces.

Another issue, that also impacts both studies, relates specifically to the design of the recruitment and selection short-listing task and the candidate profiles (e.g. the vignettes). This is because, while the job advertisement that was used in the decision-making task in study one was based on a real advert (that was taken from Indeed.com), it was limited in its scope and contained only generic details about the job role that was being recruited for. Furthermore, the candidate profiles (e.g. the vignettes) in study one only included only the following information: the candidate's name, an explicit statement about their age, a statement about whether the candidate was degree educated (or not), and what their last job role was. Accordingly, it should be highlighted that it is likely that the participants were actually rating the candidate based on less information than they would probably have in real-life. Thus, in real-life it would be expected that, firstly, the person recruiting for a role would have a better understanding of what was needed for the job role (in terms of the job specification), and secondly, would be provided with more information about the prospective job candidates (e.g. more detailed information on their job history and the skills and qualifications they possessed). Therefore, it has to be considered that in this context age stereotypes may have had more of an impact on decision-makers, than they would have had in real-life.

In relation to study two, the job advertisement also included only limited information (e.g. the name of the organisation, team, and job role etc.). This was to ensure adequate statistical control and also because it was expected that the decision maker would have some knowledge of what was needed from a candidate to fulfil that role (e.g. they would have some awareness of the job specification as it was a real role in a team that they actually managed). Yet, once again, this resulted in the participants potentially evaluating candidates with less information than they may usually have in a normal selection process, and could have made reliance on stereotypes more likely. This is because previous research has found stereotypes to be more influential when people are given inadequate or limited information about another person (Karpinska et al, 2011).

An additional shortcoming of both studies was that the candidates were categorised into age groups (e.g. younger, middle-aged, older), with this technique being utilised due to the fact that there is not a firm consensus on when a person becomes an 'older worker' and in fact 'older' tends to encompass a range of ages (McCarthy et al, 2014). Nonetheless, grouping people by age does not allow us to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the point (or age) at which a candidate is perceived as older. For example, some of the older candidates may not actually have been perceived as older by the decision makers, instead they may have been perceived as middle-aged. Likewise, some of middle-aged candidates might have been perceived as older. Consequently, one of the weaknesses of this study is that it treats the 'older' group as a homogenous group (in respect of their age). This is because it assumes that the outcome for a candidate in their fifties will be the same as the outcome for someone in their sixties, whereas, in reality, it could be likely that any age discrimination that older candidates face, may intensify as they get older. Furthermore, for

candidates who are at the younger end of the older spectrum, there may be other factors (e.g. their gender etc.) that could have a greater influence on their perceived hireability. Operationalising the relative categories of older and younger workers is, therefore, a considerable challenge for researchers hoping to examine the impact of age on hireability.

A further limitation of this thesis was the lack of support for some of the mechanisms used to explain the findings. Both studies were framed by a Social Identity approach (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) and it was suggested that an explanation for the participant's tendency to rate the older candidates as less hireable, would be due to participants categorising the older candidates as 'out-group'. Additionally, participants who agreed with the content of age stereotypes, were more likely to rate the older candidates as less hireable, which was also attributed to them categorising older candidates as out-group.

Study two measured how much each team leader identified with their respective team (to establish if team identity was moderating the relationship between team climate and hiring decisions). However, it could have been to beneficial to also ask the participants in both studies other potentially relevant identity questions, such as if they actually viewed themselves as an older, younger or middle-aged worker, or if they saw themselves as similar or dissimilar to each job candidate. As such, this could have provided additional support for the use of Social Identity (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987) framework. In consequence, suggestions for how further research could incorporate these mechanisms is explored in the 'Future Directions' section.

A weakness for both studies was that the prospective job candidates varied according to a limited number of controlled factors. However, in real life, there are many ways in which candidates could differ, including social and demographical characteristics that are also protected by law. For example, it may be that factors such as ethnicity, disability status, religion, and sexual orientation could also influence decision-makers. Moreover, some of these other protected characteristics could be even more influential on decision-makers, or could moderate the impact of the candidate's age (e.g. a person's disability status or ethnicity could decrease or increase the impact of their age). As a result, it is difficult to generalise about the findings of these studies with regards to older workers, as in reality, a candidate pool is likely to vary by many more factors than just age and gender.

There are additional limitations of the two studies, some of which have been discussed previously (e.g. methodological weaknesses), which will now also be explored. Firstly, the fact that study two was carried out with only 50 teams, when it had been expected that there would be a much higher number of participating teams. However, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to get any more data from the host organisations. From a statistical power perspective, this number of teams is quite low, and it could have impacted on the likelihood of obtaining significant results (for the team age diversity climate hypotheses) (Mathieu et al, 2012).

A limitation regarding the aggregation of the age diversity climate scale was also raised in the methodology chapter. This is because certain assumptions need to be met before such variable aggregation can take place Results from these tests found the ICC2 to be .39, with anything below .40 considered to reflect poor reliability of the measure. Therefore, to

check that aggregation was appropriate in this instance, the rWG statistic was used (which had acceptable results). Moreover, a relatively high team-member response rate was used (75%) before responses were aggregated (Dawson, 2003). However, this should still be highlighted as a potential statistical limitation.

A final limitation, was the use of an organisational level variable (organisational age culture) at the individual level. This is because it has been claimed it problematic to assume that the views of individual employees are shared across entire organisations (Hofstefe, 1985). As such, one of the key difficulties with study two, was not having the necessary resources to measure this variable at the conceptual level for which it was designed. This means that using the results from this study as an indication that organisational factors are not influencing decision-makers (as this hypothesis was not supported) may be challenging due to the design of the study.

10.12. Future Directions

The aim of this thesis was to better understand the factors that may be influencing hiring decision makers, in relation to the recruitment and selection of older workers. Accordingly, evidence was found that both individual and team-level factors were influencing decision makers. Moreover, results also found that there were additional characteristics of some of older job candidates, that worsened the impact of their age (e.g. their gender and their educational status). Nonetheless, while the two studies produced several important findings, they also revealed that there are additional potential avenues that could be explored in future studies.

The first potential future research area relates to one of the limitations, which is that in both studies, older workers consisted of a range of candidates from 55 years old to in their 60s (with the oldest age in study one being 65 years old). As such, more research needs to be undertaken to understand who is actually being categorised as older, and, whether that categorisation (and any outcomes that result from that categorisation) are consistent for people in that age group. For example, will the experiences of someone who is 55 years old necessarily be the same as someone who is 65 years old? Is there an age at which age discrimination accelerates or becomes almost inevitable? Thus, due to the fact that the labour market is going to become more much age diverse, further research is needed to explore some of these questions.

A second area that warrants further investigation is the intersection of age with other protected characteristics. This is because while Ramajaran (2014) claims that quantitative organisational research on intersectionality is in its infancy, the results from study one were consistent with previous studies (Duncan & Loretto, 2004) that have found older women may be more likely to face age discrimination than older men. Nonetheless, study two did not find a significant interaction between gender and age, which suggests further studies are needed to clarify the intersection of the age and gender. In addition, there are other potential intersections that could warrant further investigation. For instance, the intersection of age with ethnicity, and age with disability status, are two potential areas for future studies. This is because there is some cross over between age stereotypes, and stereotypes regarding people with a disability in the workplace (e.g. both groups are

stereotyped as lacking competence in the workplace) (Rohmer & Louvet, 2018), which could feasibly result in people who members of both groups facing even greater marginalisation.

Future research is also needed to understand the impact of both team and organisational influences on hiring decision makers. Accordingly, study two attempted to establish if perception of organisational age culture was influencing decisions and results showed that this was not moderating decision making. However, not only was an organisational level measure utilised at the individual level (e.g. as perception of organisational age culture), but also, the measure itself may not have been comprehensive enough to access the organisations' true cultures. As such, further research is needed to understand how certain values or practices, which may be embedded into organisations, that could be influencing hiring practices. As it seems extremely unlikely given variations in age discrimination by sector (Arrowsmith & McGoldrick, 1996), that organisational factors are not having an impact on recruitment and selection.

Study two also provided some limited evidence that team age diversity climate measured at the team level was influencing team hiring decisions. Even so, potentially due to the relatively small number of teams that took part in the study, the results did not quite meet the significant level cut-off (p=05). Thus, additional research is needed to clarify this result (with a larger sample size to increase power etc.). Furthermore, it was also posited earlier in the discussion chapter, that it could be the team leader who is influencing the climate in a team, however, what then happens to that climate when the team gets a new leader? Does it still influence the new leader or does the team develop a new climate? If so, how long

does it take for that climate to become influential? These are all factors that could be investigated in future studies.

An additional area for future research could also be to explore how the actual age profile, in organisations and teams, impacts on the recruitment and selection of older workers. For example, it has been posited that high levels of diversity can be viewed from both a positive and negative perspective, and that this perspective could vary depending on whether cohesiveness or innovation/creativity is viewed as more important for a team (Van Knippenberg & Schippers, 2007). Thus, future studies could explore whether organisations (and teams) that are limited in their age diversity are actually averse to employing older workers, and, if this reluctance is due to the composition of their workforce (or team).

Future studies could include a further exploration of the tri-partite model of bias (in relation to bias towards older workers). This because this model proposes that bias against a minority group consists of cognitive elements (e.g. stereotypes) and affective elements (Fiske, 2004). However, the results from study one were inconsistent with this model, in that they found age stereotypes to be influencing the hireability of the older job candidates, yet, affect towards older workers was not acting as a significant influencing factor. As such, this could suggest that the concept of 'affect' may be not implicated in the hireability of older workers, or, more likely that it is simply was not sufficiently accessed in this study. Accordingly, it was suggested in the discussion chapter that affect could be particularly vulnerable to socially desirable responding, because admitting to negative feelings about a minority group could be perceived as more of a social norm violation than agreeing to the content of age stereotypes. Moreover, a unipolar approach to the concept of affect

(separate positive affect and negative affect scales) could be more appropriate for future studies, to establish whether either positive or negative affect independently influences hiring decisions makers. This then means that future studies may need to find a better way of accessing or measuring this concept, while limiting the likelihood of socially desirable responding.

Lastly, it was highlighted in the 'Weaknesses/Limitations' section that one assumption drawn from Social Identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987), was that the participants self-categorisation of themselves as different from the older candidates, would result in them rating the older candidates as less hireable. However, it was not possible to provide support for this mechanism because the participants' perceptions of their own social identity were not measured (e.g. whether they themselves identified as an older worker etc.). As such, future research could attempt to confirm this theoretical proposition by asking the participants if they viewed themselves as a younger or older worker or even if they categorised the candidates as being similar or dissimilar to each candidate. Furthermore, this could also allow deeper exploration of the 'older worker' identity, to establish if this is an identity role that people actually distance themselves from in the workplace (due to its possible negative connotations).

11. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to attempt to establish a better understanding of the different factors that, with regards to older workers, may influence hiring decision-makers in recruitment and selection processes. Two studies were undertaken, which were both underpinned by a Social Identity framework (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al, 1987). The first study was based in a university setting and explored the impact of individual-level factors, such as age stereotypes, on hiring decision makers. The second study was based across four organisations and examined whether team and organisational level factors were also acting as an influence on decision makers. Both studies adopted an intersectional approach to the study of age discrimination.

Results from both studies found that older job candidates were consistently rated less hireable than younger or middle-aged candidates. Study one found that age stereotypes significantly moderated the relationship between candidate age and hireability ratings, for older job candidates. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) was then used to explain that when decision makers categorised a job candidate as out-group, they may have had a tendency to rely on stereotypes to predict that candidate's behaviour, which was detrimental for the older candidates as age stereotypes are generally derogatory in content about older workers.

Study two provided some indication that team-level factors had influenced recruitment and selection decisions (with those decision makers who were based in teams with a climate that was less positive about age diversity, then more likely to rate the older candidates as less hireable). Moreover, while there were limitations to this evidence, it is potentially a key finding, as it shows that age discrimination may not be as a result of individual biases against older workers, but that contextual workplace factors may be having a significant influence on hiring decisions.

Both studies used an intersectional lens to explore the intersection of age with other characteristics of the older job candidates. Moreover, while intersectionality has been adopted by other disciplines (e.g. sociology etc.), with regards to quantitative organisational studies, it is still not a dominant approach (Ramajaran, 2014). Nonetheless, results from study one indicated that older job candidates may have other characteristics that could lessen or increase the negative impact of their age. As such, this is another noteworthy finding, as it suggests that focusing on older workers as a homogenous group could oversimplify any inequality they may face.

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13. Appendices

13.1. Table of Appendices

Table 13: Table of Appendices

Appendix	Study	Description
Appendix A	Study One	Information Sheet & Consent Form
Appendix B	Study One	Debrief Form
Appendix C	Study One	The Vignettes (job candidates)
Appendix D	Study One	Stereotype Scale
Appendix E	Study One	Affect Scale
Appendix F	Study One	Ethics Letter of Approval
Appendix G	Study Two	Information Sheet & Consent Form (Decision Makers)
Appendix H	Study Two	Example Vignette (Job Candidate)
Appendix I	Study Two	Debrief Form
Appendix J	Study Two	Information Sheet & Consent Form (Team Members)
Appendix K	Study Two	Copies of Vignette Photos
Appendix L	Study Two	Age Culture Scale
Appendix M	Study Two	Age Diversity Climate Scale
Appendix N	Study Two	Team Identity Scale
Appendix O	Study Two	Ethics Letter of Approval
Appendix P	Study One	Stereotype Scale EFA
Appendix Q	Study One	Affect Scale EFA

13.2. Appendix A: Study One - Information Sheet & Online Consent

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research project, which is being conducted by Ann-marie Thomas, and supervised by Professor Penny Dick from Sheffield University Management School and Dr Eva Selenko from Loughborough University Business School.

The aim of the research & what you will have to do:
The aim of this study is to explore decision-making in a recruitment and selection process. You will be required to undertake a scenario based short-listing task, during which you will be asked to make a number of decisions based on a variety of different job candidates. After you have completed this task you will complete two short questionnaire scales, which will measure some of your attitudes. Finally, you will be asked to complete some demographic information about yourself (such as your age, gender, occupation etc.). I envisage that this study will not take longer than 30 minutes to complete.

What's in it for you?
I would like to stress that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give reason. However, as a token of my gratitude all participants who complete the study will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 Marks & Spencer gift voucher.

Still interested? Then please give your consent:
Please note that this study has been approved The University of Sheffield's ethics committee. All your data will be treated confidentially, kept in a safe place, and you will not be personally identifiable from your responses.

If you have any questions concerning this study, please contact Ann-marie Thomas at the email addresses below.

Thank you very much for your co-operation and assistance.

Ann-marie Thomas (ahthomas1@sheffield.ac.uk)

….. Yes, I want to consent

..... No, I do not want to take part

13.3. Appendix B: Study One - Debrief Form

Dear Participant

Thank-you for participating in this study. The aim of this research was to examine whether 'older' job candidates are considered less hireable in a recruitment and selection process. In addition, I am also interested in what other demographic factors could be having an influence on this hireability (gender etc.). It is expected that older job candidates (those over the age of 55 years old) will be found to be less hireable than younger or middle-aged job candidates. It is also expected that this hireability will differ by gender and educational level.

If you would like more information regarding the study, please email on ahthomas1@sheffield.ac.uk. Please note, as explained previously, you have the right to withdraw your data after completing the study, and if you wish to do so please contact me on the above email address.

All participants who completed this study will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 Marks & Spencer gift voucher. If you would like to be entered into this prize draw please provide your email address below.

Many thanks
Ann-marie Thomas

13.4. Appendix C: Study One - The Candidate Vignettes

- Jessica Lowe is 28. She is degree educated. Her last job was working as an office receptionist at a steel manufacturing company.

- Joanna Smith is 30. She has completed an NVQ qualification at sixth-form college. Her last job was as a Lifeguard at a Sports & Leisure Complex

- Sarah Davis is 25 years old. She is degree educated. Her last job was as a Stylist Assistant for a fashion company.

- Eleanor Thomas is 22 years old. She completed 10 GCSE's at school. Her last job was as an Office Assistant at a City Council Offices.

- Thomas Westeray is 28 years old. He has 2 A-Levels from sixth-form college. His last job was as an Admin Assistant at a builder's merchant.

- Jamie Spencer is 19 years old. He has 8 GCSCE qualifications from school. His last job was as a Catering Assistant in a restaurant.

- Leo Thornby is 33 years old. He is degree educated. His last job was as a Retail Assistant in a large department store.

- James Wray is 38 years old. He is degree educated. His last job was as an Office Administrator for a Mortgage company.

- Emma Long is 40 years old. She has a vocational qualification from school. Her last job was as a Retail Assistant in a womens shoe store.

- Liz Hunter is 49 years old. She is degree educated. Her last job was as a PA in an office of a law firm.

- June Knight is 45 years old. She completed a city and guilds qualification at college. Her last job was as a Secretary in an office of a bank.

- Patricia Padmore is 53 years old. She is degree educated. Her last job was as a Dental Nurse at a dental practice.

- Ben Walker is 44 years old. He has 3 A-Levels from college. His last job was as a Finance & Admin Officer at Royal Mail.

- Steven Farrell is 42 years old. He has a city and guilds qualification from college. His last job was as a Chef in a fast food restaurant.

- Richard Williams is 54 years old. He is degree educated. His last job was as an Office Manager in a small goods manufacturing company.

- Robert Patcham is 50 years old. He is degree educated. His last job was as a Nurse in the NHS.

- Mary Askill is 59 years old. She has a city and guilds certificate from college. Her last job was as a Finance & Admin Officer at an accountancy firm.

- Susannah MacArthur is 64 years old. She is degree educated. Her last job was as a Midwife in the NHS.

- Theresa Cocker is 56 years old. She has a vocational qualification from school. Her last job was as a Domestic Assistant at an elderly care home.

- Louise Glanville is 61 years old. She is degree educated. Her last job was as a Admin Assistant in a primary school.

- Michael Johnston is 58 years old. He has a vocational qualification from college. His last job was as a Domestic Assistant in a hospital.

- David Forster is 63 years old. He is degree educated. His last job was as a Finance Officer at an insurance company.

- Peter Smyth is 60 years old. He has a vocational qualification from college. His last job was as a Clerical Assistant for a city council office.

- Anthony Pollins is 65 years old. He is degree educated. His last job was as an Art Teacher in a secondary school.

13.5. Appendix D: Study One – The Age Stereotype Scale

Created and adapted from the WAS by Marcus, J., Fritzsche, B. A., Le, H., & Reeves, M. D. (2016). Validation of the work-related age-based stereotypes (WAS) scale. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *31*(5), 989-1004.

1)How competent are older people in the workplace?
2)How warm are older people in the workplace?
3)How suitable are older people for training and development in the workplace?
4)How comfortable are older people using technology in the workplace?
5)How capable are older people in the workplace?
6)How friendly are older people in the workplace?
7)How adaptable are older people in the workplace?
8)How knowledgeable are older people with regard to technology in the workplace?

13.6. Appendix E: Study One- Affect Scale

Cuddy, A. J., Fiske, S. T., & Glick, P. (2007). The BIAS map: behaviors from intergroup affect and stereotypes. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *92*(4), 631.

1)To what extent do you feel contempt towards older people in the workplace?
2)To what extent do you feel sympathy for older people in the workplace?
3) To what extent do you feel envious of older people in the workplace?
4)To what extent do you feel pity for older people in the workplace?
5)To what extent do you feel disgusted by older people in the workplace?
6)To what extent do you feel proud of older people in the workplace?
7)To what extent do you feel admirations towards older people in the workplace?
8)To what extent do you feel jealous of older people in the workplace?

13.7. Appendix F: Study One – Ethical Approval Letter

Approved: 20/12/2016

Ann-marie Thomas
Registration number: 150119362
Management School
Programme: PhD - Institute of Work Psychology

Dear Ann-marie

PROJECT TITLE: Pilot Study: Examining the hirability of older workers, and the intersectionality effects of age with gender, and socioeconomic status.
APPLICATION: Reference Number 011863

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 20/12/2016 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 011863 (form submission date: 14/12/2016); (expected project end date: 01/01/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1024891 version 2 (13/12/2016).
- Participant consent form 1024892 version 2 (13/12/2016).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Roberts
Ethics Administrator
Management School

13.8. Appendix G: Study Two – Information Sheet & Online Consent (Decision Makers)

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to take part in this research project, which is being conducted by Ann-marie Thomas Kent, who is a PhD researcher at The University of Sheffield's Management School. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why this research is taking place, and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

1)What is the purpose of this research?
Ann-marie's PhD is focused on recruitment and selection within organisations in the UK. She is interested in understanding how and why certain candidates are selected over others, and some of the processes that might explain this decision-making.

2)Why have you been chosen to participate and do you have to participate?
You are being contacted because your employer is one of several organisations who have agreed to take part in this research study. Also, you are a team-leader/supervisor and/or your employer has indicated that you are responsible for hiring decisions within your organisation. It is important to stress that you do not have to take part in this research if you do not want to. However, your response to the questionnaires/tasks and any views/opinions you share will be treated confidentially, and nothing that can personally identify you (or any other employee) will be included in this study or provided by Ann-marie to your employer.

3)What will happen if you take part and what will you have to do?
If you do choose to take part then you will be required to complete two tasks. For the first task, you will be required to complete a short-listing exercise during which you will be presented with a job advertisement and asked to choose between several potential job candidates. You will also be required to answer some brief question about yourself (such as your age, gender etc.). You will then complete two short questionnaires, which measure how strongly you identify with your employing organisation, and the culture within your organisation.

4)What are the possible benefits and disadvantages of taking part?
Whilst I don't foresee any immediate disadvantages to taking part in the study, you will be required to complete the tasks alongside your daily work tasks, therefore, if you feel unable to take time away from your work, then please feel free to ignore this email. However, if you would like to take part then your response will form the basis of Ann-marie's PhD research, which she hopes will have a positive impact on people's experiences in the workplace.

5)If you take part in this study will it be kept confidential?
Your responses to the tasks/questionnaires and any other information I collect about you during the course of this research (such as your age and gender) will be accessible only to Ann-marie and her supervisors: Professor Penny Dick and Dr Eva Selenko (contact details below). All your data will be treated confidentially, kept in a safe place, and you will not be personally identifiable from your responses.

6)What will happen to the data collected and the results of this study?
All the responses collected as part of this research study will inform Ann-marie's PhD studies. However, it is also likely that the results of this study will be published in an Academic Journal. If it is the case, then I would like to stress once more than neither Next (as an organisation) or you individually will be identifiable in any published articles.

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be in the University's privacy notice at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general. The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

7)Who has ethically reviewed this project?
This research project has been ethically approved via The University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by Sheffield University Management School.

8)What if something goes wrong and you wish to complain about this research?
If you have any complaints about either this research project or Ann-marie's conduct while collecting your data then please contact her supervisor, Professor Penny Dick on p.dick@sheffield.ac.uk

9)Who should you contact for any further information or if you have any questions?
Finally, if you have any questions about the study or require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact either Ann-marie (using the contact details below) or either of her Supervisors (Professor Penny Dick on p.dick@sheffield.ac.uk or Dr Eva Selenko on (e.selenko@loughbough.ac.uk). You can also contact [redacted] or [redacted] at [redacted].

Thank-you very much for your cooperation and assistance.

Ann-marie Thomas Kent (ahthomas@sheffield.ac.uk)

….. Yes, I want to consent

..... No, I do not want to take part

13.9. Appendix H: Study Two – Example Vignette (Job Candidate)

David Smith
12 Cornish Place, Blithfield, B6 3YX

Education/Qualifications:

1969 – 1974 Daneton Community School - O-Levels
1980 - Degree Qualification

Work History:

Manufacturing company – Marketing Officer
· Employed as a Marketing Officer for a Manufacturing company

Industrial Machinery company - Marketing Assistant
· Employed as a Marketing Assistant for an Industrial Machinery company

13.10. Appendix I: Study Two – Debrief Form

Dear Participant,

Thank-you for participating in this study. You will now be given some additional information about the research.

In the Information Sheet you were provided with prior to completing this research study, it was explained to you that I am interested in recruitment and selection in the workplace. Yet, what was not made clear was that I am actually interested in the selection of older workers (in particular those who are over the age of 55 years). This is because my PhD is exploring the experiences of older people in the workplace and attempting to establish how organisations within the UK can incorporate a more age diverse workforce in the future.

If you would like more information regarding the study (including more details on the results), please feel free to contact me on ahthomas1@sheffield.ac.uk. Additionally, if you have any complaints about either this research study or my conduct then please contact my supervisor Professor Penny Dick on p.dick@sheffield.ac.uk.

Finally, as previously explained, you have the right to withdraw your data after completing the questionnaires/tasks, and if you wish to do so please contact me on the above email address up to one month after your completion.

Thank-you again for your participation and assistance.

Ann-marie Thomas Kent

13.11. Appendix J: Study Two – Information Sheet & Consent Form (Team Members)

Dear Participant,

1)What is the purpose of this research?
You are being invited to take part in this research project, which is being conducted by Ann-marie Thomas Kent, who is a PhD researcher at The University of Sheffield's Management School. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why this research is taking place, and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully and ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. The overall aim of this research study is to explore how older and younger workers are viewed within your workplace, and how organisations can better support their employees as they age.

2)Why have you been chosen to participate and do you have to participate?
You are being contacted because your employer is one of several organisations who have agreed to take part in this research study. However, it is important to stress that you do not have to take part in this research if you do not want to. Your response to the questionnaire and any views/opinions you share will be treated confidentially, and nothing that can personally identify you (or any other employee at [redacted]) will be included in this study or provided by Ann-marie to your employer.

3) What will happen if you take part and what will you have to do?
If you choose to participate in this study then you will be required to complete a short questionnaire, which is mainly multiple-choice questions, however, at the end you will have a chance to provide any further views you may have on this topic. I will also ask your gender and your age. I envisage that this will take you no longer than 10 minutes.

4)What are the possible benefits and disadvantages of taking part?
Whilst I don't foresee any immediate disadvantages to you taking part in the study, you will be required to complete the questionnaire alongside your daily work tasks, therefore, if you feel unable to take time away from your work, then please feel free to ignore this email. However, if you would like to share your views confidentially, then your response will form the basis of Ann-marie's PhD research, which she hopes will have a positive impact on people's experiences at work.

5)**If you take part in this study will it be kept confidential?**
Your responses to the questionnaires and any other information I collect about you during the course of this research (such as your age and gender etc.) will be accessible only to Ann-marie and her supervisors: Professor Penny Dick and Dr Eva Selenko (contact details below). All your data will be treated confidentially, kept in a safe place, and you will not be personally identifiable from your responses.

6) What will happen to the data collected and the results of this study?
All the responses collected as part of this research study will inform Ann-marie's PhD studies. However, it is also likely that the results of this study will be published in an Academic Journal. If it is the case, then I would like to stress once more that neither [redacted] (as an organisation) or you individually will be identifiable in any published articles. According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be in the University's privacy notice at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

7)Who has ethically reviewed this project?
This research project has been ethically approved via The University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by Sheffield University Management School.

8)What if something goes wrong and you wish to complain about this research?
If you have any complaints about either this research project or Ann-marie's conduct while collecting your data then please contact her supervisor, Professor Penny Dick on p.dick@sheffield.ac.uk

9)Who should you contact for any further information or if you have any questions?
Finally, if you have any questions about the study or require any further information then please do not hesitate to contact either Ann-marie (using the contact details below) or either of her Supervisors (Professor Penny Dick on p.dick@sheffield.ac.uk or Dr Eva Selenko on (e.selenko@loughbough.ac.uk). You can also contact [redacted]

Thank-you very much for your cooperation and assistance.

Ann-marie Thomas Kent (ahthomas@sheffield.ac.uk)

…… Yes, I want to consent

…….. No, I do not want to take part

13.12. Appendix K: Study Two – Copies of Vignette Photos






13.13. Appendix L: Study Two – Age Culture Scale

Zacher, H., & Gielnik, M. M. (2014). Organisational age cultures: The interplay of chief executive officers age and attitudes toward younger and older employees. *International Small Business Journal*, *32*(3), 327-349.

1)In our company, older employees are seen as efficient

2)In our company, older employees are seen as flexible

3)In our company, older employees are seen as motivated

4)In our company, older employees are seen as high in initiative

5)In our company, older employees are seen as reliable

6)In our company, younger employees are seen as efficient

7)In our company, younger employees are seen as flexible

8)In our company, younger employees are seen as motivated

9)In our company, younger employees are seen as high in initiative

10)In our company, younger employees are seen as reliable

13.14. Appendix M: Study Two – Age Diversity Climate Scale

Pugh, S. D., Dietz, J., Brief, A. P., & Wiley, J. W. (2008). Looking inside and out: The impact of employee and community demographic composition on organizational diversity climate. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(6), 1422-1428.

Boehm, S. A., Kunze, F., & Bruch, H. (2014). Spotlight on age-diversity climate: The impact of age-inclusive HR practices on firm-level outcomes. *Personnel Psychology*, *67*(3), 667-704.

1)Our team makes it easy for people from diverse age groups to fit in and be accepted

2)In my team, employees are developed and advanced without regard to the age of the individual

3)My immediate manager/supervisor demonstrates through his/her actions that they want to hire and retain an age diverse workforce

4)I feel that my immediate manager/supervisor does a good job of managing people with diverse backgrounds in terms of age

13.15. Appendix N: Study Two – Team Identity Scale

Mael, F., & Ashforth, B. E. (1992). Alumni and their alma mater: A partial test of the reformulated model of organizational identification. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour, 13*(2), 103-123.

1)When someone criticises my team it feels like a personal insult

2)I am very interested in what others think about my team

3)When I talk about my team, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'

4)Team successes are my successes

5)When someone praises my team it feels like a personal compliment

13.16. Appendix O: Study Two – Ethics Letters of Approval

Two letters of approval (as ethics amendment made to add an organisation).

Downloaded: 11/04/2023
Approved: 10/10/2019

Ann-marie Thomas
Registration number: 150119362
Management School
Programme: PhD Management School

Dear Ann-marie

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the impact of organisational culture & climate on the recruitment and selection of older workers
APPLICATION: Reference Number 030770

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 10/10/2019 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 030770 (form submission date: 10/10/2019); (expected project end date: 30/01/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1070992 version 3 (10/10/2019).
- Participant information sheet 1070993 version 3 (10/10/2019).
- Participant consent form 1070995 version 3 (10/10/2019).
- Participant consent form 1070994 version 3 (10/10/2019).

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Sophie May
Ethics Administrator
Management School

Downloaded: 11/04/2023
Approved: 03/07/2020

Ann-marie Thomas
Registration number: 150119362
Management School
Programme: PhD

Dear Ann-marie

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the impact of organisational culture & climate on recruitment and selection processes
APPLICATION: Reference Number 035003

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 03/07/2020 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 035003 (form submission date: 01/07/2020); (expected project end date: 01/09/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1079804 version 1 (25/05/2020).
- Participant information sheet 1079803 version 1 (25/05/2020).
- Participant consent form 1079807 version 1 (25/05/2020).
- Participant consent form 1079806 version 1 (25/05/2020).

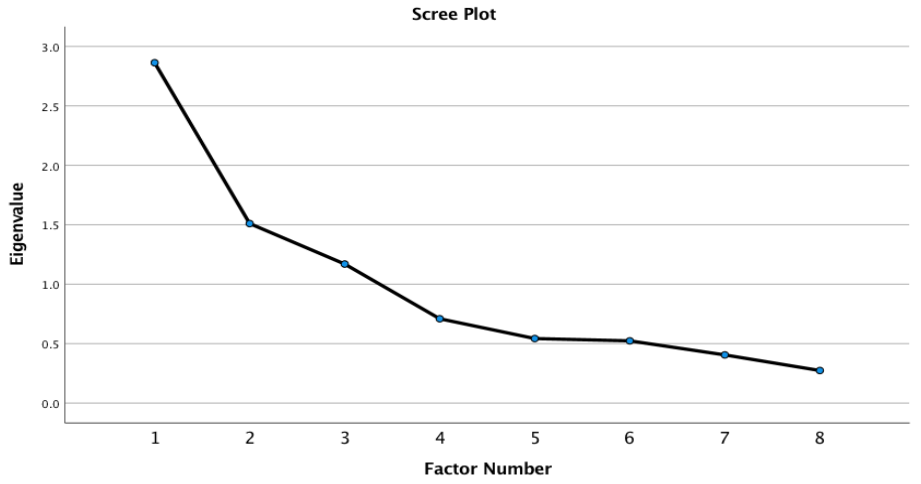
If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Your responsibilities in delivering this research project are set out at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Patterson
Ethics Administrator
Management School

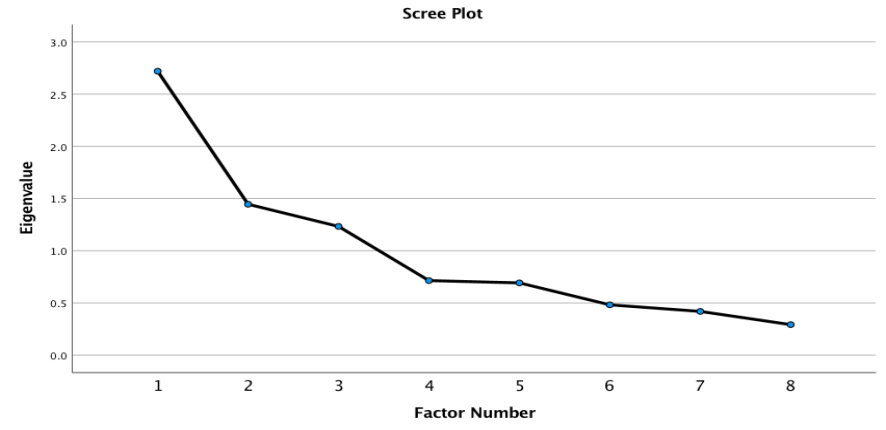
13.17. Appendix P: Study One – Stereotype EFA



	Rotated Factor Loadings		
	Factor 1 Technical/Adaptability Skills	Factor 2 Competence	Factor 3 Interpersonal skills
How knowledgeable are older people with regard to technology in the workplace?	.86		
How comfortable are older people using technology in the workplace?	.79		
How adaptable are older people in the workplace?	.59		
How suitable are older people for training and development in the workplace?	.49	.41	
How capable are older people in the workplace?		.79	
How competent are older people in the workplace?		.51	

		.81
How friendly are older people in the workplace?		
		.64
How warm are older people in the workplace?		

13.18. Appendix Q: Study One – Affect EFA



	Rotated Factor Loadings		
	Factor 1 Pity/contempt	Factor 2 Jealousy	Factor 3 Admiration
To what extent do you feel pity for older people in the workplace?	.87		
To what extent do you feel sympathy for older people in the workplace?	.60		
To what extent do you feel contempt towards older people in the workplace?	.48		
To what extent do you feel disgusted by older people in the workplace?	.43		
To what extent do you feel jealous of older people in the workplace?		.88	
To what extent do you feel envious of older people in the workplace?		.72	

	.74
To what extent do you feel admirations towards older people in the workplace?	
	.67
To what extent do you feel proud of older people in the workplace?	