Ageism in Job-Seeking and Recruitment Practices: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Despite a wealth of experience across generations, ageism remains a persistent barrier in job seeking. The global trend of an aging population has created a unique workforce with up to five generations, from Traditionalists to Generation Z. Nevertheless, both older workers and younger workers face persistent ageism in the workplace. As a result, ageism in recruitment and its mitigation has become an emerging issue for scholars and practitioners.

While existing studies provide valuable insights, the current body of knowledge remains fragmented. This paper addresses two key research questions: 1) what is known from the literature on the challenges of ageism experienced by different age groups in job seeking? and 2) how do employers account for age diversity in recruitment practices? In addition, it aims to analyse and synthesise the findings from the literature to identify themes, knowledge gaps and recommendations for future research and practices.

Six key themes were identified through the analysis of 27 studies: *1) ageism in stages of recruitment, 2) ageist stereotypes, 3) intersectional impacts of ageism, 4) age cues and physical appearance in ageism, 5) reverse ageism in recruitment, 6) ageism mitigation intervention*. This paper contributes to the theoretical understanding of ageism within the specific context of recruitment and its parallels with intersectionality, internalised ageism, the negative discourse of aging and social theories.

Furthermore, the paper also highlights age-diversity approaches to mitigate ageism in recruitment practices. Lastly, it identifies the key areas for future research to empirically identify and evaluate ageism mitigation interventions across diverse contexts.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the dissertation by introducing the research topic of ageism in job seeking. It synthesises prevailing studies of ageism in employment settings and highlights the rationales for a systematic review to investigate what is known from the literature on this topic. The chapter also outlines the research purposes and questions and defines the scope of the review. The outline of the dissertation is then presented at the end of this chapter.

1.1. Introduction

Global trends of increased longevity and delayed retirement are extending individuals' active participation in the workforce, resulting in historically unprecedented levels of age diversity (Weber & Loichinger, 2022; World Health Organization, n.d). Contemporary workplaces consist of up to five generations, from Traditionalists to Generation Z, actively engaged in the workforce (Becker et al., 2022). This age diversity intrinsically overlaps with research exploring differences among generations. Studies demonstrate that workforces with multigenerational representation possess a valuable wealth of varied experiences, skills, knowledge, and networks, potentially enhancing decision-making, productivity, and overall organisational performance (Gerhardt et al., 2022; Zélity, 2023). Nonetheless, each generation continues to confront unique obstacles within the job search process, significantly influenced by age-related factors and persistent societal stereotypes (Cebola et al., 2023; Jones et al., 2017; Lyons et al., 2014).

Research indicates that ageism represents one of the most pervasive challenges encountered by job seekers across different age groups (Bratt et al., 2018; Cebola et al., 2023). According to Butler (1969), ageism is defined as a “prejudice by one age group toward other age groups” (p. 243). This seminal definition laid the foundation for further studies into ageism. Building on this, Levy and Banaji (2002) proposed a definition that

involves affective, cognitive and behavioural components. Ageism was defined as "an alteration in feeling, belief, or behaviour in response to an individual's or group's perceived chronological age (Levy & Banaji, 2002, cited in Iversen et al., 2009, p. 50). Further to this, a more recent conceptual analysis has broadened the scope of ageism definition. Iversen et al. (2009) defined ageism as harmful or favourable stereotypes, biases and discriminatory actions towards older individuals based on their age or perceived age and operating consciously or unconsciously across individual, social and institutional levels.

While Iversen et al. (2009) offer a comprehensive conceptual analysis of ageism, their definition primarily focuses on older individuals. Ageism, however, can also affect younger individuals and other age groups (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Singer & Sewell, 1989). Therefore, this dissertation will primarily utilise the definition by Levy and Banaji (2002), which is more inclusive of the groups affected by ageism. In addition, it will also acknowledge the insights from Iversen et al. (2009), recognising that ageism can manifest positively or negatively, implicitly or explicitly, and affect individuals, social groups and institutions. This approach will underscore the complexities of ageism in the context of job-seeking.

Ageism has been well studied in the workplace context concerning its diverse and harmful manifestation. This ranges from obstacles in securing employment opportunities (Drydakis et al., 2018; Garcia et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2017) to undue pressure to retire (Thorsen et al., 2012). Older workers frequently face negative stereotypes and devaluation (McMullin & Marshall, 2001), while younger workers may lack trust due to assumptions about their inexperience (Loretto et al., 2000). Ageism can be overt, resulting in legally prohibited actions, or more subtle, manifesting through discriminatory behaviours or interpersonal biases (Stypinska & Turek, 2017). Most importantly, research in this field has recognised that ageism could target individuals at any career stage

(Raymer et al., 2017). While these existing studies provide insights into varied ageism effects, there appears to be a lack of research synthesising the challenges encountered by different age groups in job-seeking contexts.

Specific research reveals how ageism presents significant challenges within the context of recruitment. While older applicants disproportionately experience discrimination (Drydakis et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2016; Ruggs et al., 2014) evidence suggests that younger job seekers also encounter biases that can limit their opportunities (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Singer & Sewell, 1989). For older candidates, barriers often stem from discriminatory practices and age-related stereotypes (Ahmed et al., 2012; Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Drydakis et al., 2018). These stereotypes may portray older individuals as resistant to change, less competent with technology, or lacking ambition (Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Jones et al., 2017; Perry et al., 2016). Conversely, younger applicants may face assumptions about their work ethic, experience level, or commitment (Chan et al., 2012; Perry et al., 2016), potentially hindering their employment prospects (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Singer & Sewell, 1989). While these studies highlight the age-related challenges, a gap exists in connecting these challenges to employers' practices of age diversity in hiring practices.

Synthesising findings across the existing literature can provide valuable insights for organisations seeking to mitigate age-related barriers in recruitment. One commonly studied practice is crafting inclusive job advertisements (Rudolph et al., 2017; van Selm & van den Heijkant, 2021). Research demonstrates that employers can promote age diversity by emphasising age-inclusive language and highlighting workplace values that support individuals across the age spectrum (Rudolph et al., 2017; van Selm & van den Heijkant, 2021). Additionally, studies on job attraction have revealed that minimising metastereotypes can reduce the sense of exclusion among younger and older job seekers (Koçak et al., 2023; Koçak et al., 2022). These metastereotypes refer to beliefs within a

group about what stereotypes other groups may hold against them (Vorauer et al., 1998, cited in Koçak et al., 2022).

Despite valuable research on ageism in job-seeking and recruitment, the current body of knowledge remains fragmented. To date, there has yet to be a systematic attempt to synthesise and critically evaluate this literature, specifically within the context of recruitment. While recent research on this area was conducted by Batinovic et al. (2023), they focused on quantitatively investigating age discrimination through meta-analysis. The study did not employ a systematic review approach to synthesise the broader body of literature. Although the study provides insightful findings into the magnitude of ageism in hiring, their reliance on quantitative data may need to fully capture the contextual richness, recurring themes, experiences and underlying complexities contributing to the phenomenon. In addition, the existing systematic review (e.g., Cebola et al., 2023) appeared to only focus on older worker-related ageism, thus limiting their direct applicability to understanding the distinct challenges faced by job seekers of different ages during the recruitment process. It is important to note that while some studies analysed the issue in terms of generational stereotypes, this study will refer to a broader categorisation of age groups as younger, middle-aged and older job seekers instead. The rationale for this is because these groups are more commonly used in the literature, as well as being able to capture more variations of ageist concepts. Based on these reasons, this paper contends that ageism within the job-seeking process requires a dedicated review to address the research gap.

1.2. Research Purposes and Questions

The present research aims to conduct a systematic literature review on ageism in job seeking. The review will focus on ageism at the individual (micro) and organisational level (meso), examining how age-related discrimination and biases impact job seekers of different ages. Drawing from the methods employed by Cebola et al. (2023), this study

seeks to synthesise findings, identify the research gaps and provide recommendations for future research to advance the understanding of ageism within the recruitment domain. Furthermore, it aims to contribute theoretical and practical insights into understanding recruitment practices that foster age inclusivity. In light of this, two research questions have been developed as follows. The first question seeks to comprehensively examine the prevalence of ageism in job-seeking and uncover barriers, biases and discrimination that different age groups may encounter. The second question shifts from individual focus to organisational actions, aiming to identify and analyse the practices employers use (or could use) to address ageism in recruitment. In this paper, it is important to note that recruitment is considered as part of the broader job-seeking process, while shifting the focus from the indivudal perspective to that of the organisation. This allows for a more comprehensive exploration of how employer manage age diversity during hiring, which is a key element of the job-seeking experience.

RQ1. What is known from the literature on the challenges of ageism experienced by different age groups in job-seeking?

RQ2. How do employers account for age diversity in recruitment practices?

1.3. Dissertation Outline

This dissertation consists of five chapters. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 outlines the systematic literature review methodology employed in this study. It describes the systematic review method, research procedures, literature search and selection, data appraisal and data analysis. Chapter 3 presents the findings of the thematic analysis, identifying key themes and patterns that emerge from the extracted literature data on ageism in job-seeking. Chapter 4 comprehensively discusses existing research and theory findings, gaps, and implications. Lastly, Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation with a summary of research contributions, limitations and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Systematic Literature Reviews

This study adopts a systematic literature review to examine what has been studied about ageism challenges experienced by different age groups in job-seeking and recruitment practices. A systematic review is a comprehensive research method and process aimed at thoroughly identifying, evaluating and integrating all relevant studies concerning a specific topic (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The approach enables researchers to explore and assess the current knowledge landscape within a particular literature, facilitating a thorough understanding of the present state of knowledge, identifying research gaps, and suggesting future research avenues that could enhance the scholarly discourse (Tranfield et al., 2003). Furthermore, the contributions of systematic reviews can inform the practice and policy of various disciplines and theory building in a specific domain (Fan et al., 2022; Tranfield et al., 2003).

A systematic review was chosen for this study as it allows for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of existing literature in a transparent and replicable way (Fan et al., 2022; Snyder, 2019). Unlike other traditional reviews, systematic reviews use a repeatable process and exhaustive searches of studies and provide a transparent record of the researcher's decisions, procedures and conclusion (Tranfield et al., 2003). Therefore, these explicit and systematic procedures can effectively minimise biases and offer trustworthy findings (Snyder, 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003). In addition, systematic reviews can facilitate the consolidation of high-quality knowledge on a particular topic through quality assurance measures. These measures include developing clear parameters, transparently identifying the related studies, providing justified inclusion and exclusion criteria of papers, establishing a protocol for coding and synthesis and evaluating the quality of the research (Gough et al., 2017).

Systematic reviews can be traced back to the medical science discipline, primarily aimed at shaping policy and guiding health and social care decisions (Tranfield et al., 2003). Nevertheless, their application has gained more prevalence in business and management research (Fan et al., 2022; Snyder, 2019).

2.2 Research Procedures

This study adopted the procedures for conducting a systematic review of management research suggested by Briner and Denyer (2012) and Denyer and Tranfield (2009). First, the process began with defining the questions for the review in Chapter 1, which set the scope for the subsequent stages. Second, the relevant studies were searched and selected using inclusion and exclusion criteria. Next, the research proceeded to analyse and synthesise the findings from the selected studies using a thematic analysis method. Lastly, the synthesised results were reported and communicated to inform the current knowledge, gap and research agenda.

2.3 Searching and Selecting the Relevant Studies

While the procedures by Briner and Denyer (2012) and Denyer and Tranfield (2009) are adopted, this paper also followed the protocol outlined in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) by Page et al. (2021). PRISMA is used to identify, screen and select the literature for included studies. Online searches through electronic databases were undertaken to identify relevant studies that have explored the challenges related to ageism in job-seeking and how employers account for age diversity in recruitment practices. Scopus was chosen because it contains extensive academic publications across various disciplines. As ageism has been studied in several fields, such as human resource management, organisational studies, psychology, management, and gerontology, using Scopus provided a rigorous and multidisciplinary platform for the search. Moreover, Scopus is equipped with search functions, analytical

features, and filters, which allow the researcher to conduct more tailored searches for systematic literature reviews. In addition, the subject areas of Business, Management and Accounting were added to the filters. Importantly, the researcher also incorporated studies from the psychology discipline due to its relevance to organisational psychology and behaviour.

The selection of appropriate keywords is important in conducting a thorough search for systematic literature reviews to enhance the literature search's effectiveness (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009). For this study, keywords were derived from the research questions and expanded upon using related terminology (see Table 1). For example, given that ageism is related to discrimination, prejudices, stigmas and stereotypes, these terms were accounted for in the search string. Similarly, "job-seeking" was expanded to cover related terminologies such as job application, employment search, recruitment, hiring, job interview, resume and CV. It is important to note that resumes and CVs will be used interchangeably to address the geographical preferences of the terms. Keywords were searched in titles, abstracts, and keywords on Scopus.

The total initial results for both search strings amounted to 432 documents. It is important to note that there were overlaps in the articles identified through both search strings, which were later screened and removed (See Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart).

Table 1. Research Questions and Corresponding Keywords

Research questions	**Keywords**	**Results**
RQ1. What are the challenges of ageism experienced by different age group in job-seeking?	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ((ageism* OR "age discriminat*" OR "age stereotype*" OR "age stigma*")) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (("job-seek*" OR "job application*" OR "employment search*" OR "hir*" OR	310

	"recruit*" OR "job interview*" OR "resum*" OR "CV")))	
RQ2. How do employers account for age diversity in recruitment practices?	(TITLE-ABS-KEY ("age inclusiv*" OR "age divers*" OR "age equality" OR "age-friendly" OR "age neutral" OR "age diverse" OR "age fair*") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("recruitment" OR "selection*" OR "hir*" OR "staffing" OR "employment practices" OR "talent acquisition"))	122

2.4 Data Appraisal

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure relevance and high quality in selecting studies (see Table 2 below). The timeframe was chosen to focus on articles published within ten years, from 2013 to 2023, to ensure recent findings can still be generalisable to the present. Furthermore, it is assumed that digital tools such as AI-based screening started to have a prominent role in recruitment during this period. Articles unrelated to the employment context, such as clinical age care and biodiversity ageing, were selected.

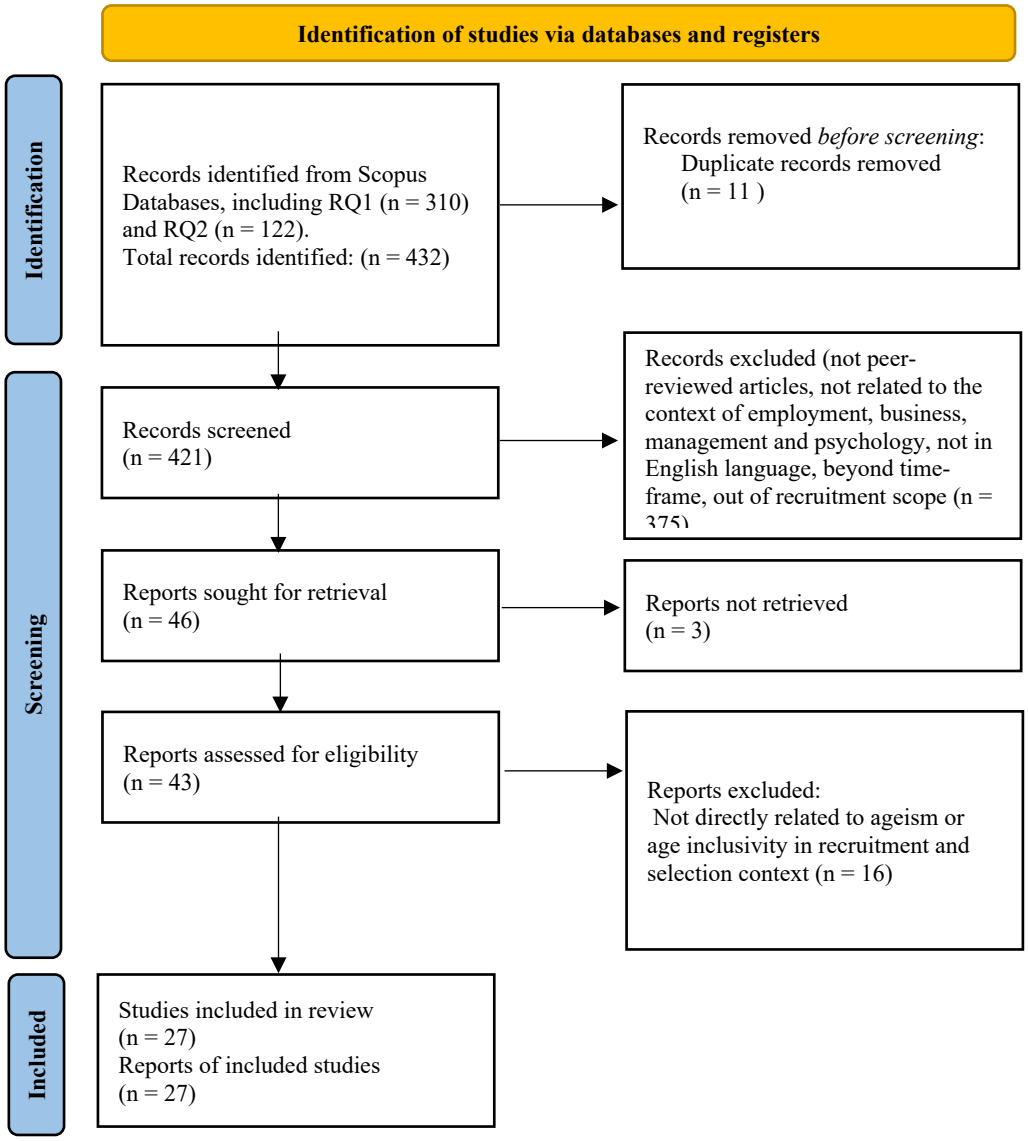
Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	1. Written in English language 2. Published in a peer-reviewed journal 3. Related to ageism in an employment context

	4. Published within 10 years (2013 – 2023)
Exclusion Criteria	1. Not written in the English language 2. Not peer-reviewed sources (reports, conference papers, book chapters, etc.) 3. Outside business, management and organisational behaviour discipline and unrelated to ageism and employment context. 4. Published before 2013

The above inclusion and exclusion criteria were incorporated into eligibility criteria under the PRISMA 2020 protocol (see Figure 1) to identify and select the articles. After the removal of duplicates, the researcher screened 421 records for eligibility. Using Scopus's filters, the researcher narrowed down records based on the publication year, language and source type. Consequently, 375 records were deemed irrelevant from applying the filters, leaving 46 studies for further retrieval checking. Of these, three were excluded due to the absence of full-text access. After a full-text reading, 16 more studies were excluded for lacking the required emphasis on ageism and recruitment and selection. As a result, 27 studies were included in the final corpus of this systematic literature review.

Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flowchart



Adapted from Page et al. (2020)

2.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of breaking down a vast amount of data into smaller fragments for interpretation, aggregation and understanding of the subject of investigation (Gray, 2018). Following the final sample selection for the systematic literature review, the researcher used an extraction template to extract data from each reference. The technique was selected because of its ability to organise substantial data, minimise errors and simplify the subsequent analysis and synthesis of the literature (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Tranfield et al., 2003). All articles were thoroughly reviewed by full-text reading and divided into seven categories based on the synthesis suggestions: (1) author information and context, (2) purpose of study, (3) research methodology, (4) samples, (5) theoretical frameworks, (6) primary age groups investigated and (7) key findings. The extracted data were later entered into a table in Appendix 1.

While data can be analysed using various methods, this study used thematic analysis to conduct the systematic review through the key findings from the extracted table. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis refers to "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p.79). The fundamental rationale for choosing this method is its ability to capture critical data patterns while simultaneously explaining the dataset comprehensively (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Although the procedures of a thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) were primarily focused on interview transcripts, they have also been used in systematic reviews such as Fischer et al. (2019) and Cristofaro (2022). This paper will implement the five stages of thematic analysis processes as described in the following table:

Table 3. Thematic Analysis Process

Analysis process	Process description
1. Data familiarisation	Repeated reading of the included articles, taking notes and refining the extracted tables
2. Formulation of initial codes	Developing initial codes to prominent themes using Nvivo software
3. Theme identifications	Consolidating the codes and developing themes
4. Review of themes	Reviewing the themes against the codes, collating and merging themes
5. Defining and labelling themes	Establishing a list of definitions and descriptions of each theme and sub-theme
6. Development of report	Choosing the most relevant extracts to report against the research questions

The researcher used NVivo software throughout the thematic analysis to formulate codes from the extracted data systematically. The identified codes were reviewed and classified to develop potential themes and sub-themes using the parent-child coding features. Six final themes were identified, with a further 12 sub-themes. These examples are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Examples of Initial Coding

Parent Code (Sub-theme)	Initial Code	Relevant Studies	Example Quotations
Ageism in stages of recruitment	• Lower callback rates for older applicants	(Berde & Mago, 2022, p. 1259)	"The younger job seekers were invited to interviews about 2.2 times more often than the older ones."
		(Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019, p. 173)	"We find that the callback rate begins to fall substantially for workers in their early 40s and becomes very low for workers close to the retirement age"
	• Undervaluation of older candidates' resumes	(Derous & Decoster, 2017, p. 9)	"Specifically, resumes with both a young-sounding name and modern activities received the highest job suitability ratings, followed by resumes with an old-sounding name/modern activities, and resumes with an old-sounding name/old-fashioned activities."
		(Zaniboni et al., 2019, p. 453)	"Implicit age stereotypes had a negative effect on the evaluation of older applicants' resumes but had no significant effect on the evaluation of younger applicants' resumes."

Chapter 3 Findings

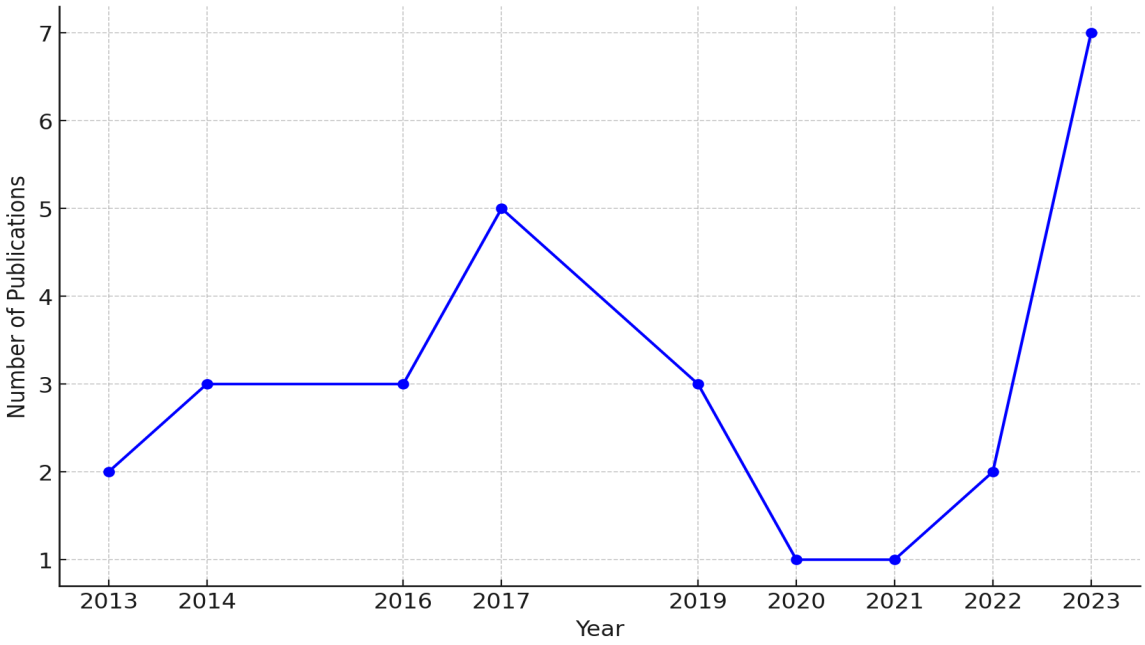
This chapter presents the results of the systematic literature review on how ageism affects different age groups in job-seeking and how employers account for age diversity in the recruitment context. The chapter is structured into seven sections. The first section provides an overview of the study characteristics. The latter six sections present the findings of the thematic analysis.

3.1 Study characteristics

Frequency of study by year

This section provides descriptive information on the sample of 27 articles derived through the identification and selection of the studies. Figure 2 illustrates the publication frequency of the included articles during the ten years from 2013 to 2023. While there were periods of growth from two articles in 2013 to five articles in 2017, some declines were observed from 2018 to 2021. The number of studies increased significantly in 2022, leading up to seven articles in 2023, indicating a renewed interest in the topic.

Figure 2. Frequency of Articles Published by Year during 2013 to 2023

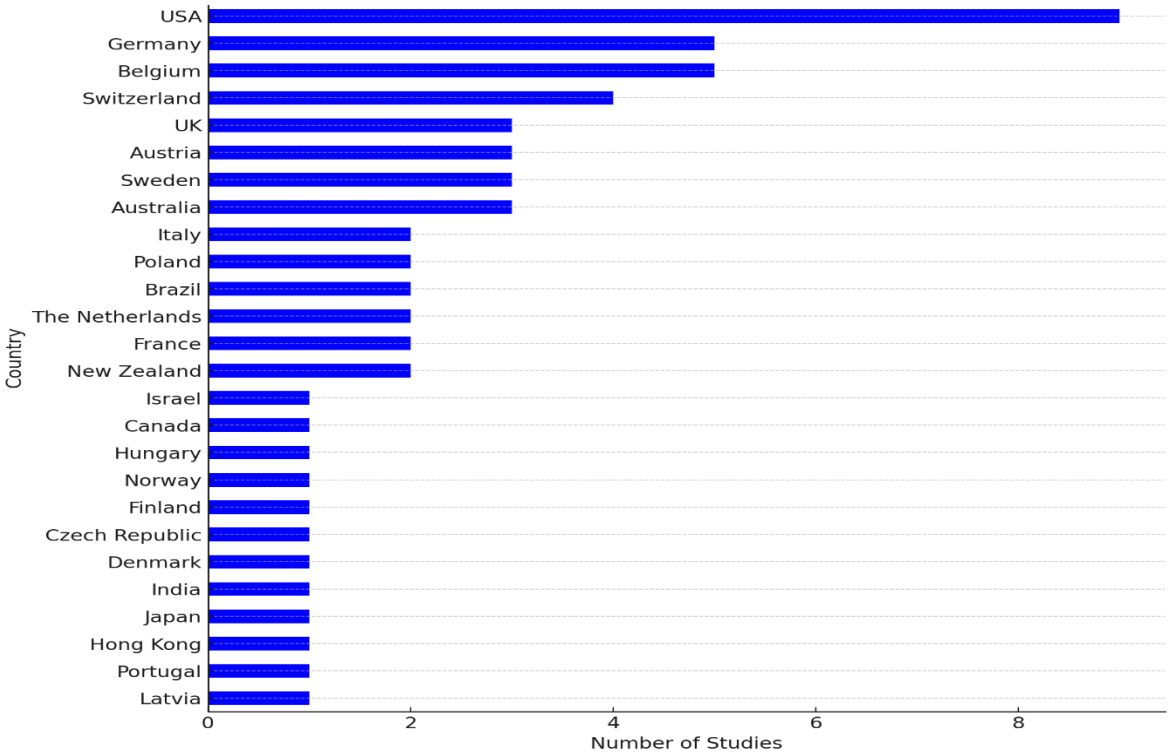


Frequency of study by countries

Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of the 26 countries in the included studies on ageism in job seeking. Most research is centred in Western countries, with the majority from the US (n = 9), followed by European studies, notably Germany (n = 5), Belgium (n = 5), Switzerland (n = 4), the UK (n = 3) and Sweden (n = 3). Moreover, the corpus also includes studies from Australia (n = 3) and New Zealand (n = 2). Some studies were also conducted in multinational contexts (e.g. Kaufmann et al., 2017; Kleissner & Jahn, 2021), including two articles that are systematic reviews and meta-analyses of research from broad geographical scope (e.g. Batinovic et al., 2023; Cebola et al., 2023). There is a notable gap in research from non-Western contexts, particularly in Asia, where only India, Japan and Hongkong were presented. However, these Asian countries were only represented within the data of one systematic review article included in Cebola et al. (2023). Furthermore, there were no studies from the African context, highlighting another gap in the topic in this region.

Figure 3. Frequency of Articles by Country

Journals



Most articles were published in Psychology journals, with the Journal of Managerial Psychology, Frontiers in Psychology and the Journal of Applied Social Psychology each publishing three articles. Appendix 2 illustrates the corresponding journals of the studies included in this systematic review.

The research approach of the included studies

Among the 27 studies, most used quantitative research methods (n = 23) to examine ageism in job seeking. Most quantitative studies (n = 14) were scenario-based experiments, which emerged as the most prevalent approach. These experiments typically involved research participants evaluating fictitious candidates from different age groups for a vacancy. Moreover, other quantitative articles used surveys (n=5) and correspondence testing (n = 4). On the other hand, only one study took a qualitative approach by conducting conversation analysis on actual job interview recordings. Furthermore, one study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining a survey and interviews to investigate the topic. Lastly, two studies were systematic reviews and meta-analyses.

The sample composition in the included studies was notably diverse. The most common samples were employees from various organisations and industries (n = 12), encompassing positions from entry-level staff to middle managers and senior executives. Additionally, several studies involved university students (n = 4) and job seekers (n = 3) as participants. Another notable sample involved using fictitious job applications submitted to actual job vacancies in four studies (n = 4). Many studies also recruited regular persons as their samples (n = 6). Furthermore, two studies (n = 2) utilised data derived from more extensive surveys. It is important to acknowledge that some studies employed a combination of these sample groups.

Nearly all of this review's articles (n = 23) strongly emphasise the employer's perspective. These studies primarily investigated hiring decisions, callback rates and evaluations of job seekers from specific age groups. In contrast, few studies (n = 2) were jobseeker-centric, examining the effects of ageism on jobseekers and their perceptions and responses to the phenomenon. In addition, another few studies (n = 3) adopted a dual approach by analysing the topic from both the employers' and jobseekers' lenses.

The age groups investigated in the reviewed studies generally range from young adults to middle-aged and older job seekers. Among the 27 samples, 16 articles categorised job seekers into two main groups: those aged between twenties to early thirties being younger while those 50 years and above being older. Six articles acknowledged and incorporated the middle-aged group in the studies. Moreover, three articles focused solely on older groups without comparative elements to other groups. It is also important to note that the two studies did not consider age labels like old, young, or middle but considered age a social group and continuous. In addition, only one study considers the effects of generational membership in addition to chronological age.

Overall, up to 21 theories and frameworks were referred to across the 27 articles. However, many of these were atheoretical research (n = 6), which tends to focus more on empirical data instead of theoretically driven perspectives. The most common theories were related to intersectionality (n = 3), impression management (n = 3), intergroup contact (n =2), stereotype embodiments (n = 2) and terror management theory (n =2). The remaining theories appear fragmented with only one frequency each.

Table 5. Key Themes Related to Ageism in Job-Seeking

Themes	Sub-themes	Related codes
Ageism in stages of recruitment	Resume screening	• Lower callback rates for older applicants • Undervaluation of older candidates' resumes
	Job interviews	• Required adoption of strategies to navigate ageism
	Job advertisements	• Ageist job requirement • Metastereotype • Lower self-efficacy
Ageist stereotypes	Skills and qualifications	• Underestimation of older applicants' abilities • Association of older candidates with lower capability to learn • Technological proficiency stereotypes
	Physical health and fitness	• Perceived lower physical fitness • Gender bias amplifying health perception for older women
	Behavioural stereotypes	• Perceived inadaptability and inflexibility • Perceived resistance to change • Negative perception of modesty against younger candidates
Intersectional impacts in ageism	Intersectionality effects	• More severe impact on females and minority race • Differential disadvantage from multiple identities
	Work experience	• Moderating role of relevant career history and education on ageism in hiring • Consistency in career path influencing the ageism during career transitioning

		• Perceived overqualification • Potential mitigating role of work experience
Age cues and physical apperance	Age cues in job application	• Implicit and explicit age cues affecting hiring intentions • Ineffectiveness of concealing explicit age cues by applicants
	Physical appearance	• Favouritism towards younger-looking candidates • Association of younger look with healthier and fitter attributes
Reverse ageism in recruitment	Younger age group's experience	• Negative assessment of younger candidates for high self-promotion • Perception of younger candidates being inexperienced, lack of loyalty • Preference for middle-age candidates
Ageism mitigation intervention	Employer intervention strategies	• Limited adoption of age-diversity policies and practices • Direct and indirect debiasing strategies • Subjective results of indirect debiasing strategies based on gender • Diversity in recruitment panels • Positive effects of diversity training, intergenerational communication and intergroup competency

3.2 Ageism Definitions

In the broadest sense, the definition of ageism generally involves biases, stereotypes, prejudices or behaviours directed towards individuals based on their age (Cebola et al., 2023). In the literature reviewed, most studies (n =15) explicitly described ageism as consistent with the cognitive, affective and behavioural elements mentioned earlier (e.g. Amorim et al., 2019; Batinovic et al., 2023; Cebola et al., 2023; Döbrich et al., 2014; Drydakis et al., 2023; Fasbender & Wang, 2017). Some studies (n =15) did not use the term ageism but instead described its behavioural phenomenon as age discrimination or stereotypes. A few articles (n = 3) explained age discrimination as having two distinct dimensions: statistical discrimination, rooted in factual or historical occurrences of a specific age group, and taste-based discrimination, which aligns more closely with the general description of ageism (Baert et al., 2016; Berde & Mágó, 2022; Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019). Most studies (n = 21) tend to frame ageism as predominantly directed against older individuals in their description of ageism or age discrimination. Only one study (n = 1) coopted ageism against middle-aged workers between 45 to 60 years old. The remaining studies (n = 5) did not explicitly mention in their titles or their definitions of ageism whether it was directed against a specific age group. While younger age was included in the investigation of most studies, no study focused on younger job seekers.

3.3 Ageism in Stages of Recruitment (n = 15)

Multiple studies have consistently shown that ageism manifests across different hiring and job-seeking stages. These stages include job advertisements, resume screening, and interviews (e.g. Derous & Decoster, 2017; Previtali et al., 2023; Turek & Henkens, 2020).

A few studies have demonstrated how ageism manifests in job-seeking as early as in the job advertisement. A study by Koçak et al. (2022) reveals that older job seekers exhibit

lower intention to apply when job advertisements list personality requirements associated with youth, such as flexibility. This is partly due to a reduced self-efficacy caused by metastereotype, which refers to the beliefs within a group about what stereotypes other groups hold against them (Vorauer et al., 1998, cited in Koçak et al., 2022). In this context, for instance, older job seekers tend to believe that recruiters perceive their age group as inflexible, thus creating a reluctance to apply for the job (Koçak et al., 2022). Similarly, Turek and Henkens (2020) also found that job requirements can be subtly ageist, with nearly half of job announcements excluding older applicants in advance. This subtle ageism is reflected in physical, technological, and digital requirements that were coded in a way that may discourage older applicants.

Resume screening is also a stage where ageism is highly prevalent. Older job seekers encounter discrimination during this phase, as recruiters tend to exhibit preferences for younger candidates (Baert et al., 2016; Batinovic et al., 2023; Berde & Mágó, 2022; Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Kaufmann et al., 2016; Kaufmann et al., 2017; Kleissner & Jahn, 2021; Ruggs et al., 2014; Zaniboni et al., 2019). Recruiters often determine an applicant's age through explicit cues, such as the date of birth or perceived facial age (in cases where photographs are included), as well as through implicit cues, exemplified by the applicant's name, dates of education and employment history on resumes (Derous & Decoster, 2017; Kaufmann et al., 2016; Kaufmann et al., 2017). While there may be a shift to omit age details on resumes driven by laws restricting discrimination, including date of birth remains a common practice in Western societies (Derous & Decoster, 2017).

Moreover, concealing explicit age indicators in resumes may also result in lower job suitability scores both for younger and older applicants, with implicit cues could make the biases more severe when they become the primary basis for age inference (Derous & Decoster, 2017; Kleissner & Jahn, 2021; Zaniboni et al., 2019). The impacts of ageism in resume evaluation are often reflected in fewer callbacks (Baert et al., 2016; Batinovic et

al., 2023; Berde & Mago, 2022; Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019). For instance, one study in Belgium found that the callback rate for younger candidates is two times higher than that of their older counterparts who are 60 years old and above (Berde & Mago, 2022). The decline in callback rate is substantially higher when the candidates are near retirement (Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019). Similarly, Derous and Decoster (2017) and Zaniboni et al. (2019) also reveal that the resumes of older candidates were consistently undervalued in the perceived employability score compared to the younger ones.

Some studies focused on the manifestation of ageism during the job interview stage. Older job seekers encountered a precarious position during interviews that required them to adopt further strategies and tactics compared to their young (Gioaba & Krings, 2017; Krings et al., 2023; Lyons et al., 2014; Previtali et al., 2023). For instance, one study found that job candidates had to agree with the ageist stereotypes from the recruiter to bond during interviews (Previtali et al., 2023).

3.4 Ageist Stereotypes (n = 13)

Ageism emerges from the various stereotypes and perceptions of different age groups. In recruitment, ageism is shaped by various stereotypes held by employers, recruiters and among themselves, which appear to affect all age groups according to the included studies.

Within the studies, stereotypes concerning the skills and qualifications of job seekers constitute age discrimination in hiring, particularly for older job seekers. This is reflected in the way the skills and qualifications of older applicants were commonly underestimated, with their actual abilities being rated 45 to 67 per cent lower than reality, indicating a significant stereotype in employer perceptions (Berde & Mágó, 2022). This discrepancy often stems from stereotypes about older workers' learning ability (Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Gioaba & Krings, 2017). For instance, a study found that employers

tend to perceive older candidates as having a lower cognitive function than younger groups (Kaufmann et al., 2017). Compounding this issue is the stereotype that older individuals have lower technological proficiency (Gioaba & Krings, 2017; Ruggs et al., 2014). In contrast to the older groups, research shows that younger job candidates are disadvantaged the most by the negative stereotype of being less modest (Krings et al., 2023).

Additional age-related stereotypes and negative perceptions affecting job seekers are related to their physical health and fitness (Drydakis et al., 2023; Kaufmann et al., 2016; Kaufmann et al., 2017; Richardson et al., 2013; Ruggs et al., 2014). Candidates with older appearance were evaluated less favourably in hiring due to perceived lower physical fitness (Kaufmann et al., 2016; Kaufmann et al., 2017; Richardson et al., 2013). Their advanced age is perceived by employers as correlated with lower suitability for physical jobs, resulting in lower hireability of older candidates (Ruggs et al., 2014). The stereotype of declining health is more severe for older women in conjunction with gender bias (Drydakis et al., 2023; Ruggs et al., 2014). This issue is also highlighted in the intersectionality theme in the next section.

Furthermore, a few studies also identify behavioural stereotypes associated with age. Research shows that younger job candidates experience the negative stereotype of being less modest during job interviews (Krings et al., 2023). Conversely, older candidates are perceived to be inflexible, resistant to change and unambitious (Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Poulston & Jenkins, 2016; Ruggs et al., 2014). This leads to the preference for youth and millennials with the associated beliefs of being more motivated and adaptive (Kleissner & Jahn, 2021; Perry et al., 2017). However, one study showed that even middle-aged individuals between 46 and 60 years old were also affected by prejudices over their adaptability and ability from the hiring managers and the social climate of the organisation, ultimately impacting the hiring outcomes (Binyamin & Brender-Ilan, 2023).

3.5 Intersectional Impacts of Ageism (n = 12)

One of the themes emerging from the identified articles is the intersectional impacts of ageism on recruitment. This theme reflects intersectionality, a concept investigating how distinct identities intertwine to create unique and differential experiences of advantages and discrimination (Crenshaw, 2013). Such situations lead to a more severe impact of ageism on job seekers due to the complex effects of their multiple social categorisations (Baert et al., 2016; Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Döbrich et al., 2014; Drydakis et al., 2023; Fatfouta & Ghoniem, 2022; Fritzsche & Marcus, 2013; Kaufmann et al., 2016; Krings et al., 2023; Ruggs et al., 2014; Zaniboni et al., 2019).

In the recruitment context, the intersection of age, gender and race significantly affects employment prospects. Research by Carlsson and Eriksson (2019) and Ruggs et al. (2014) show a steeper decline in callback rates for aging females than their male counterparts, reflecting a more severe disparity in gendered and ageist industries such as technology. In addition to gender, ethnicity is also reported to exacerbate the effects of age discrimination in job-seeking (Drydakis et al., 2023). For example, Drydakis et al. (2023) found that ageism is more severe for Black British males and female candidates, with older Black British males being the most affected group.

In contrast to these findings, other studies suggest that gender does not have a compounded effect on ageism in hiring (Kaufmann et al., 2016; Zaniboni et al., 2019). Relatedly, Krings et al. (2023) reveal a reversal of the typical gender-age bias, where older women displaying high self-promotion levels during job interviews were evaluated most positively compared to younger and older male applicants. Ruggs et al. (2014) also found that older males experienced greater challenges when applying for entry-level positions. As per social role theory, this is attributed to societal expectations that older men should hold higher-level jobs as they age, ultimately leading to increased scrutiny against them in entry-level job applications. In addition, the gendered effects are also

observed in the outcomes of human resource strategy aimed at reducing age discrimination. Döbrich et al. (2014) found that when recruiters were exposed to debiasing strategies, such strategies enhanced the evaluations for older male applicants compared to prior debiasing. However, the study did not find improved evaluation effects among older female candidates, thus indicating a gender disparity and the unique ageist experience that aging females may face.

Apart from gender and ethnicity, the work experience of job candidates was another key intersectional identity influencing the impact of ageism in recruitment. This is because professional identities, such as work experience and seniority, can intersect with stable identities, such as gender and race, to create unique intersectional dynamics in an organisation (Atewologun et al., 2016). The included studies showed mixed results on how work experience moderates the degree of ageism (Baert et al., 2016; Fritzsche & Marcus, 2013; Perry et al., 2017; Richardson et al., 2013). For instance, Baert et al. (2016) discovered that older age did not result in lower call-back rates if the applicants' employment histories aligned with their education compared to those who did not have this alignment. Similarly, Fritzsche and Marcus (2013) found that when older job candidates transitioned into a new job field, they faced harsher suitability evaluations than younger counterparts in similar situations. This negative evaluation is mitigated if the older candidates have relevant experience in the field. On the other hand, Fatfouta and Ghoniem (2022) found that younger job candidates faced a unique challenge, where their age was perceived as inexperienced despite the qualifications that they may possess. In the same study, it was also observed that while the work experience of older candidates may positively influence their employability, this positive effect can be offset by negative evaluations based on their appearance (Fatfouta & Ghoniem, 2022). Richardson et al. (2013) found similar findings, indicating that older job applicants' work-related

qualifications and competencies did not influence the negative correlation between their age and hireability.

3.6 Age Cues and Physical Appearance in Ageism (n = 5)

Within the identified articles, some studies have highlighted the influence of age-related cues and physical appearance in perpetuating ageism during the job-seeking process.

Both implicit and explicit age cues were reported to impact the hiring process of older applicants. Derous and Decoster (2017) found that even when explicit age cues such as birth dates or age details were concealed from resumes, this did not result in higher hireability for older applicants, suggesting that recruiters may refer to subtle cues to infer age during evaluation. Similarly, another study confirmed that age cues, even when not directly stated, have a considerable influence on the evaluation of job applications of older individuals (Kleissner & Jahn, 2021). These subtle cues mentioned in the included studies were older or younger-sounding names, activities and affiliations to a particular group, which manifested primarily in the resume screening stage (Derous & Decoster, 2017; Kleissner & Jahn, 2021).

Furthermore, physical appearance serves as an essential factor affecting the age discrimination of job seekers. Fatfouta and Ghoniem (2022) found that older candidates are often viewed less favourably in terms of appearance, which, in turn, decreases their perceived job suitability and the likelihood of being employed. This bias is more evident for candidates who appear older than their chronological age. Kaufmann et al. (2016) discovered that older-looking facial appearance, regardless of chronological age, resulted in lower ratings for health and fitness, leading to diminished job-person fit and hiring intentions. In a different study, organization-based professionals and students were recruited to evaluate fictitious resumes featuring chronological age details such as date of birth compared to those with a photo of facial appearance (Kaufmann et al., 2017). Their

findings revealed that the candidates with older-looking faces received the lowest employability.

3.7 Reverse Ageism in Recruitment (n = 4)

While a standard narrative across the majority of the studies included is the preferential evaluation of younger candidates in the recruitment process, there appears to be only limited studies discussing how younger candidates could experience ageism in the same context (Binyamin & Brender-Ilan, 2023; Cebola et al., 2023; Krings et al., 2023; Richardson et al., 2013). This instance is understood as reverse ageism, in which younger candidates are the victims of discrimination (Cebola et al., 2023). According to Cebola et al. (2023), younger candidates are commonly not taken seriously, are perceived as inexperienced and face barriers to job access due to scepticism of their loyalty to organisations. Similarly, Krings et al. (2023) found that younger candidates are negatively assessed when exhibiting high self-promotion during job interviews. Another unique finding is found in a study by Richardson et al. (2013), which recruited university students and organisation-based participants to evaluate fictitious resumes. Their findings revealed a preference for middle-aged applicants within the age range of 42 to 48, highlighting the prevalence of ageism against older and younger candidates outside the range. However, another study identified the existence of age bias against middle-aged applicants (Binyamin & Brender-Ilan, 2023). It found that hiring managers evaluated middle-aged candidates unfavourably, particularly when they perceived competition or a risk to their job security.

3.8 Ageism Mitigation Intervention (n = 6)

This theme encapsulates interventions used to alleviate ageism in recruitment. Studies show that firms rarely employ age-diversity policies and practices, and recruiters often overlook the issue of age discrimination in hiring (Amorim et al., 2019; Cebola et al.,

2023). Binyamin and Brender-Ilan (2023) reported the need for firms to build a supportive climate and effective communication to combat ageism and enhance age diversity in hiring. Research has shown that age discrimination in recruitment can be significantly reduced if firms engage in direct debiasing, where hiring decision-makers are provided with explicit information or warnings about age bias (Döbrich et al., 2014).

Moreover, scholars suggest indirect debiasing methods, which aim to influence hiring managers through unconscious thought subtly processes rather than explicitly informing them (Döbrich et al., 2014). One of the primary methods the scholars mentioned was enforcing accountability for hiring decisions such that decision-makers are aware that they will be required to provide clear and rational explanations for their hiring choices. This approach was proven effective, particularly toward older male candidates (Döbrich et al., 2014), but less effective toward older female job applicants.

However, Poulston and Jenkins (2016) found that despite having age-inclusivity policies in the workplace, older workers still experience obstacles to job access. This was due to the lack of effective discrimination prevention measures for age bias at the HR level, influenced by managers' ageist beliefs and preferences for youths for better-perceived appeals and attitudes (Poulston & Jenkins, 2016). It was also suggested that forming age-diverse recruitment panels and training hiring managers to evaluate the job candidates' competencies more objectively can reduce age discrimination during the hiring process (Poulston & Jenkins, 2016). Another study highlighted that in addition to diversity mentoring, enhancing positive, cooperative intergenerational interactions among employees of diverse ages can help reduce age-related prejudices and anxieties, making hiring managers more receptive to the competencies and hiring of older workers (Fasbender & Wang, 2017).

Chapter 4: Discussion

This section of the paper will analyse and synthesise the key findings of the systematic review in light of the established research questions. Drawing on the identified themes, it will discuss the findings in relation to the broader theoretical and social context of ageism, as well as highlighting gaps in the research. To achieve this, the chapter is organised by the two research questions as below.

RQ1. What is known from the literature on the challenges of ageism experienced by different age groups in job-seeking?

The initial research question of this paper aimed to understand what is known from the literature on the challenges of ageism experienced by different age groups in job-seeking. In response to this research question, the review has identified jobseeking stages where ageism occurs, how ageism is perpetuated through explicit and implicit age cues and the underlying reasons why ageism persists in jobseeking.

Three key jobseeking stages where ageism can occur

The review identified three important stages where ageism could occur, including job advertisement, resume screening and interview stage. Firstly, job advertisements often emphasise youth-associated characteristics Koçak et al. (2022) and subtly exclude older candidates through specific skill requirements (Turek & Henkens, 2020). Linking these findings to the literature, the phenomenon can be understood through the lens of the metastereotypes, which refer to a group's assumption about the stereotypes others possess regarding them (Vorauer et al., 1998). For instance, the reluctance of older applicants to apply for jobs listing youthful attributes indicates that they may internalise negative stereotypes of being outdated or inflexible. Similarly, this finding aligns with stereotype threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995), where the fear of confirming stereotypes about one's age group may deter older individuals from pursuing a particular job.

These practices reveal not only the challenges job seekers face but also the missed opportunities for employers. Inadvertently creating ageist job ads could risk alienating the valuable human capital of older workers (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Furthermore, the findings align with the study by Köchling and Wehner (2020), which shows the magnitude of ageist linguistics in job advertisements detected by machine-learning algorithms and humans, deterring older applicants. This highlights the potential implication for artificial intelligence-powered recruitment tools to perpetuate age discrimination, mainly if they are built on biased or misrepresented training data from ageist job ads (Kim, 2016; Köchling & Wehner, 2020).

While the findings illustrate the impact of ageist job ads on older job seekers, there is a gap in understanding the effects on younger groups. This area warrants further investigation, as ageist language may also inadvertently exclude younger applicants from roles they are well-suited for. In sum, discriminatory language and skill requirements in job ads can exclude younger and older workers, hindering organisations from capitalising on diverse talent and accurately reflecting the changing labour market.

Under the resume screening stage, the review highlights a pronounced bias against older job seekers. Recruiters use explicit or implicit cues to determine an applicant's age (Derous & Decoster, 2017; Kaufmann et al., 2016; Kaufmann et al., 2017). Candidates who are perceived as older tend to receive lower job suitability ratings and fewer interview callbacks compared to their younger counterparts (Berde & Mágó, 2022; Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Derous & Decoster, 2017; Kaufmann et al., 2016; Kaufmann et al., 2017; Zaniboni et al., 2019). This phenomenon aligns with the statistical discrimination (Phelps, 1972), where evaluators make assumptions based on group characteristics rather than individual attributes. In resume screening, older candidates are often evaluated not on their actual competencies but through age-related stereotypes. Moreover, through the lens of the representativeness heuristic Tversky and Kahneman

(1974), the concept suggests that hiring managers might form opinions based on age stereotypes of older candidates, such as perceived diminished adaptability or technological proficiency, thus neglecting a more objective analysis of resumes.

During the interview phase, ageism presents unique challenges for older job seekers, necessitating them to adopt additional strategies to counteract potential biases (Gioaba & Krings, 2017; Krings et al., 2023; Previtali et al., 2023). The review shows that older candidates are sometimes compelled to conform to ageist stereotypes during interviews to establish rapport with recruiters (Previtali et al., 2023). Conversely, other strategies involve actively countering age stereotypes, such as concealing or downplaying their age during discussions (Lyons et al., 2014). These findings resonate with the Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles et al., 1973), which proposes that individuals adjust their communication styles to seek approval or redefine relational identities (Giles & Ogay, 2007). However, this appears to contrast with the notion of self-categorisation theory by Turner et al. (1987), which states that individuals tend to act in ways aligned with the norms and expectations of their group. For older candidates, this could mean exhibiting traits they believe represent their age group and resisting conforming to agree with the stereotypes imposed by the interviewers.

Perpetuation of ageism through specific implicit and explicit cues

In response to the research question, the review also identified how ageism is perpetuated through implicit and explicit age cues in job seeking. Age cues encompass explicit markers, such as date of birth, photograph, and age details, and implicit markers, such as name, attributes, and affiliation (Kleissner & Jahn, 2021). Consistent with other literature, this systematic review found that older workers are commonly disadvantaged by explicit age markers. Even when explicit age cues are concealed, implicit indicators associated with older traits affect the hireability of older job applicants (Derous & Decoster, 2017; Kleissner & Jahn, 2021). Furthermore, the included studies also revealed that older-

looking appearance, regardless of age, was perceived as less healthy and subsequently rated lower in job suitability (Kaufmann et al., 2016; Kaufmann et al., 2017). These findings were consistent with the empirical findings of Zebrowitz and Montepare (2008) that older traits tend to signal the absence of fitness. In addition, the findings reflect the concept of attractiveness bias, which suggests that individuals who are perceived as physically attractive, often those who are youthful-looking, are more likely associated with positive qualities and competencies (Marlowe et al., 1996). The role of age cues and physical appearance in perpetuating ageism underscores a critical issue in recruitment, as well as the valorisation of youth and penalisation of age. With the absence of the youth as the subject of this topic, it warrants an area of investigation whether younger job seekers can be disadvantaged by youth-associated cues in their resumes, particularly in the context of jobs requiring high experience.

Ageist stereotypes being the key reasons why ageism occur in jobseeking

The review identified ageist stereotypes as being the potential factor why ageism is prevalent in jobseeking. The stereotypes can be broadly categorised into three aspects: skills and qualifications, physical health and fitness and behaviours of job seekers.

A dominant stereotype against job seekers lies in the underestimation of their skills and qualifications, particularly for older workers. The misconception leads to unfair comparison between younger and older groups with comparable competencies (Berde & Mágó, 2022; Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019). This aligns with the Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002), which older groups are often perceived as less capable but modest, contrasting with less modest but more capable belief of younger groups. These assumptions highlight a concerning tendency to undervalue experience and knowledge of older job seekers based on prejudices over their ability such as being technologcally inept, slow learners or lower cognitive capabilities (Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Gioaba & Krings, 2017; Ruggs et al., 2014).

In addition, the persistence of negative stereotypes about job seekers' physical health and fitness highlights the interplay of ageism with broader societal preferences. The review identified that older ages are associated with diminishing health and fitness (Kaufmann et al., 2016; Kaufmann et al., 2017; Richardson et al., 2013). Such stereotypes were found to perpetuate a discriminatory practice and lower the hireability ratings, as evidenced in the studies by Drydakis et al. (2023) and Ruggs et al. (2014).

Furthermore, behavioural stereotypes add complexity to the discussion of ageism in job seeking. These stereotypes show that age-based prejudices are not limited to single age group. Younger candidates are challenged by stereotypes of being less modest (Krings et al., 2023), while older candidates facing labels of inflexibility (Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Poulston & Jenkins, 2016; Ruggs et al., 2014). Additionally, middle-aged groups face biases over their adaptability (Binyamin & Brender-Ilan, 2023). These stereotypes are significant, provided that behavioural traits are considered one of the important criteria for hiring.

The prevalence of ageist stereotypes across these three areas underscores the importance of the broader societal discourse that often portrays aging as a process of decline (Thomas et al., 2014). Within a Western profit-driven context, such ageist notions reflect the devaluation of diversity (Byrd & Sparkman, 2022), leading to prioritising youth-centric productivity ideals and positioning older workers as less valuable. Moreover, these adverse stereotypes challenge the concept of statistical discrimination (Phelps, 1972), underscoring the problematic nature of basing individual assessments on group characteristics. Nevertheless, the included studies highlight a gap on cultural considerations on ageism. Since different cultures may have distinct meanings and perceptions associated with age, taking account of cultural context would provide a more holistic understanding of ageism for future research on this issue.

Intersectional effects of ageism

The findings show that ageism does not affect every group equally. The evaluation of job seekers varies significantly due to the complex interplay of age and other social identities such as gender, race and professional identities. This aligns with the concept of intersectionality, which acknowledges that individuals may face multiple intersecting forms of discrimination (Crenshaw, 2013).

Studies within this review highlight that older women, particularly from marginalised racial groups, often face more severe age discrimination due to the intersection of ageism, sexism and racism (Carlsson & Eriksson, 2019; Drydakis et al., 2018; Ruggs et al., 2014). However, a few studies found no effects of gender on the experience of ageism in job seeking (Kaufmann et al., 2016; Zaniboni et al., 2019). This inconclusive result show how the intersectional effects of ageism may be influenced by context and methodology of the studies, thus providng deviating results.

Work experience was found as another factor intersecting with ageism in recruitment. Findings suggest that relevant work experience may initially buffer against ageist biases, with older candidates being perceived more favorably (Baert et al., 2016; Fritzsche & Marcus, 2013). However, this mitigating effect is not always consistent as other studies found no correlation (Fatfouta & Ghoniem, 2022; Richardson et al., 2013).

The deviations in the intersectional effects highlight the need to refine methodological approaches in investigating the inherently complex concept of intersectionality. Future research could utilise replications, controlled settings, and other rigorous methods to carefully consider the contextual salience of age, gender, race or work experience and how they intersect with other identities in shaping employment opportunities (Marcus & Fritzsche, 2015).

Reverse ageism reconsidered

This review reveals that there is a limited knowledge of reverse ageism in job seeking. According to Cebola et al. (2023), reverse ageism describes age-related biases that target younger age groups. Consistent empirical evidence (Raymer et al., 2017), negative perceptions about lack of experience and loyalty often disadvantage younger candidates (Cebola et al., 2023; Krings et al., 2023). On the other hand, middle-aged candidates face similar biases if they are perceived as competitors or threats to the organisation (Binyamin & Brender-Ilan, 2023).

It is important to note that the term 'reverse ageism'may be misleading since it reinforces a notion that ageism only affects older groups. A broader conceptualisation, such as the ageism definition by (Levy & Banaji, 2002), is crucial to acknowledge that age discrimination could target any age group. While older workers remain the primary focus of ageism research, further studies exploring the challenges faced by younger job seekers are needed to enhance the understanding of this phenomenon in jobseeking context.

RQ2. How do employers account for age diversity in recruitment practices?

In response to the second research question, the review uncovered only a scarcity of research highlighting mitigating strategies on ageism in jobseeking. While age-diversity policies exist, there appears to be a notable absence of their implementation in many firms, as indicated by Amorim et al. (2019) and Cebola et al. (2023). This gap between policy and practice is a significant issue. Binyamin and Brender-Ilan (2023) emphasise the importance of creating a supportive work environment and clear communication to fight against ageism.

Moreover, Döbrich et al. (2014) suggest two types of debiasing: direct and indirect. Direct debiasing involves informing decision-makers about age bias, while indirect debiasing works subconsciously, involving reflexivity in hiring managers' decisions. These strategies were tested and proven effective in reducing ageism during recruitment.

However, their effectiveness differed based on gender, being more effective for older male candidates than female candidates, especially for the indirect debiasing method. This variation is attributed to the accountability mechanism of indirect debiasing, which, in scenarios of limited information, may inadvertently reinforce rather than diminish stereotypes against older female candidates due to more deeply ingrained societal biases. This underscores the need for more tailored approaches in debiasing strategies to effectively address the intertwined complexities of ageism and gender bias (Döbrich et al., 2014).

Poulston and Jenkins (2016) also show a concern that even with age-inclusivity policies, older workers face barriers to employment. It was proposed that forming age-diverse recruitment panels and training managers to assess competencies objectively could help reduce this bias. Consistent with the social identity theory (Turner et al., 1979), this approach can be practical, as having a more diverse membership could reduce the in-group biases, leading to more equal evaluation of candidates across age groups. Furthermore, Fasbender and Wang (2017) highlight the importance of fostering positive interactions between employees of different ages. These strategies reduce age-related prejudices, making managers more open to hiring older workers.

However, the findings of this theme need more empirical evidence on the effectiveness and sustainability of the interventions suggested by the included articles. This represents an area of investigation to determine how these strategies perform over time across various contexts of ageism mitigation. For instance, future research may consider longitudinal studies, which would allow tracking of the implementation and effects of interventions over time, leading to insights into their variability in diverse contexts (Menard, 2002)

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter summarises the systematic reviews on ageism in job seeking. The chapter starts by highlighting the theoretical and practical contributions of this paper, followed by limitations and future research avenues. Lastly, it provides a concluding remark.

5.1. Contributions

Theoretical contributions

This systematic literature review contributes to the theoretical understanding of ageism, a foundational concept introduced by Butler (1969), within the context of recruitment. While prior studies have broadly explored worker-related ageism in workplace settings (Cebola et al., 2023), this paper fills the gap by specifically focusing on ageism in job seeking. The findings underscore the enduring severity of ageism among job seekers, emphasising its parallels with other deeply ingrained forms of discrimination, such as racism and sexism (Butler, 1969). This paper also adds insights into metastereotype theory (Vorauer et al., 1998) by demonstrating how internalised ageist beliefs can lead to stereotype threats and deter older job seekers from applying for specific roles (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Building on the concept of intersectionality, the review also emphasises the intersectional effects of ageism, highlighting potential compound influences of age, gender and race on job-seeking outcomes. It reflects the need to move beyond analysing ageism in isolation and instead adopt theoretical frameworks that explicitly provide intersectional perspectives (e.g., Crenshaw, 2013) to understand unique and overlapping disadvantages that the marginalised identities may face in the job market. The review also sheds light on how prevailing discourses framing aging solely as a decline (Thomas et al., 2014) both perpetuate and are reinforced by statistical discrimination (Phelps, 1972). Finally, the review suggests the potential of applying social identity theory (Turner et al., 1979) to reduce ageism in recruitment. This highlights the area of investigation into how

age-diverse hiring panels could lead to fairer candidate evaluations. Relatedly, the review suggests exploring social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012) to examine how age-related societal expectations create systemic barriers for job seekers who defy those norms.

Practical contributions

Besides theoretical contributions, this paper offers practical implications for employers, HR professionals, and job seekers about ageism in recruitment. Ageist practices, such as discriminatory job advertisements and biased screening methods (e.g., Koćak et al., 2022; Turek & Henkens, 2020), affect the employment opportunities for job seekers of all ages while also causing employers to miss out on a diverse talent pool (Ng & Feldman, 2012; Posthuman & Campion, 2009). To mitigate these issues, organisations and HR professionals could prioritise age-neutral language in job advertisements and avoid skill requirements that subtly signal age preferences. This is particularly crucial given the increasing use of AI in application screening, as machine-learning algorithms trained on biased job ads risk perpetuating discriminatory practices (Kim, 2016; Köchling & Wehner, 2020). Moreover, implementing direct and indirect debiasing strategies, fostering intergenerational interactions, and forming age-diverse hiring panels can help reduce biases among recruiters (Döbrich et al., 2014; Fasbender & Wang, 2017; Poulston & Jenkins, 2016). These measures, in turn, contribute to unbiased recruitment practices and develop a workplace culture that values age diversity.

Job seekers, particularly older groups facing age-related barriers, may benefit from addressing internalised ageism in line with self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), which suggests that beliefs over their capabilities shape individuals' motivation and effort. Hence, job seekers can engage in reflexivity to recognise and overcome negative aging stereotypes, leading to a more positive outlook in job seeking. Furthermore, micro-level interventions on productive aging, such as stress management, technology training and

physical activities, can effectively mitigate the effects of internalised ageism and enhance the employability of specific age groups (Steward, 2022).

5.2. Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of this study is the use of a single database for literature search. While Scopus is an extensive and multidisciplinary database, it is possible that relevant studies from less mainstream journals may not be fully represented. Future research may benefit from expanding to multiple large databases (e.g., EBSCO, JSTOR, ProQuest) to mitigate this potential limitation and provide more exhaustive scope of the review. In addition, although the timeframe on recent publications between 2013 and 2023 offers valuable insights into technological advancement and shifting demographics with the aging population shaping contemporary ageism (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2023), it might overlook important historical insight into the evolving nature of ageism in recruitment. Future studies could incorporate earlier research for a more holistic view of ageism's evolution in recruitment.

Another limitation is that while systematic reviews aim for objectivity through rigorous procedures, my sole involvement introduces potential researcher biases in the literature selection and analysis. Future studies could further enhance rigour by employing multiple researchers for cross-verification. The collaborative approach would reduce the impact of individual biases and strengthen the reliability of the findings.

This review is also limited by the variability of quality of the included studies on ageism in recruitment. Some included articles (e.g., Döbrich et al., 2014; Poulston & Jenkins, 2016) were published in journals with low impact factors. While the review included relevant publications identified, this observation suggests that future studies would benefit from adding other databases for additional high-impact research on the topic.

Another key limitation is that the predominance of Western contexts in the reviewed literature limits understanding of how cultural norms shape ageism. While a Western focus can offer insights, comparative analyses across cultures are needed for a more global perspective. Future research should investigate ageism in more diverse geographic regions, such as Asia, Pacifica, and Africa, to broaden our understanding of how age is perceived in different employment contexts. This is to deepen the understanding of how ageism in employment could distinctively manifest in recruitment by cultures, beliefs, customs and social hierarchies of different regions.

Lastly, this review discuss the findings through basic age categorization as younger, middle-aged and older job seekers. Relying on these age groups may exclude potential insights from other forms of age categorization, such as age range or generational labels. Therefore, further studies could consider standardising constructs of ageism. This will allow for more consistent comparison of studies, if the same terminology is applied.

5.3. Conclusion

This paper provides a systematic review of ageism in job seeking. It explores how ageism impacts job seekers from different age groups and identifies how age diversity can be accounted for in recruitment practices. Based on 27 peer-reviewed journal articles between 2013 and 2023, this systematic review has uncovered six key themes central to understanding the issue. These themes highlight how ageism manifests in different stages of recruitment, the three dimensions of ageism stereotypes, the intersectional effects, the influence of age cues in hiring decisions, the reverse ageism against younger age groups and the mitigation intervention. While insightful, the review identified a scarcity of ageism research in jobseeking, in comparison to other forms of discrimination. This limited results may occur due to several exeptions to the search, which were applied in the beginning of the study. Furthermore, the review also suggests potential avenues for future research. These include examining ageism against younger age groups, exploring

deeper intersectionality aspects of ageism during recruitment and evaluating the effectiveness of organisational strategies and policies to mitigate ageism. The findings provide insightful theoretical contributions to the diversity and inclusion literature and practical implications for organisations.

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Appendix 1 Extracted Data

No.	Author(s), Year and Country	Research Purposes	Theoretical Perspective	Sample Population	Primary Age Groups Investigated	Research Methods	Key Findings/Propositions
1	Amorim et al. (2019) Brazil	To investigate how businesses in Brazil manage ageism issues	Not explicitly stated	Workers aged 50 and over, classified as older (n = 13.0 million during 2011-2015) in the Brazilian Annual Social Information Database	50 and over	Quantitative - Survey	• Private firms with advanced HRM practices employ fewer workers aged 50 or above compared to the market average. • The participation of workers aged 50 and over in the labor market is increasing, and these workers are predominantly male with higher education and longer formal contracts. • HRM policies and practices in these firms rarely address ageism, and individual hiring processes often overlook the issue. • The study indicates a need for future HRM

							considerations regarding the aging workforce.
2	Baert et al. (2016) Belgium	To present a new method to assess age bias in recruitment, by considering the activities of older applicants in post-education years To disentangle age-related bias from disparate treatment based on other activities of older workers.	Human capital theory	Fictitious 1,152 job applicants aged 38, 44 and 50 years for 576 vacancies across various occupations in the Belgian labour market. The study compared age differences of 6 and 12 years within each pair to represent younger and older candidates.	34, 44 and 50 years old	Quantitative – Experiment (Correspondence Studies)	• Age discrimination exists in Belgium's labour market and is difficult to disentangle from unequal treatment arising from differing human capital fully • Younger candidates had 64.3% higher chance of being invited for interview and 39.7% higher chance of receiving positive assessment, despite the similar qualifications and career experiences. • The extent of ageism in hiring depends on the older candidates' career patterns and is particularly pronounced if they undertake irrelevant jobs after education

3	Baltinovic et al. (2023) Multiple countries	To determine the extend of ageism in hiring by using data from previous studies and experiment, focusing on call-back rates and the probability for hiring and interviewing	Not explicitly stated	Analysis of 13 studies with a total combined sample size of 15,232 from USA, France, Sweden, Belgium, Latvia, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Australia	Control Group: 29-35 years old Older Applicants: Categorized into the following age groups: 40-49 years old 50-59 years old 60-65 years old 66+ years old	Meta-analysis	• Age discrimination in hiring is positively related to the increase in age • Moderate magnitude of ageism against older job seekers in hiring
4	Berde and Mago (2022) Hungary	To determine whether age discrimination affects older Hungarian females in job-seeking.	Probability theory (to quantify the magnitude of ageism)	786 job applications for office assistant and economic analyst positions in Hungary, using two pairs of fictitious female	Younger: 34 Older: 60	Quantitative – Experiment (Correspondence Studies)	• Younger female applicants were more likely to receive interview 2.2 times than older job seekers • The skills and qualifications of older female applicants were rated lower by 45 to 67 percent of their actual skills for both positions

				applicants aged 34 and 60.			
5	Binyamin and Brender-Ilan (2023) Israel	To investigate the impact of social climate and communication on the attitudes toward middle-aged workers and their perceived employability	Self-Determination Theory Social Exchange Theory Intergroup Contact Theory	537 employees from several organisations through questionnaires and referrals.	Middle-aged: 45-60 years old	Quantitative - Survey	• Negative views on middle-aged workers are associated with lower perceived employability • Negative attitudes were shaped by the social climate at workplace and age stereotypes. • Hiring decision-makers tend to have negative view toward middle-aged candidates, if their own career prospect is affected
6	Carlsson & Eriksson (2019) Sweden	To explore age discrimination in hiring decisions and determine its magnitude in the Swedish labour market	Statistical Discrimination	6,066 fictitious resumes aged between 35 to 70 years submitted to 2,022 employers in Sweden	35-70 years	Quantitative – Experiment (Correspondence Studies)	• Strong prevalence of age discrimination in hiring decisions in the Swedish job market • Callback rate substantially decreases with age at the interval between 35 – 70 years old,

							very low close to retirement age • The decline in callback rate is higher for females than males • Employers perceive older candidates to be less capable in learning, inflexible, resistant to change and lower ambition.
7	Cebola et al. (2023) Multiple countries	To provide an overview and scope of ageism in the workplace context and identify gaps and future research agenda	Social Identity Theory	Analysis of 58 articles from electronic database from multiple countries.	Various: ten articles studied samples aged 45 years; two articles focused on 50 years and below; one article looked at a sample aged starting 18 years and above	Systematic Review	• Research on ageism in the work context is relatively recent and most studies were published from post 2000. • Most prevalent category is diagnosis studies. There is a need for more research on multi-dimensionality and complexity of ageism

							at work and the need for interdisciplinary research to enhance the understanding
8	Derous and Decoster (2017) Belgium	To explore the impact of subtle age cues on hiring discrimination To examine how age-related information on resumes affects hireability ratings.	Job Market Signalling Theory	610 HR professionals in Belgium, who involved in recruitment, evaluating four fictitious resumes aged 26 and 54 years old.	26 and 54 years old	Quantitative – Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Applicants with older implicit age cues on resumes got lower hireability scores compared to younger implicit age cues • The bias was stronger for older than younger candidates, suggesting age discrimination as the main barrier to employment for older job seekers • Concealing age cues such as birth dates did not increase older applicants' hireability • Recruiters may use subtle clues to estimate age, resulting in biased decisions

9	Döbrich et al. (2014) Belgium	To assess the impact of direct and indirect debiasing of HR professionals toward ageism in performance appraisal To investigate the impact of direct and indirect debiasing methods on age discrimination in hiring decisions of HR professionals	Direct and Indirect Debiasing	Study 1: 176 HR professionals aged between 22 and 77 years performing performance appraisal of fictitious age groups. Study 2: 384 HR professionals aged between 20 and 75 years evaluating fictitious job candidates	28 and 59 years old	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Direct debiasing effectively reduce age-related stereotypes in performance evaluation and hiring decisions • Indirect debiasing diminish age bias against older male job applicants, but less effective on female applicants • The success of debiasing strategies can differ based on the organisational culture and decision-making approach • The long-term impact of informing evaluators about biases is not evident and require further research

10	Drydakis and Paraskevopoulou (2023) UK	To investigate the intersection between age, gender and race at the early phase of recruitment processes and the impact on hiring and wage outcomes	Intersectionality framework	A combined total of 804 pairs of fictitious job applications from White British and Black British mena nd women	28 and 50 years old	Quantitative - Experiment (Correspondence Studies)	• Older White and Black British both males and females face challenges in accessing jobs and often resorted to lower-paid occupations than younger counterparts • Ageism is more pronounced for Black British men and women, with Black British women being the most affected. • The findings correlate with ethnic biases and gendered stereotype that physical and performance of female individuals decline sooner than male counterparts.
11	Fasbender and Wang (2017) UK	To explore the influence of intergenerational contact on hiring decision-makings by analysing how	Intergroup Contact Theory	232 participants with hiring authority from various industries within the UK	55 or older	Quantitative – Survey	• Decision-makers' willingness to hire older people is positively related to diversity training, intergenerational contact frequency and

		decision-makers' emotional and cognitive reaction affect their willingness to hire older workers					quality and outgroup competence. • Willingness to hire older people is negatively related to intergroup anxiety.
12	Fatfouta and Ghoniem (2022) Germany	To present a dual-pathway model in exploring how perceived age of the candidate affects their hireability in hiring processes.	Impression Formation Theory Social Categorization Theory	A total combined sample of 419 participants consisting of persons and experienced HR professionals, which were randomly assigned to evaluate a fictitious job applications of younger and older candidates.	Young-looking: 25-35 and old-looking: 45-55	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Age discrimination in hiring stem from two factors: the perceived appearance and experience of candidates • Older candidates are viewed as less favourable in terms of appearance but more experienced • The overall hiring decision is influenced by the combined perceptions of appearance and experience • Age bias is more pronounced when candidates appear older

13	Fritzsche and Marcus (2013) US	To investigate the extent of ageism in between and during career transition between older and younger workers	Theory of Vocational Personality Terror Management Theory	251 undergraduate students in the US aged between 18 to 30 years old were recruited to evaluate fictitious job applications.	26 and 52 years old	Quantitative – Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Age bias is more pronounced for older applicants during between-career transitions compared to within-career transitions • Older applicants are perceived as less suitable for roles, especially in between-career shifts • Job experience confounds the relationship between age and type of career transition
14	Gioaba and Krings (2017) Switzerland	To examine the efficacy of impression management (IM) strategies in minimising age bias towards older job seekers in recruitment	Social Identity Theory	515 undergraduate students in Switzerland were recruited to evaluate the perceived hireability of the fictitious applicants	29 and 51 years old	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Older applicants utilising social identity-based IM tactics were perceived more favourably in terms of competency, particularly in adaptability, learning and technology • IM tactics had more pronounced effects on

							the employability of older candidates compared to the younger counter part, indicating a potential tool to navigate the age-related stereotypes in job-seeking
15	Kaufmann et al. (2016) Switzerland	To explore the influence of facial age appearance on hiring intentions and its driving mechanism	Theory of Impression Formation	336 participants from Switzerland, Germany, Austria and the US were recruited to evaluate fictitious job applicants	30 and 50 years old	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Facial age appearance significantly influenced hiring intentions, regardless of control for chronological age and gender • Candidates appearing younger were favoured over those looking older • The preference for youth was driven by its association with healthier and fit characteristics • Gender and age do not have significant effects on hiring outcomes

16	Kaufmann et al. (2017) Switzerland	To investigate the influence of facial appearance and perceived fitness on hiring decisions and whether these factors correlate with the age of job applicants	Theory of Impression Formation	A total combined sample of 647 participants (383 in Study 1 and 264 in Study 2) from the US, Austria, Germany and Switzerland were recruited to evaluate fictitious job applicants	30 and 50 years old	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Candidates with older appearance were perceived less favourably in hiring due to the perception of lower physical and cognitive function • Indications of cognitive or physical fitness through hobbies moderate the adverse effects of facial age appearance in hiring • The importance of appearance for a position significantly influenced the impact of facial age on hiring decision • Actual age had no influence on perceptions of hireability or fitness
17	Kleissner and Jahn (2021)	To examine the effects of implicit and explicit age cues in job	Stereotype Embodiment Theory	Combined total of 1,011 participants were recruited	20 and 60	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Younger candidates are favoured across all job roles (profit, leader, subordinate)

	Germany and Austria	application on hypothetical hiring decisions To determine if a small intervention could reduce age discrimination		to across three studies: Study 1: 509 Study 2: 300 Study 3: 202			• Regardless of job attributes being controlled for valence and job relevance, younger candidates are more favoured toward hiring decisions • Age cues have a significant influence on the evaluation of job applications and age discrimination is prevalent in hiring processes. • Small anti-discrimination intervention was effective in alleviating ageism in hiring
18	Koçak et al. (2022) Belgium	To examine if negative metastereotyped personality criteria in job advertisements influence the	Self-Efficacy Theory Self-Categorization Theory	556 jobseekers from Belgium were recruited to evaluate job ads	30 and below; 50 and above	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Older job seekers possessed lower self-efficacy in response to personality requirements in job ads, resulting in lower

	intention to apply for jobs among older and younger job seekers			intentions to apply for the job • Younger job seekers' self-efficacy positively correlate with their qualifications, but not correlate with their intention to apply • Negative metastereotypes in job advertisements reduced older job seekers' self-efficacy, further affecting their application intentions • Not significant effects of negative metastereotypes were found for younger candidates • For older candidates, the type of traits mentioned in job ads influenced their application intentions, regardless of their actual qualifications

19	Krings et al. (2023) USA	To investigate how the perceived age and gender of job interviewees affect the way evaluators respond to strong self-promotion	Theory of Impression Management, Theory of Backlash and Stereotype Maintenance Social Identity Theory Intersectionality Theory	361 participants in the US were recruited to assess the fictitious job candidates from younger, middle and older age groups	25, 40 and 60 years old classified as younger, middle-aged and older	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Evaluators perceived applicants demonstrating high self-promotion as less modest but equally competent compared to those with moderate self-promotion • Younger men showing high self-promotion experienced more negative evaluations than older men. • Older women showing high self-promotion were perceived more positively than younger women
20	Lyons et al. (2014) USA	To explore the link between the perception of age-related bias and age-related identity management	Identity Management Theory	129 job seekers without employment from a job-search seminar in the US, aged	18 to 77 years old	Quantitative - Survey	• Job seekers tend to commonly acknowledge their age and rarely abstain from disclosing their age or concealing their age

		strategies of unemployed job seekers		18-77, 50% female.			• Recognizing a potentially stigmatised visible identity can result in a more favourable view of that individuals
21	Perry et al. (2017) USA	To assess and compare the influence of age and generational membership on hiring perceptions and outcomes of job candidates	Generational cohort	Study 1: 125 graduate students from US college consisting of Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers Study 2: 245 online respondents consisting of Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers.	60 years old or Baby Bommers and 29 years old or Gen-Y/Millennials	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Younger and millennial applicants receive better ratings than older and boomers • The preference for younger and millennials were related to stereotypes about adaptability, motivation and competence • Generational labels had a stronger influence on hiring outcome than mere age • Negative perceptions (such as perceived overqualification) were more influenced by age stereotypes

							than positive perceptions • Older participants with more experience showed lower age and generational biases in their evaluations
22	Poulston and Jenkins (2016) New Zealand	To identify the obstacle to hiring older employees within New Zealand's hotel sector and to determine the causes of those barriers.	Not explicitly stated.	44 hotel managers in New Zealand responded to the questionnaires. A total combined of 13 older hotel managers and workers were interviewed .	45 and above	Mixed-Method (Survey and Interviews)	• Older workers experience age discrimination in both policies and practices in the hotel industry, regardless of anti-discrimination policies in the workplace • Obstacles to hiring older workers include negative views toward older employees, a preference for younger employees and the lack of training and development catered to older employees • Formal education, diverse hiring practices, in-house

							training and age-aware practices help reducing discrimination
23	Previtali et al. (2023) Italy	To examine the use of age categorisation and age-based biases in discussions by job candidates during interviews To explore how interviewers respond or align with these age-related mentions	Social Categorisation	Video recordings of 24 job interviews	Not specified - age was considered as a social category	Qualitative - Conversation Analysis	• Job candidates utilised age co-membership with the interviewers as a tactic to create a sense of affiliation or to address perceived differences between the candidate and the interviewer • Ageism in hiring is constructed and reinforced through the way the candidates and employers interact during job interviews, which aligns with the principles of Discursive Psychology.

24	Richardson et al. (2013) Australia	To examine the influence of applicant age on hiring decision in the IT industry	Double Standard Model	102 university students and organisation based participants in Australia were recruited to assess a fictitious job candidate's hireability.	33 to 66 years old	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Older job applicants were generally viewed more less favourable due to age-related stereotypes and negative aging views • The hiring possibility for applicants decreased with increasing age (curvilinear relationship). The effect was lower among older candidates with strong work background
25	Ruggs et al. (2014) USA	To investigate the interactive influence of age and gender on hiring decisions of job applicants	Social Role Theory	320 online participants aged between 18 to 72 years old.	20, 40 and 60 years old	Quantitative - Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Female applicants were perceived as less suitable for tech roles compared to males • Increasing age of applicant correlates with lower suitable for both tech and physical jobs

							• Older male applicants faced more negative assessments than both older female and younger male applicants, due to societal norms about gender and employment stability. • Stereotypes of tech skills and agility associated to their age negatively affected their hiring evaluation
26	Turek and Henkens (2020) Poland	To examine how age stereotypes influence the hireability of older individuals	Job-Typing Theory Human Capital Theory	15,408 respondents of Human Capital Study-Employers Survey in Poland during 2010 to 2014.	50 and over years old	Quantitative - Survey	• Job requirements were ageist and nearly half of job offers excluded older applicants in advance • Older job seekers only found advantages in recruitment when the job required technical or managerial skills • Job requirements focusing on office skills and the need for independence at work, which are

							generally considered age-neutral, did not provide advantage to older job seekers in recruitment. • Lower probability of hiring workers over 50 years old for jobs requiring intensive training
27	Zaniboni et al. (2019) Italy	To examine ageism and its influence on resume assessment.	Social Identity Theory	110 participants from Italy aged between 18 to 65 years.	50 and above, 34 and below	Quantitative – Experiment (Scenario-based)	• Explicit age biases improved perceptions of younger applicants' resumes and not significantly impact older applicants. • Implicit age stereotypes negatively affected the ratings of older applicants' resumes, but no significant impact on younger applicants. • Age biases are stronger when based on implicit rather than explicit stereotypes, indicating a possible unconscious ageism

- The effects of age stereotypes are not affected by the gender of both applicants and evaluators.

Appendix 2 Journals Included

No.	Journal	No. of Articles	Ranking	Journal Impact Factor
1	Journal of Managerial Psychology	3	B	3.2
2	Frontiers in Psychology	3	None	3.8
3	Journal of Applied Social Psychology	3	B	2.5
4	Employee Relations	2	B	3.4
5	International Journal of Selection and Assessment	2	A	2.2
6	Ageing and Society	1	None	2.5
7	Revista de Gestao	1	None	1.2
8	Labour Economics	1	A	2.4
9	Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism	1	B	0.624
10	Journal of Economic Psychology	1	A	3.5
11	International Journal of Human Resources Development and Management	1	None	0.89
12	Applied Psychology	1	None	7.2
13	European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology	1	A	4.3
14	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	1	B	2.4
15	Discourse Studies	1	A	1.8
16	Collabra: Psychology	1	None	2.5
17	British Journal of Management	1	A	5.6
18	Work, Aging and Retirement	1	None	3.7
19	Work, Employment and Society	1	A	3.7