



Eyal Gringart
Edward Helmes
Craig Speelman

The Role of Stereotypes in Age Discrimination in Hiring:

Evaluation and Intervention

 **LAMBERT**
Academic Publishing

Eyal Gringart
Edward Helmes
Craig Speelman

The Role of Stereotypes in Age Discrimination in Hiring:

Eyal Gringart
Edward Helmes
Craig Speelman

**The Role of Stereotypes in Age
Discrimination in Hiring:**

Evaluation and Intervention

Lambert Academic Publishing

Impressum/Imprint (nur für Deutschland/ only for Germany)

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek: Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Alle in diesem Buch genannten Marken und Produktnamen unterliegen warenzeichen-, marken- oder patentrechtlichem Schutz bzw. sind Warenzeichen oder eingetragene Warenzeichen der jeweiligen Inhaber. Die Wiedergabe von Marken, Produktnamen, Gebrauchsnamen, Handelsnamen, Warenbezeichnungen u.s.w. in diesem Werk berechtigt auch ohne besondere Kennzeichnung nicht zu der Annahme, dass solche Namen im Sinne der Warenzeichen- und Markenschutzgesetzgebung als frei zu betrachten wären und daher von jedermann benutzt werden dürften.

Verlag: Lambert Academic Publishing AG & Co. KG
Dudweiler Landstr. 99, 66123 Saarbrücken, Deutschland
Telefon +49 681 3720-310, Telefax +49 681 3720-3109, Email: info@lap-publishing.com

Herstellung in Deutschland:
Schaltungsdienst Lange o.H.G., Berlin
Books on Demand GmbH, Norderstedt
Reha GmbH, Saarbrücken
Amazon Distribution GmbH, Leipzig
ISBN: 978-3-8383-3370-0

Imprint (only for USA, GB)

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek: The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Any brand names and product names mentioned in this book are subject to trademark, brand or patent protection and are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders. The use of brand names, product names, common names, trade names, product descriptions etc. even without a particular marking in this works is in no way to be construed to mean that such names may be regarded as unrestricted in respect of trademark and brand protection legislation and could thus be used by anyone.

Publisher:
Lambert Academic Publishing AG & Co. KG
Dudweiler Landstr. 99, 66123 Saarbrücken, Germany
Phone +49 681 3720-310, Fax +49 681 3720-3109, Email: info@lap-publishing.com

Copyright © 2010 Lambert Academic Publishing AG & Co. KG and licensors
All rights reserved. Saarbrücken 2010

Printed in the U.S.A.
Printed in the U.K. by (see last page)
ISBN: 978-3-8383-3370-0

The Role of Stereotypes in Age Discrimination in Hiring:
Evaluation and Intervention

Eyal Gringart PhD
Edith Cowan University

Edward Helmes PhD
James Cook University

Craig Speelman PhD
Edith Cowan University

Abstract

As the number of older adults grows, governments find it increasingly harder to support them through social and health care services. One solution to this problem is for older adults to remain in paid employment longer. However, older workers are discriminated against due to negative stereotyping by employers. Previous research has found that older females experienced greater discrimination than did older males. In order to address the issue of hiring discrimination against older adults a progressive two-stage research project was conducted. Using a questionnaire that was developed especially for this project, Study One explored the stereotypes held about older workers of both genders among Australian employers and undergraduates, using a national random sample of 128 companies across industries and 187 undergraduates across disciplines. Study One used a 2 x 2 factorial design with sample (employers and undergraduates) and questionnaire version (asking about older males or females) as the independent variables. There were three continuous dependent variables (DVs): 'sum of scale' - a sum of the ratings of the questionnaire's stereotype scale, 'likely to hire' - ratings of respondents' likelihood to hire older workers, and 'age relevance' - ratings of how important respondents' viewed age in making hiring decisions. The results showed systematic stereotyping among both samples with no significant differences across questionnaire version. Both samples indicated that they were less than likely to hire older workers and viewed age as relevant in hiring. Study Two was designed to test two interventions that were aimed to promote positive attitude changes toward older workers. It comprised two stages and used a randomized-controlled trial. In the first stage, respondents were sent one of three intervention materials. One involved inducing cognitive dissonance. Another involved a fact sheet that presented the misconceptions about older workers that were

identified in Study One and contrasted them with empirical data. The third was a combination of the other two. In the second, testing stage, those who responded to the intervention plus a new control group were all sent questionnaires to assess the effects of the interventions. Intervention materials were posted to a national random sample of 900 companies across industries and to 147 undergraduate research volunteers. At the testing stage 556 employers and 137 undergraduates were addressed. Ninety-seven undergraduates and 267 employers responded. The first stage of Study Two used a 2 x 2 x 2 between subjects design with cognitive dissonance (yes or no), fact sheet (yes or no), and sample (employers and undergraduates) as the independent variables. There were four dependent variables: 'age preference' - respondents' general age preference in hiring, 'sum of scale', 'age relevant', and 'likely to hire'. The last three DVs were based on those used in Study One. The results of Study Two showed no significant differences between either the fact sheet or the cognitive dissonance conditions and controls. The cognitive dissonance and fact sheet combination showed significant positive effects among employers but not among undergraduates. Employers in the combination condition had significantly higher mean 'sum of scale' and 'age preference' scores, and indicated that they were more than likely to hire older workers whilst all other conditions were less than likely to do so. These significant effects in the employers' sample make a case for using the cognitive dissonance and fact sheet combination method in combating hiring discrimination against older workers. The results suggest that the drive to reduce cognitive dissonance could be harnessed to change stereotypes. Finally, the results emphasize the potential of psychological interventions to bring about social changes and to enhance compliance with legislation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	11
Introduction	
CHAPTER 2	17
Ramifications of Population Ageing and the Employability of Older Adults	
Population Ageing.....	17
Ageism.....	20
Ageism and Sexism.....	24
The Willingness of Older Adults to Work and the Psychological Aspects of Work in Older Adulthood.....	26
Health and Performance Abilities of Older Adults.....	30
Older Adults in the Workforce.....	37
Age Discrimination in Hiring.....	53
Government Undertakings to Combat Age Discrimination.....	56
Conclusion.....	60
CHAPTER 3	63
Measuring Ageist Stereotypes	
CHAPTER 4	71
Measuring Stereotypes Held About Older Workers: An Empirical Study	
Method.....	76
Results.....	82
Discussion.....	96

CHAPTER 5	109
Combating Stereotyping and Discrimination of Older Workers	
Combating Hiring Discrimination.....	111
Strategies to Combat Ageism.....	114
Stereotyping and Discrimination.....	122
Promising Interventions.....	136
CHAPTER 6	146
Testing Interventions to Reduce Hiring Discrimination Against Older Adults	
Method.....	151
Results.....	162
Discussion.....	186
CHAPTER 7	206
Overall Discussion	
Relevance of the Findings of the Project.....	211
Validation of Findings and Prospective Implementation.....	212
A Model for Changing Attitudes and Stereotype-Based Behaviours.....	215
Strengths of the Current Project.....	216
Limitations of the Current Project.....	219
Avenues for Future Research.....	221
Summary.....	223
REFERENCES	226

List of Appendices

Appendix A	246
Questionnaire Pilot Testing	
Appendix B	249
Sampling and Randomization	
Appendix C	254
Examples of Questionnaire Cover Letters and Follow-Ups that were used in Study One	
Appendix D	259
An Example of the Questionnaire that was Used in Study One	
Appendix E	267
An Example of a Fact Sheet produced by the Australian Government	
Appendix F	269
Examples of The Intervention Materials that were used in Study Two	
Appendix G	276
Examples of Questionnaire Cover Letters and Follow-Ups that were Used in Study Two at the Testing Stage.	
Appendix H	280
Examples of the Age Preference Question and the Questionnaire that were Used in Study Two.	

List of Tables

Table 1	83
Alpha values by group (Study One)	
Table 2	85
Item means and standard deviations by group (Study One)	
Table 3	86
Mean scores for Sum of scale, Age relevance, and Likely to hire (Study One)	
Table 4	88
Undergraduates' mean scores for Sum of scale, Age relevance, and Likely to hire as a function of respondents' sex (Study One)	
Table 5	90
Undergraduates' mean scores for Sum of scale, Age relevance, and Likely to hire as a function of age and questionnaire version (Study One)	
Table 6	92
Employers' male version group. Attributes for which older male workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study One)	
Table 7	93
Employers' female version group. Attributes for which older female workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study One)	
Table 8	94
Undergraduates' male version group. Attributes for which older workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study One)	

Table 9	95
Undergraduates' female version group. Attributes for which older workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study One)	
Table 10	164
Alpha values by group (Study Two)	
Table 11	165
Stereotype scale item means and standard deviations by employers groups (Study Two)	
Table 12	166
Stereotype scale item means and standard deviations by undergraduates groups (Study Two)	
Table 13	168
Mean scores for Age preference, Sum of scale, and Age relevant (Study Two)	
Table 14	171
Mean employers likely to hire score as a function of group (Study Two)	
Table 15	173
Mean employers scores for age preference, sum of scale, age relevant, and likely to hire by sex of respondent (Study Two)	
Table 16	174
Mean employers scores for age preference, sum of scale, age relevant, and likely to hire by respondents age (Study Two)	
Table 17	175
Mean undergraduates scores for age preference, sum of scale, age relevant, and likely to hire by respondents age (Study Two)	

Table 18	179
Employers' cognitive dissonance group. Attributes for which older workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study Two)	
Table 19	180
Employers' fact sheet group. Attributes for which older workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study Two)	
Table 20	181
Employers' cognitive dissonance and fact sheet group. Attributes for which older workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study Two)	
Table 21	182
Employers' control group. Attributes for which older workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study Two)	
Table 22	183
Undergraduates' cognitive dissonance group. Attributes for which older workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study Two)	
Table 23	184
Undergraduates' fact sheet group. Attributes for which older workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study Two)	
Table 24	185
Undergraduates' cognitive dissonance and fact sheet group. Attributes for which older workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study One)	
Table 25	186
Undergraduates' control group. Attributes for which older workers were viewed as better or lesser compared with younger workers (Study Two)	

List of Figures

Figure 1	89
Mean undergraduates likely to hire scores as a function of sex and questionnaire version (Study One)	
Figure 2	170
Mean employer sum of scale scores as a function of cognitive dissonance and fact sheet (Study Two)	
Figure 3	171
Mean employer likely to hire score as a function of cognitive dissonance and fact sheet (Study Two)	