Managing Age Discrimination: An Examination of the Techniques Used When Seeking Employment

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Purpose: This article examines the age-related management techniques used by older workers in their search for employment. Design and Methods: Data are drawn from interviews with individuals aged 45–65 years (N = 30). Results: Findings indicate that participants develop “counteractions” and “concealments” to manage perceived age discrimination. Individuals counteract employers’ ageist stereotypes by maintaining their skills and changing their work-related expectations and conceal age by altering their résumés, physical appearance, and language used. Implications: This research suggests that there is a need to reexamine the hiring practices of employers and to improve legislation in relation to their accountability.

Key Words: Ageism, Hiring practices, Management techniques, Older workers, Unemployment

It is widely recognized that the Canadian population is aging, and as a result, there are a wide number of social and economic changes expected to occur in the coming years. In particular, changes in the domain of work will be considerable as individuals aged 45–65 years are estimated to represent close to half of the working-age population by the year 2015 (Forum of Labour Market Ministers, 2002). Mandatory retirement was eliminated in Ontario in 2006, and thus, increasing attention has been paid to the aging of the workforce by both lay and academic audiences. In fact, the Canadian government has been trying to encourage older workers to remain in the labor force longer through various policy changes (Policy Research Initiative, 2005). Despite these changes, the average age of retirement in Canada has been decreasing from 64.9 years in 1976 to 61.4 years in 2005 (Conference Board of Canada, 2006).

Further, industries in Canada, such as manufacturing, have had large layoffs in recent years and switched their focus to more contract and part-time work, which leaves older workers with little protection under employment standards law and employment insurance (McMullin, Cooke, & Downie, 2004). In fact, it has been recognized that recent changes in the Canadian economy have led to the need for workers to be geographically, occupationally, and industrially mobile as well as invest more heavily in job searches, training, and education (Secretariat for the Expert Panel on Older Workers, 2007). Thus, displaced older workers face the most challenges due to their lack of mobility, education, and training and due to the existence of age discrimination. These factors cause older Canadian workers to have a reduced chance of finding reemployment once unemployed. Further, older workers take considerably longer than younger ones to find work once unemployed due in part to the existence of age discrimination (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2000; Walker, 2002). In fact, as age increases, so does the average duration of unemployment for working-age Canadians. Individuals aged 15–24 years spend an average of 7.9 weeks unemployed, those aged 25–54 years spend 17.9 weeks unemployed, and 55- to 64-year-olds spend an average of 22.8 weeks unemployed (Statistics Canada, 2007). This finding is similar to that in the United States, where individuals aged 16–19 years spend an average of 11.2 weeks unemployed and those aged 20–24 years spend 14.4 weeks unemployed on average (U.S.)
Bureau of Labor Statistics: Division of Labor Force Statistics, 2007). This pattern continues, where number of weeks spent unemployed increases as age increases, and 45- to 54-year-olds spend an average of 21.2 weeks unemployed and 55- to 64-year-olds spend an average of 21.9 weeks unemployed.

Therefore, despite the growing number of older individuals and policy changes that encourage them to remain in the workforce longer, labor shortages will still occur due to their tendency to retire earlier (both voluntarily and involuntarily due to discrimination) and to their poor retention and recruitment. Although an increasing amount of research has been focused on policy changes related to the aging workforce and quantitative studies examining employers’ attitudes toward older workers (reviewed subsequently), there is a lack of research on how various policies and practices (both positive and negative) affect older workers. Specifically, little is known about the hiring practices of employers from the older worker’s perspective and how these practices influence older workers when searching for employment. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to examine older workers’ perceptions of employers’ attitudes toward them and their management of these (mostly) negative attitudes.

**Literature Review**

**Employers’ Attitudes Toward Older Workers**

Employers’ first impressions of older workers are often based on stereotypes—“mental pictures of people based on their membership in a group” (American Association for Retired Persons [AARP], 1994, p. 8). Although research suggests positive attitudes toward older workers on certain dimensions (knowledge, experience, honesty, dependability, work ethic, mentoring, and stability; Berger, 1999; Marshall, 1996; Walker & Taylor, 1998), they are perceived negatively in many other areas. For example, studies indicate that employers believe older workers are less flexible, in poorer health, less creative, less interested in technological change, and less trainable than are younger workers (Chiu, Chan, Snape, & Redman, 2001; Guillemard & Walker, 1994). In addition, older workers are seen as being more prone to accidents and staying with the company for a shorter period of time as compared with younger workers. Older workers are also viewed by employers as less productive and less able to engage in physically demanding work than younger workers (Henkens, 2005).

Although most of these stereotypes have been disproved in the literature, employers continue to believe many of them and often make their hiring decisions accordingly (Berger, 1999, 2004). The key reasons that employers cite for not hiring older workers relate to beliefs concerning their lack of computer literacy, followed by lack of other appropriate skills, lack of appropriate qualifications, and difficulty adapting to varying work settings (Marshall, 1996). Employers’ stereotypical attitudes have also been linked to poor opportunities for training, promotion, and retention of older workers (Chiu et al., 2001). Another study that specifically examined the relationship between employers’ attitudes and their behaviors toward older workers also found a direct association between the two in relation to hiring, training, and advancement opportunities (Taylor & Walker, 1998). Further, Taylor and Urwin (2001) found that older workers participate less than younger workers in employer training programs due in large part to an age bias in employers’ decision making. In addition, stereotypical attitudes of employers have been tied to negative views concerning the retirement or retention of their older employees (Henkens, 2005). In fact, employers who have less personal contact with older workers have more negative attitudes toward them than employers who have more personal contact with older workers. This could suggest that although employers may be positive toward older workers already employed by their organization, they are negative toward the recruitment of new older employees. Employers’ attitudes toward older workers also vary significantly according to company size, employers’ age, and employers’ gender, with older female employers from smaller companies displaying the most positive attitudes (Berger, 1999).

Although there is a growing body of literature on employers’ attitudes toward older workers, there is a lack of research that examines older workers’ perceptions regarding ageism. However, according to a national American work and career survey of more than 2,500 individuals aged 45–74 years, 80% of individuals who are searching for employment feel that age discrimination exists in the workplace (AARP, 2002, p. 66). Also, 15% of older individuals feel that they were not hired for a particular job because of age (AARP, 2002, p. 13). Findings from the survey speculate that older workers’ perceptions about age-related barriers to

**Managing Attitudes and Behaviors**

Concepts that are taken from the symbolic interactionist framework are used in this article to gain a meaningful understanding of individuals’ motives, behaviors, and interactions (Blumer, 1969). In this perspective, individuals are seen as having agency and as engaging in mindful interaction and self-reflexive behavior. Therefore, individuals act, they do not simply respond, and they make choices within the constraints of the broader social context. Under the symbolic interactionist umbrella, Goffman (1959, 1963) has demonstrated the importance of stigma, identity, self-presentation, and impression management through his dramaturgic perspective. The concept of stigma refers to “an attribute that is deeply discrediting” (Goffman, 1963, p. 3) and results in discriminatory attitudes and behaviors being directed toward the stigmatized individual. More recently, the conceptualization of stigma has been redefined as existing “when elements of labeling, stereotyping, separating, status loss, and discrimination co-occur in a power situation that allows these processes to unfold” (Link & Phelan, 2001, p. 382).

In relation to identity, Goffman (1963) described three types of identity that are used in the developmental process: “felt identity,” the meaning attributed to one’s own identity; “presented identity,” the view of oneself that is projected to others; and “social identity,” the meaning that others attribute to the individual. He argued that one’s presented identity can be altered to meet the needs of any given situation. By using certain techniques, individuals actively control the image they are projecting to others (presented identity), to obtain a desirable social identity. Goffman’s (1959, 1963) use of the term “impression management” explains how individuals present themselves to others by conveying certain images that they consider appropriate in a given situation. In this way, individuals can manipulate the presentation of themselves displayed to others and create a distinct “definition of the situation” (Thomas, 1972) to sway others’ perceptions of them in a positive direction. For example, in their sociological study of the process of becoming doctors, Haas and Shaffir (1991) discussed medical students’ “constant need to create and manage the image of a competent self through the process of impression management” (p. 74). Thus, the importance of managing self-presentations is a well-developed concept in many realms of the sociological literature. With respect to aging, research on older widows has shown that to avoid being stigmatized and maintain a positive identity, the women “suppressed” evidence of age (Matthews, 1979, pp. 74–75). “People have time allotted to tend to physical and mental needs . . . to cover potential age stigma signs, such as wrinkles or gray hair, by surgical intervention or hair dyes” (Luken, 1987, p. 185). Thus, research suggests that individuals use certain management strategies to avoid being classified as “old” and being stigmatized by others.

Studies indicate that impression management tactics are often used in the context of a job interview (Delerly & Kacmar, 1998; Rosenfeld, 1997). More specifically, Delery and Kacmar showed three types of impression management techniques that are useful in an interview setting: (a) entitlements (taking credit for a prior work-related success), (b) enhancements (making statements reflecting one’s own positive attributes), and (c) self-promotion (highlighting strengths in relation to those required by the ideal applicant). Their research considered the importance of applicants’ age in an interview setting but only included participants with a maximum age of 38 years and considered age to be an advantage in relation to having more experience with the interview process itself. Other research indicates that individuals use impression management strategies when they perceive that discrepancies exist between the feedback received in an organizational setting and their desired social identity (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997). When discrepancies do occur, individuals acquire alternative techniques to use and then wait for additional feedback, which determines the future interaction between the participants. Accounts (Scott & Lyman, 1968) and disclaimers (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975) are also used in the employment context (Bozeman & Kacmar), to avoid negative stigmatization and negotiate identity in relation to past and future behaviors. Thus, although previous research has not focused on older workers seeking employment, it does suggest that certain strategies are particularly useful for enabling individuals to focus the interview on their strengths and positive attributes.

Despite these findings, there is a lack of research that seeks to understand older workers’ experiences...
during the job search process. This article is part of a larger research project, which examined the meaning and import of age in the job search process (Berger, 2004). The majority of participants in this project experienced ageism when looking for work. The present article examines how these participants manage this ageism when searching for employment. To do this, I draw on data from 30 semistructured interviews with older unemployed workers. More specifically, this qualitative study addresses the following research questions: Once older job hunters perceive they have been discriminated against by potential employers, do they develop specific management techniques that they feel help them in the job search process? Are these techniques similar to the ones used by younger workers or are there specific age-related techniques that develop during the job search process?

Methods

This study used a qualitative methodological approach that allowed for a direct examination of older workers’ experiences in the job search process. The use of qualitative methodologies allowed for the subjective meanings and interpretations of my participants’ experiences to be revealed in a way that is often not possible through quantitative methodologies (George, 1990). This study also used the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in an attempt to let the data generate the theory, and thus, initial research questions were reformulated as the study progressed to better reflect the emerging data.

The data for this study were drawn from semistructured interviews with 30 unemployed individuals aged 45–65 years. Individuals became unemployed for a variety of reasons, including corporate downsizing, layoffs, or desire to leave their previous place of employment. I also conducted 35 hrs of participant observation in three older worker programs in the greater Toronto area to help provide a context for older workers’ experiences. Human Resources Development Canada (1999) created these programs to assist older workers in their job search process by providing them with specific workshops to meet their needs. These workshops covered topics such as interviewing skills, personality assessments, computer training, résumé writing, and specific sessions on understanding the myths and realities of being an older worker. I recruited most of my respondents by attending these workshops (n = 20) and posting recruitment advertisements in older worker programs (n = 4) and in employment agencies geared to all age groups (n = 0). To obtain participants who may not have sought out specific employment assistance (anticipating that this may lead to distinct results), recruitment advertisements were also placed in community centers (n = 1) and libraries (n = 0) in a major Canadian city, in a monthly newspaper aimed at individuals aged 55 years and older (n = 3), on a university Web site (n = 0), and through personal referral techniques (n = 2). To be included in my study, participants had to be between the ages of 45 and 65 years (in congruence with the definition of older workers given in the majority of literature), actively searching for work, and unemployed for 3 months or longer. (The stipulation that individuals must be unemployed for 3 months or longer was used because individuals unemployed for less than this may still be highly distressed from losing their jobs and may not have had the opportunity to develop age-related management techniques for their job search.)

The interviews conducted in this study lasted from 45 min to 2 hrs. The first 8 interviews were conducted in 1999. An additional 22 interviews were done in 2002 to expand the initial research project. (As the unemployment rates were similar in 1999 and 2002 [7.6% and 7.7%, respectively], I do not believe that the economic conditions differentially affected participants’ ability to secure employment in the two time periods [Statistics Canada, 2004a, 2004b]. Further, due to the qualitative nature of this project and the related focus on individuals’ meanings that were attributed to their experiences, the fact that data were collected at two different time points is not perceived to have altered the findings of my study.) Prior to conducting the interviews, the study was approved by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board. Interviews were held at a variety of locations (including older worker programs, community centers, libraries, and coffee shops), depending on individuals’ personal preferences. A semistructured interview format was used to guide the interview along several key areas, as well as to provide enough flexibility for the participants to discuss issues freely that arose during the course of the interview. The interview guide included questions on demographics, employment background, perceptions of age discrimination, feelings related to these perceptions, and strategies used to gain employment. With consent from the participants, interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed verbatim.
The sample for this study included individuals who varied by age, gender, marital status, ethnic or religious background, country of origin, education, income, and length of time unemployed. Just over half of the participants were aged 45–54 years (n = 16) and the remaining ones were 55–65 years (n = 14). There was an equal number of men and women in this study and the majority of participants were married (n = 16). The remaining participants were divorced (n = 6), never married (n = 6), or widowed (n = 2). In terms of ethnic or religious background, the majority of participants indicated that they were atheist or preferred not to answer this question (n = 16). The remaining respondents varied in their ethnic or religious background. The sample was quite well educated, as the majority of the participants had a college or university degree (n = 19). In terms of participants’ personal income before they became unemployed, individuals who were comfortable disclosing their income were quite dispersed among the income categories provided to them in the interview, aside from the lowest income category ($19,999 or less). Participants were also asked their personal and family income level since being unemployed; however, only a small number of participants were willing to provide this information. The length of time that individuals were unemployed also varied substantially, ranging from 3 months to 6 years. The most common length of time unemployed for the participants was between 6 and 8 months. The occupational backgrounds of the participants interviewed were quite varied. Occupational categories represented in this study included administrative, construction, consulting, education, engineering, executive, finance, food and service, health care, human resources, law, management, sales, marketing, and television and film.

Data Analysis

The data were coded according to several key themes, which were broken down further into various subthemes and subcategories (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 142). I used three stages to analyze my data based on the grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1988). First, I used open coding and explored preliminary themes that emerged from the data. I then used axial coding, which allowed me to create a framework involving these themes and helped me to identify and link more specific subthemes and subcategories. Finally, I used selective coding, which involved confirming and refining my initial set of codes.

This article is part of a larger research study containing six main research themes. “Management techniques,” the focus of this article, was one of my six key themes, which was broken down further into three subthemes and nine subcategories. After reading through the data and recognizing similar statements from various participants in terms of a pattern beginning to present itself, I created a theme, subtheme, or subcategory. For example, looking at the theme “management techniques” as a whole, I began to notice some common strategies that participants were using in an effort to find employment. I divided these strategies into three subthemes based on “preparation for the interview,” “impression management during the interview,” and “alteration of employment.” I then more closely examined these subthemes and found that within the subtheme “preparation for the interview,” various patterns began emerging, such as “physical preparations” (related to appearance), “training,” “résumé modification,” and “mental preparations.” These became the subcategories. Two subcategories also presented themselves with respect to “impression management during the interview,” which I grouped into “clothing for the interview” and “youth-oriented language during the interview.” Finally, the third subtheme, “alteration of employment,” was broken down into the subcategories “alteration of employment goals,” “alteration of employment type,” and “alteration of geographic location for employment.” I developed codes (e.g., 1.1, 1.2) and recorded them on the transcripts by hand and then I loaded the data into the qualitative analytical software program QSR NUD*IST (Non-Numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing). This program allows researchers to code large amounts of text, which can then be stored according to themes and accessed easily in the future. Thus, once the transcripts were loaded into QSR NUD*IST, I entered the codes I had created by hand so that when I was ready to write about a particular subtheme or subcategory, this software would highlight these previously coded quotations.

To ensure trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or accuracy of its interpretation, several techniques were used. First, interviews were transcribed verbatim by a research assistant, and I then checked them independently for errors. Second, although I coded the data myself, themes that emerged were shared with my peers and only finalized once this consultation took place. At that point, a consensus was reached that these themes
accurately represented the data they were describing. Transcripts were also reexamined on several occasions to confirm accuracy of the themes that initially presented themselves. Finally, I continued to recruit participants until I felt that no new themes were emerging and data saturation was achieved (Patton, 2002). It is anticipated that by using the methods previously described, the transferability of my findings (similar to external validity in quantitative studies) to other research contexts will be heightened (Lincoln & Guba). In addition, member checks, a technique that involves the corroboration of preliminary findings with research participants, were used early on in my study to ensure the credibility (similar to internal validity in quantitative studies) of my findings. These member checks involved follow-up telephone conversations with several participants. During these conversations, I suggested specific themes that were emerging from the data and asked respondents if these themes accurately reflected their job search experiences.

Results: Managing Age Discrimination

In the job-seeking process, participants felt that prospective employers used various mechanisms to discriminate against them that reflected negative stereotypes with respect to skills, training, adaptability or flexibility, and financial costs. Further, participants felt that employers examined their résumés in a discriminatory fashion (i.e., choosing candidates to interview based on the year their degree was received or the number of years of experience they had), that the job interview was a mechanism for employers to assess the age of job candidates, and that ageist language was used during the hiring process. (For more detail on participants’ perceptions concerning age discrimination in the hiring process, see Berger [2004].) As a result of these negative experiences, the vast majority of individuals in this study developed specific strategies that they felt helped them avoid being stigmatized as old when searching for employment. Although it is recognized that most individuals, regardless of age, use various management techniques during their job searches (e.g., wearing appropriate attire, preparing mentally for an interview), the strategies that I refer to in this section are management techniques that are related to age. I have grouped these techniques into two categories. The first type of technique used by respondents I refer to as “counteractions”—tactics used to offset negative stereotypes. These techniques involve participants attempting to counteract employers’ ageist stereotypes by maintaining their skills and changing their work-related expectations. The second type of technique used by participants was “concealments”—strategies used to hide specific information (i.e., age). These techniques, developed to conceal age, included participants altering their résumés, physical appearance, and language used.

Counteractions

Skill Maintenance.—The first age-related management technique used by respondents to counteract employers’ negative attitudes toward them involved keeping up-to-date with training. This technique was used by the majority of participants, slightly more often by women as compared with men. Overall, they felt that employers did not want to invest the money and time in training older workers:

They look at a person and—this has been told to me point-blank by human resources people—they look at people as a monetary investment. They invest a certain amount of time and effort in training a new recruit—the higher level of the recruit, the more expensive the time in training. And they expect to get back ten times their investment, or else it isn’t worth it to them to hire them. So if they spend a year acclimatizing me, training me, getting me integrated into the system, then they would expect to get ten years of profitable time out of me. Now, if I am 50 years old, they look at me as a poor prospect. Even at 46, they were looking at me as a very poor prospect. (man aged 52)

Respondents kept their training current to avoid being classified as “out of touch” by potential employers:

Any training going on, I signed up for it, and I did it. You know, when it came to computer training, I was one of the older ones. Everyone realized it, but I’m computer literate, so that’s not an issue . . . . I have also gone for all the training on how to job search. They have my résumé, a follow-up letter, and the whole bit—doing it professionally. (woman aged 60)

I went to the University of Toronto to take some courses to update my knowledge. I also go when different organizations offer specific workshops that I am interested in. (woman aged 56)

Despite the recognized importance of keeping training and skills up-to-date, many of the participants were very frustrated with their current inability to pay for the training needed to obtain
employment and described a type of “catch-22” situation during our interview:

I need the qualifications, but I need money to get the qualifications, but I need the qualifications in the first place to get the job to have the money. It’s kind of like a catch-22. It’s very similar to the 17-year-old fresh out of high school who can’t get a job because he doesn’t have any experience and doesn’t have any experience because he can’t get a job. It is the same kind of catch-22, only 35 years later. (woman aged 53b)

If you have an education here [Canada] you can reach whatever you want. But I have no money to take courses to upgrade my education from [my previous country of residence]. It is not a nice feeling. It is unpleasant and very difficult. . . . I am planning to learn more and get a Canadian license but the problem for me is money. If I can get a job and start to work, I will be able to save money and get a license. (woman aged 45b)

There were three groups of women and four groups of men who shared the same age in my study. To distinguish between participants, I have used the letters “a,” “b,” and “c” after their ages. A few of the participants mentioned that they were doing volunteer work, in the hopes that this would help them gain reentry into their desired occupation:

We both [she and her husband] are volunteering and always keeping busy. This allows us to improve our knowledge. . . . And I am reading every day on the computer to improve my professional skills. (woman aged 45b)

I have worked for two years as a volunteer. . . . I am probably too chicken to get a [paid] job because I haven’t worked in a while. (woman aged 56)

Volunteering was viewed as a temporary (and undesirable) solution to prolonged unemployment; yet, participants felt that this would help them update their skills or keep them current and hoped that it would give them the chance to get a foot back in the door.

Another way that participants were able to update their skills was by attending workshops held by older worker programs:

I never really used the Internet very much where I worked ‘cause you know, you were busy with your other things. . . . They [older worker program] spent a lot of time on computer skills, like using Word and getting on the Internet. (man aged 62)

I was advised to go for that [older worker] program. . . . I needed some updating in my computer skills because the courses I had in computers was from more than 20 years ago. (man aged 57b)

I have changed majorly since I took the training [provided through the older worker program]. . . . There were a lot of books available there. There was a lot of advice given. . . . I went to the centre and every day I learned something new. (woman aged 50a)

Interestingly, what was previously considered an advantage by participants—having job security by remaining in one job for a long period of time—was now something that they believed was hindering their job search success. To overcome this newfound limitation, participants felt that they not only needed to update their skills but they also needed to mentally alter their expectations to find work. Participants’ changing expectations will now be discussed.

Changing Expectations. —Another way that participants attempted to counteract employers’ ageist stereotypes was in relation to their work-related expectations. Most respondents (men and women equally) changed their employment expectations with respect to altering their original employment goals, the type of employment being sought, or the geographical location of the place of employment. First, a third of participants indicated that they altered their original employment goals. Second, a majority of participants changed the type of employment they were seeking (i.e., monetary remuneration, career change, employment status). Finally, one third of respondents also considered geographical relocation to secure employment. Although these mental strategies may be applicable to all individuals regardless of age, older workers have had to use these management techniques to heightened degrees due to the experience and higher salaries that are often associated with advancing age. Thus, once older workers perceived that their age was a barrier to reemployment, they soon realized that they could no longer have the same expectations they once had if their main goal was to secure employment.

In terms of employment goals, although monetary rewards were viewed as important to a degree, satisfaction and fulfillment with work were seen as the primary motivators in seeking employment by some of the participants in higher-income brackets. For example, according to one respondent:

You know, I’m not an entry-level person, and I don’t expect an entry-level kind of remuneration. Not that money is the most important thing to
me—satisfaction to me is as important or more important at this stage of my life than money. (man aged 52)

This tendency may assist older individuals in their job-seeking process, as employers often cite higher financial costs (associated with employee turnover, salaries, and benefits) as a reason for not hiring older employees. Respondents described how they came to this realization:

The end result for me is to find a position. I'm not finding a position. The end result of a company is to make money. They think they are going to make money off younger people better than they are making money off an older person because they think that the younger person will be with the company longer and is going to be able to produce or benefit revenue for a longer period of time. It's not true. An older person doesn't make the mistakes of the less experienced. So, the learning curve is a lot shorter. But they don't look at that. They don't look at the result's line. (man aged 52)

I think salary is a barrier because employers think we expect more money. (woman aged 45b)

It follows that many of the respondents realized that receiving the same level of financial compensation as they had prior to becoming unemployed was not necessarily feasible and thus lowered their monetary expectations in relation to the type of employment being sought. For example:

I know that I will take a lower [pay] rate to come in [to the labor force]. . . . You just have to keep going, you know. Lower your expectations, unfortunately, and just keep going. . . . It seems the longer you're unemployed, the more you can rationalize it. You don't feel any better, but you just sort of, like I said, you lower your expectations just basically to get back into the job market. (woman aged 58)

Thus, job advertisements stating lower salaries, a mechanism that participants believed employers used to discriminate against them, would no longer be considered a barrier to these respondents. Furthermore, after long periods of unemployment, many individuals begin to consider a change in career or industry to gain reentry into the workforce:

The frustration is immense because you keep sending your résumés back out to the same people. . . . I've been about 18 months out of work, and a couple of months ago I decided I've got to switch this trade. That's when I considered bartending. . . . Then I decided on this building maintenance course. . . . But [it is hard] knowing that no matter what industry I go into now, I'll never make that kind of money again. (man aged 50c)

I am trying now to shift my focus. . . . I am trying to diversify. . . . It has been very difficult to get interviews, so now I am trying to look into other areas. (woman aged 50b)

Although a change in career was not their preference, many respondents realized that this sacrifice had to be made at some point in their job search process. Some individuals even deliberated between returning to their previous careers with lowered salary expectations and changing careers in the hopes of achieving any level of financial stability. This decision was not an easy one, as many participants soon realized that once they left their original career, they would have great difficulty reentering it at a later date. For example, one woman who was a dental assistant explained her current predicament:

I am looking into—I mean I'm not really sure that I would be just as good doing other things and I'm thinking why should I waste 25 years of training. . . . I have set up a deadline for myself that at least by the end of January if I do not get a job as a dental assistant—I never thought I could think along the lines and I'm still not happy doing that—but I just might consider other jobs. . . . But then that's where the problem lies, that if you go into other things, it's that much harder to go back. If you go for an interview and the doctor's asking you what you are doing and you say, "I'm in a bookstore" or something like that—"So why are you applying for the job? I can have 20 assistants that are actually assistants." So that's the dilemma there. (woman aged 50a)

Expectations may also change in relation to the status of employment that is being sought. Many older individuals decide (voluntarily or not) to work on a contract or part-time basis with various organizations. For example:

I would accept part-time work, and at the moment I'm doing some consulting work for a boutique; it gets me out of the house. (woman aged 60)

There are some jobs that admittedly the salary is not what I want, but right now, would I take a part-time job? Yes. . . . Right now I'm willing to listen to any offers that come around. (man aged 62)

Although the security of full-time employment was not present for these individuals, participants felt that they were able to display their strengths to employers, which may ultimately lead to more stable employment for them in the future. Many participants felt that changing their own “definition of the situation” (Thomas, 1972) from unemployed to semiretired helped them
accept a possible change in the type of employment that was being sought. For example:

I sort of call myself semi-retired ‘cause that means that I could tolerate, say, a lesser job than I had before. Like part-time work or something. . . . When I first looked [for a job], that’s what I told people—that I wasn’t anxiously looking. Like when I say people, I mean the neighbor I bump into on the street, or something, wondering why I was home during the day. (man aged 60)

You know, I almost made up my mind that this is semi-retirement, but I’m not ready for it, I’ll tell you. (woman aged 60)

Individuals reconceptualized their status from unemployed to semiretired to provide a new and more acceptable social meaning to their current situation, similar to findings reported in the literature on displaced workers (McMullin & Marshall, 1999).

Despite making drastic changes in monetary, career, and employment status expectations, participants were still unable to secure employment:

I’d like to have full-time but if like I could only get part-time, well, I would do that, you know, in the interim. . . . I’d take another job. Like I even applied at different places like IGA and Blockbuster, you know, I would take something like that, you know, just to be working and doing something. (woman aged 53c)

I’m willing to try anything and I’m not asking 30 dollars an hour, what I used to make before, I’m not asking that. I’m going to go for—how much is minimum wage—six eighty-five? I’m willing to start with that if the job is normal and I’m capable of doing it. I’m not picky. I’m not asking this kind of wages, minimum wage is going to do it. I’m going to be there. I’m going to try. (man aged 56)

I’ve junk-mailed every employer out there with my résumé—even survival jobs where I went to a car dealer and wanted to be a lot person—you know, park cars, take them in and get them washed, vacuum them out, and that kind of stuff—even to get minimum wage. And I can’t even land that ‘cause they look at you and go— “What is your problem?” You know, it’s just tough. (man aged 46b)

Making these extreme changes in their expectations without success (i.e., securing employment) was obviously quite disturbing to many of the respondents. In fact, many of the comments made by the participants conveyed both a sense of desperation and a sense of adaptableness. For example:

I’m willing to do practically anything to work rather than not work. (woman aged 64)

Many of the individuals in this study were also quite willing to move to another geographical location to find work:

Don’t just depend on Toronto, Mississaugia, Brampton, or York, because there is nothing out there. And you gotta have your mind made up to want to leave your home and to be traveling wherever the job is. . . . You have to try all different angles. (woman aged 59)

When I started my job search. . . . I placed that restriction—my job search parameters—and then realized it. I used to say, “I want only full-time and I want it downtown.” Then I said, “I want full-time but I’m willing to stay anywhere in greater Toronto or contract in greater Toronto.” So now it’s full-time, part-time, or contract anywhere in Ontario. . . . And this month I’ve also begun sending résumés off to the [United] States. . . . So now I’ve widened my search. . . . So we’ll see. (man aged 62)

However, several participants noted that although they would personally be willing to relocate to secure employment, they felt that the needs of their families would best be met by remaining in their current geographical location. For example, despite the hardships that they had encountered since immigrating to Canada, some of the participants felt that there would be better long-term opportunities for their families if they remained in Canada due to the educational system or a general feeling of safety and security:

I would have, you know, left the country [if] I didn’t have the problem of my daughter studying here. It’s only for her that I continue to stay here. (man aged 57b)

We came to Canada because of the dangers of living in [my previous country of residence]. . . . My husband was a big company director and I was a medical doctor and now we are both unemployed and on welfare. . . . We can’t find work here. We have been unemployed for five years—since we have been in Canada. (woman aged 45b)

The changes in mental expectations described in this section were deemed necessary by the participants to try to overcome some of the stereotypes associated with being an older worker, such as higher salary expectations. Unfortunately, making these mental adjustments did not help participants secure employment, so many of them felt that more drastic measures were needed to conceal their ages to potential employers. The analysis now turns to these types of management techniques.
**Concealments**

**Résumé Modification.** — It should be recognized that stereotypes can also be positive, and some of the participants felt that they possessed certain positive characteristics that are associated with being older. For example, the experience that comes with age was recognized by one respondent when describing her previous work situation:

I mean, there is no substitute for experience. . . . It does make the work that much more efficient; that much more professional. Honestly, I think a lot of people—say, my age—when they go to an office and see a person my age, they would say “Okay, this person knows what she or he is doing. It seems that they’ve been doing this for a long enough time.” (woman aged 50a)

While some participants tried to emphasize positive stereotypes associated with older workers, such as loyalty and experience, many were not able to do this due to a variety of reasons. For example, assuming that age and experience go hand in hand reflects a gendered bias in that most of the women in my sample had less paid work experience than did the men, due mainly to raising their children. Thus, they were not able to highlight to employers one of the few positive stereotypes associated with older workers in the same way that men could do so. See McMullin and Berger (2006) for more details on gender differences in the route to reemployment for older workers.

However, having experience can also be a negative thing:

To just look at my résumé, they know how many years I’ve been in the business and they can sort of deduct that I’m not 35 or 40. (woman aged 60)

You don’t know if they’re looking at your résumé and looking at . . . like, figuring you got all that experience so obviously you got to be a certain age, right? (woman aged 53c)

In the aforementioned examples, respondents described how their extensive experience was being used by employers as a way to determine age from their résumés and subsequently identify and select younger candidates to interview for job openings. Therefore, most respondents felt that they had to conceal age on their résumés by eliminating some of their work experience, number of jobs held, or the year a degree was received:

I try to hide it [my experience]. Sometimes I don’t mention my degree and that sort of thing, and I only show the last ten years of work experience. (man aged 60)

I changed my résumé somewhat to exclude the number of years I’ve worked and said, “I have extensive [experience].” . . . Even though—I guess now everybody who uses “extensive,” they [employers] say, “Oh. This guy’s got 20 plus years.” (man aged 62)

Participants also indicated that they switched the style of their résumés from chronological ones to “functional” ones, where the importance of skills rather than specific jobs or years in the labor force is highlighted:

I changed my résumé around. I was using a chronological résumé at first, but for the last four months I have been using a functional one. (man aged 50a)

I use a particular style of résumé that emphasizes skills more than the number of jobs or length of time that I have been in certain jobs. (man aged 50b)

Responses from the participants made it increasingly clear that “de-emphasizing age” was a strategy taught by personnel at the older worker programs:

At the [older worker program] they helped me modify my résumé—to de-emphasize age. . . . They would tell us don’t give them [employers] any more information, basically, than is necessary. Like sort of just give them your last 10 years of work, let them see you versus, you know, putting down everywhere you’ve worked for the last 30 years or 40 years. (woman aged 58)

I was taught [at the older worker program] that when you send a résumé, you don’t put the date you graduated from school. . . . or stuff like that. So they really don’t know how old I am when I send them the résumé. (woman aged 55)

Thus, although some individuals may have eventually decided to alter their résumés on their own using some of the techniques previously described, it was clear that the overt encouragement at the older worker programs was the reason that the majority of adjustments were made.

**“Improving” Appearances.** — Another way respondents felt that employers discriminated against them related to the interview process. These individuals believed that after employers had the opportunity to see them during an initial interview, they could immediately estimate how old they were and only request second interviews from the younger applicants. Several participants provided justification for this belief:
What is quite interesting is that a friend of mine who is 45 years old, about the same age as me and who just got her degree, is getting more interviews than me. She is only getting the first interview, though. I am not sure if it is because the employers assume that she is younger because of her recent degree, but once she gets in there and has an interview, she is never asked back for a second interview. I am not sure if it is age per se, but that is just my feeling. (woman aged 45a)

We [she and other older workers] get interviews but not jobs. . . . When they [employers] look at you, they decide. (woman aged 53a)

Thus, another type of concealment used by the majority of participants—by women far more often than men—was to portray a “youthful” appearance to potential employers. Several of the participants referred to physical preparations for the job interview. For example, many men and women acknowledged dying their hair prior to an important interview:

When I actually get an interview, . . . I dye my hair. (man aged 50b)

When you look around you and you see the faces getting younger and younger, you know you’ve got to keep it up. Even if you can’t afford it, that’s the one thing you need is your bottle of dye. (woman aged 58)

Several men also considered using a toupee if they were balding and shaving their beards to appear younger, despite the fact that they did not necessarily agree with this or acknowledge that this was their idea in the first place:

They want to see me have a full head of dark brown hair. Maybe I should go to Honest Ed’s [discount department store] and buy a nylon toupee. That would improve my appearance, don’t you think? (man aged 52)

People say to me, because I’m bald, “Why don’t you get one of these wigs?” or whatever you call them, or “Why don’t you shave your beard?” I have had my beard all of my life—since I was 20. It was never a problem, so why is it a problem now? (man aged 50a)

Similarly, several respondents mentioned that after going to job interviews, they recognized the importance of “fitting in” to an employer’s organizational culture, which essentially meant giving the impression of being younger:

I think that the organizational culture in an organization is very important. You need to fit into the company’s culture. Many companies have youth-oriented cultures and they may only hire someone who fits into this culture. (man aged 50b)

Therefore, he explained how he would dress a certain way for an interview in an attempt to “fit in” with what he believed was a young organizational culture:

There are certain techniques that I use [in an interview] to seem younger. . . . I always wear young-looking clothes. . . . I dress in certain clothes that fit in with their company’s culture. (man aged 50b)

Another strategy that respondents used to maintain youthful appearances was to make a concerted effort to maintain their health. Thus, although many of the participants encountered changes in their mental health following experiences with age discrimination and prolonged unemployment (see Berger [2006] for more detail on the psychosocial consequences of perceived age discrimination), the majority of participants were in good physical health prior to becoming unemployed and remained this way following unemployment. In fact, several of the respondents felt that their physical health had improved since they became unemployed. For example, when asked to describe his health since he had become unemployed, one individual explained:

My health has improved quite a bit because I’ve got back into a running program. . . . My previous job, you know, they wanted the 60-hour weeks. . . . So physically I’m doing a lot better and my eating habits have improved. (man aged 46a)

Other respondents expressed how they felt fortunate that they did not physically look “old” due to their good health and thus felt they did not have to alter their physical appearance to avoid experiencing age discrimination from employers:

I guess [in relation to] how I look—I really haven’t had that kind of age discrimination. I think that when I go to a [work-related] event I always look good, so I think that also helps a lot. (woman aged 50b)

Appearance-wise I find I’m okay . . . to be able to say, “yes, I’m still capable of working; I don’t have a cane yet.” (woman aged 58)

Finally, it should be noted that not all the participants agreed with modifying their physical appearance to obtain employment. Some individuals actually were quite against this active age concealment behavior. For example:

I have grey hair and I refuse on general principle to dye my hair. . . . I don’t want to cater to this. . . . I can see the reaction of people to somebody who has dyed hair—you know they dye their hair blond or whatever—they tend to think of them as younger and prettier and so on and I refuse to do it. I’m stubborn that way. It’s costing me I know
but I don’t believe in catering to that. I don’t believe the color of your hair should be an influence on how people treat you. (woman aged 53b)

It is clear that this woman felt very strongly about not wanting to conform to society’s expectations regarding her physical appearance; yet, she also recognized that this conviction may be harming her job search success.

**The “Right” Age Talk.**—The last way that many participants attempted to conceal their age was by managing their outward portrayal during job interviews through language. This was done by either using certain discourse to reframe otherwise undesirable conversations or using “youth-oriented” language. Turning first to reframing undesirable age-related conversations, one woman said:

I was told that [I was too qualified for a position] but I turned it around because I had so much experience or knowledge in finance that—I was applying for a job in mutual funds and I said “You are getting kids out of school who don’t even own them so how do you expect them to sell them.” I turned it around. (woman aged 53a)

Many of the respondents explained how they managed to avoid or deflect discussions in which their age could become known to employers and explained the importance of anticipating age-related questions during job interviews to mentally rehearse desirable answers:

I’m not saying falsify an image [during an interview]. Be yourself and be honest. But, again, depending on the questions, you know—“How old are you?”—rather than respond—“That’s none of your business”—I would have said something like—“Well, I’m old enough to have 25 years of experience in this business,” which gives them an age bracket and it doesn’t affect me. “As you can see by my résumé, I have 25 years [experience], so you know I’m not 35.” (man aged 50c)

I try to verbalize what I’m going to say to them [employers] because they seem to do this constantly …. I guess I just sort of prepare myself mentally for these, I call them, stupid questions—“What are your goals, let’s say ten years down the road?” Well, I don’t have ten years left, you know. So you have to verbalize what you are going to say. (woman aged 58)

Several individuals also engaged in what they considered to be youthful language. For example, one participant explained the lengths he went through to avoid being defined as “out of touch” more generally in terms of current societal trends:

What I talk about is really youth-oriented. I make sure I discuss very physically active kinds of sports and I mention various social groups that I have joined. (man aged 50b)

Participants also realized the importance of using certain “buzzwords” (e.g., in the sales field, what was once referred to as a “forecast” is now called a “pipeline”) during a job interview to illustrate to employers that they were up to date with the language being used in their field. For example:

The high-tech industry has so many different skills and languages. Like, you have to be an expert. . . . You’ve got to really move quickly and learn new stuff. (man aged 46a)

I think the lingo has changed considerably. . . . There are a whole slew of buzzwords that I am sure are being used today by corporations that perhaps a person that was trained 20, 25 years ago understands but is not comfortable using because it’s not in their everyday vocabulary. They were trained with a different sets of words. . . . I think it’s a barrier. . . . As soon as you go into an interview and you use your own terminology, you date yourself—automatically, subconsciously. (man aged 57a)

This participant went on to describe a whole list of buzzwords that he felt were being used by individuals in his field and in human resources more generally:

We were just discussing a whole list of words yesterday [at the older worker program]. And they were words that I personally had not seen, let’s say 20 years ago. Such as “telecommuting” and “motor-skiing” and “life-long learning” and “career planners” and “dejobbing.” This is just on the human resources side. . . . The same thing occurred in the marketing industry in a different way. For example, you know, having “new enhancements.” That’s one way people would refer to things. In the old days you would just call it, you know, “increased sales.” . . . I do believe that it would be useful to create, I don’t know, a whole set of words, buzzwords, that are currently in use in an industry that show involvement and progression—at least of terminologies. (man aged 57a)

Another individual used some other buzzwords to explain his difficulties in an interview situation:

Let’s say they [employers] describe a particular position you have to do. . . . You have to meet “revenue targets” and you have to “integrate pricing and portfolio managements” and “database marketing” and you have to work “retention strategies.” . . . Unless you are able to repeat these words that they put in their job description, you may sound outdated. You may sound like you will not be able to fit because you don’t
understand their terminology, which is not true. You are [just] more comfortable working with established business terms. (man aged 45b)

Thus, some of the respondents felt they were at a disadvantage in relation to the language being used in their field after realizing that the lingo they were trained with in the past was already outdated; being unemployed for a lengthy period of time complicated the matter. They found this quite frustrating, similar to the catch-22 situation that they found themselves in in relation to their skills and training. Thus, individuals felt that the only way to maintain a current lingo in their field was to be employed in it, and this was not happening for them at the time of these interviews.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study explored how older individuals’ perceptions of age discrimination in the job search process led to the development of age-related management techniques. Participants’ feedback on seeking employment illustrated how age became a discrediting attribute or stigma (Goffman, 1963), which resulted in discriminatory attitudes and behaviors by potential employers. Using Goffman’s three notions of identity, individuals began to feel old (felt identity) when the image they were projecting to employers (presented identity) was perceived to be that of an “older” worker (social identity). Because presented identity can be modified depending on social context, by using the management techniques described in this article, participants were actively controlling the image they were projecting to others to present a more advantageous social identity.

Similar to findings discussed previously in relation to impression management techniques in general (Goffman, 1959, 1963) and their use in the organizational behavior literature (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997), once individuals perceived that a discrepancy existed between the image they wanted to convey to potential employers and the feedback they received (perceived age discrimination), the vast majority of them developed alternative management techniques that were age related to project a positive presented identity (Goffman, 1959) and avoid being stigmatized by potential employers. For example, most respondents altered their physical appearance to portray a more youthful image in a job interview setting to manipulate their self-presentation and sway potential employers to hire them.

Overall, counteractions were used by participants more often than concealments. Looking at all five types of management techniques, “changing expectations” was used most often, followed by “skill maintenance,” “the ‘right’ age talk,” “résumé modification,” and “‘improving’ appearances.” With respect to gender differences, in descending order of use, women were most likely to “‘improve’ appearances,” equally used “changing expectations” and “skill maintenance,” and then used “the ‘right’ age talk” and “résumé modification.” For men, the pattern of usage was slightly different. They predominately used “changing expectations,” followed equally by “résumé modification” and the “right age talk,” “skill maintenance,” and “‘improving’ appearances.” I was surprised that there were not larger gender differences in terms of the management techniques used overall, but it is interesting to note that the biggest gender difference appeared with respect to the subcategory “‘improving’ appearances.” Aged bodies are more commonly perceived to be a barrier to finding employment for women than for men because youth is more often equated with attractiveness for women (McMullin & Berger, 2006). As many of the women in my sample had come to this realization over the course of their job search, most felt the need to alter their appearance before a job interview.

Management techniques were developed by the participants to combat employers’ negative attitudes in relation to their skills, training, adaptability or flexibility, and higher perceived monetary costs by staying up-to-date with their skills and training and changing their work-related expectations. In addition, participants felt that employers examined their résumés and chose candidates to interview in a discriminatory fashion. After coming to this realization, individuals began to use concealment tactics on their résumés that involved eliminating the year that they received their degree or reducing the amount of experience (i.e., number of jobs or number of years in a job) displayed on their résumés to gain a more competitive advantage in the job market. Similarly, respondents felt that the job interview and language used by employers were key mechanisms for discrimination. By altering their appearance or using specific language to mentally prepare for age-related concerns, they felt a more youthful image was being conveyed to potential employers.

This study contributes theoretically and substantively to the literature by applying concepts
related to management techniques and the aging process to older individuals who feel stigmatized in their job search process. More specifically, in relation to management techniques, previous researchers have argued that the following types of impression management techniques have been used in an interview setting: (a) entitlements (claiming responsibility for a positive event that occurred in the past), (b) enhancements (making statements that reflect one’s positive attributes), and (c) self-promotion (highlighting strengths in relation to those required by the ideal applicant (Delery & Kacmar, 1998). (Although this was not the focus of my current investigation, I found evidence that participants in my study were using all three of the impression management techniques described by Delery and Kacmar. Many of them made statements to me that highlighted their past accomplishments, emphasized their positive attributes, and stressed how their work-related experience would benefit them in a job situation. Further, they explained that they would make similar comments to employers in an interview setting.) Findings from my study expand on the impression management techniques described by Delery and Kacmar. My research demonstrated that older workers use these three techniques in a similar fashion to younger workers. However, they also use two additional techniques in an attempt to combat age discrimination. The first technique was counteractions—tactics used to offset negative stereotypes. The second technique used by participants was concealments—strategies used to hide specific information (i.e., age). The notion of concealment has been examined in the literature on aging in relation to older widows who suppressed evidence of age (Matthews, 1979, pp. 74–75). However, the use of these management techniques has not been applied specifically to age discrimination in the hiring process prior to this study. I anticipate that this contribution to knowledge can also be applied to a broader area relating to impression management and aging more generally. Both counteractions and concealments can relate to behaviors that attempt to offset any type of stereotypes or hide any type of stigma, although further research is needed to demonstrate the utility of these concepts beyond their applicability to older workers and the hiring process.

The findings from my research suggest that more needs to be done to assist older individuals in their search for reemployment; thus, I believe that additional interviews with older workers, employment counselors, and employers themselves will greatly enrich our understanding of the job search process. These findings would help expand those presented in this article, which could then be investigated on a larger scale. A quantitative study that tests the frequency that these management techniques are used would expand our knowledge regarding structural barriers in the job search process. Examining these strategies on a larger scale in future research would help quantify the extent that counteractions and concealments are being used by older workers. This would highlight the magnitude of this issue, which is becoming of growing importance due to the aging of the workforce. This suggestion highlights the utility of combined research methods or triangulation (Creswell, 1994). I suspect that the insights into the lived experiences of the participants could only be obtained from qualitative interviews; yet, to illustrate the applicability of the themes I created beyond the participants in my study, a larger-scale investigation is warranted. Although gender was examined to some extent in this article, the ways in which age combines with other social structural factors such as race, ethnicity, or country of origin, and occupation in the job search process need to be examined.

Another area worthy of future research relates to conducting interviews with individuals who found work immediately following unemployment or those older than 65 years who are working past the “typical” retirement age. This research would provide insights into whether these individuals have used the specific age-related techniques described in this article. This could lead to an exploration of lessons learned from “success stories” of older workers who have succeeded in finding and retaining employment, which could help unemployed older individuals avoid or manage encounters with ageist employers. Further, it would be interesting to discover if these individuals are located in certain industries or occupations (e.g., those with less physically demanding jobs).

Next, longitudinal research is needed to follow older individuals who experience prolonged periods of unemployment. Interviewing individuals several times over an extended period would provide greater insight into the job-seeking process and advance knowledge in relation to the amount of time spent in each stage of the job search process. Further, both physical and mental health could be assessed at various points in time to observe specific changes and relate them to their coinciding experiences with their search for...
employment. Thus, both long- and short-term health of older workers could be assessed in relation to experiences with age discrimination and unemployment.

Further research is also needed in relation to the newfound contradiction that has surfaced during my research. On the one hand, prior quantitative analyses have demonstrated that employers’ attitudes toward older workers have become more positive in recent years; yet, on the other hand, my interviews with older workers suggest that age discrimination currently exists in the hiring process. Although quantitative studies that document employers’ attitudes toward older workers are growing, there is little research that examines employers’ accounts of the hiring process. Therefore, qualitative interviews with employers would allow for greater insight into the meanings that they give to various experiences with older job candidates and provide a greater understanding of their attitudes toward older workers. It would also provide clarification in relation to whether employers’ attitudes lead to the development of age-related hiring and retention practices and policies.

In summary, research indicates that as a result of prolonged periods of unemployment, older workers are often considered to be “peripheral and marginal to the workforce” (Henkens, Sprengers, & Tazelaar, 1996, p. 575). This is due in large part to the existence of age discrimination in employers’ hiring processes. Thus, the current societal norms that favor youth have created structural barriers for older workers seeking reemployment. However, despite the existence of these structural barriers, findings from this study suggest that participants actively negotiate age-related strategies and thus clearly have agency in the job search process. Although the findings from this study cannot be generalized to all older workers due to the small nonrepresentative sample, the sociological insights gained contribute to knowledge of older workers’ job search process and provide a foundation for further research into this area on a broader scale. This research suggests that there is a need to reexamine the hiring practices of employers and to improve legislation in relation to their accountability. The Conference Board of Canada (2006) has suggested that policy makers work with employers to make age part of their diversity strategies; yet, this is still not largely occurring. It is only by combating age discrimination on a broader societal level that the age-related management strategies used by the participants will no longer be necessary.

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