



Older and Younger Job Seekers' Impression Management on LinkedIn

Similar Strategies, Different Outcomes

Franciska Krings¹, Irina Gioaba¹, Mich le Kaufmann², Sabine Sczesny², and Leslie Zebrowitz³

¹Department of Organizational Behavior, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

²Institute of Psychology, University of Bern, Switzerland

³Department of Psychology, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, USA

Abstract. The use of social networking sites such as LinkedIn in recruitment is ubiquitous. This practice may hold risks for older job seekers. Not having grown up using the internet and having learned how to use social media only in middle adulthood may render them less versed in online self-presentation than younger job seekers. Results of this research show some differences and many similarities between younger and older job seekers' impression management on their LinkedIn profiles. Nevertheless, independent of their impression management efforts, older job seekers received fewer job offers than younger job seekers. Only using a profile photo with a younger appearance reduced this bias. Implications for the role of job seeker age in online impression management and recruitment are discussed.

Keywords: impression management, social media, older worker, recruitment

The past decades have been marked by revolutionary changes in the workplace as a result of rapid technological advances. These changes had a profound impact on how people approach work and how management practices are carried out (Colbert et al., 2016). Among these, several human resource functions have become increasingly reliant on technology, including recruitment, selection, and training (Bartram, 2000; Klumper et al., 2016). Social media have become the main medium through which organizations advertise jobs, recruit, and screen prospective employees (McCarthy et al., 2017). Nowadays, more than 80% of the companies use social media for recruitment (Society for Human Resource Management, 2016). Likewise, millions of job seekers use social networking sites (SNSs) today to present their skills and render themselves attractive to employers.

Scholars have cautioned about using social media for recruitment because they feature non-job-related content such as gender, ethnicity, age, and other personal characteristics, which might influence decisions and lead to disparate treatment (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Klumper

et al., 2016; McFarland & Ployhart, 2015; Roth et al., 2016; Ruggs et al., 2016). Moreover, while social media provide job seekers with new possibilities to present themselves on a very large job market, using them for one's own professional benefits requires specific skills. This may put some social groups in a disadvantaged position (Hargittai & Hinnant, 2008). Thus, the use of social media in recruitment might increase barriers for those who already face more obstacles on the labor market. Yet, research on this topic remains scant. Virtually nothing is known about how these individuals use social media when looking for a job and how this use affects their employment outcomes (Landers & Schmidt, 2016).

This research examines how younger and older job seekers present themselves on LinkedIn, the current largest and most popular professional SNS. We draw on theories of impression management (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) and applicant impression management on social media (Roulin & Levashina, 2016) to analyze how job seekers present their skills and competencies on their LinkedIn profiles, and how these efforts relate to receiving employment opportunities.

We suggest that job seeker age may play an important yet underexplored role for impression management on SNS. Research on Internet and social media use shows that older adults encounter attitudinal (e.g., skepticism) and skill-based barriers (e.g., producing content) that may render them less effectual in presenting their skills online (Karahasanović et al., 2009; Lüders & Brandtzæg, 2017). Less effectual impression management in turn may lead to receiving less employment opportunities, thus creating a disadvantage for older job seekers.

Considering the widespread use of social media in recruitment and the urgent need to integrate older workers into the workforce (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2019), it is utterly important to examine how older job seekers use social media to present themselves and how it affects their employment outcomes. Our results provide novel insights into the role of job seeker age in online self-presentation and recruitment. Moreover, they highlight the need to integrate social group membership into research and practice in this domain.

Impression Management on Social Networking Sites for Employment Purposes

Impression management can be described as “the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of them (Leary & Kowalski, 1990, p. 34).” It comprises a large range of behaviors that aim at creating a desired image of the self in others, including verbal statements and nonverbal and stylistic behaviors, such as associations with other people or groups or changes in physical appearance (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schneider, 1981).

Theories on impression management posit that people’s motivation to influence how they are seen by others is particularly high when they depend on another individual who has control over desired outcomes (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). This is certainly the case at hiring where applicants’ outcomes depend entirely on the decision of recruiters and hiring managers. It is therefore not surprising that a large body of research documents the extensive use of applicant impression management in various hiring situation like interviews (e.g., Levashina et al., 2014), assessment centers (Klehe et al., 2014), or personality inventories (Griffith & McDaniel, 2006).

A recent framework for applicant impression management on social media (Roulin & Levashina, 2016) proposes that job seekers’ motivation to create a desired image on social media platforms is equally strong. Job seekers know

that recruiters use professional SNS frequently, and they depend on recruiters for receiving job opportunities. Moreover, social media is a highly controllable environment for users and provides them with plenty of time to create the desired image, for example, by carefully editing text and pictures that they post on their profile. It is therefore an ideal platform for job seeker impression management (Roulin & Levashina, 2016).

Professional platforms like LinkedIn have been created for job search and career development, and thus primarily trigger impression management behaviors that aim at signaling high levels of professional competence and performance. Because job seekers create only one single SNS profile with the goal of making it attractive to a large number of employers, they are particularly attentive to promoting their skills and competences effectively and to fully utilize the different areas of the SNS profile (e.g., text areas and network areas) and different contents (text, pictures, etc.) for this purpose (Roulin & Levashina, 2016).

Impression Management on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the largest professional SNS, with more than 690 million users in over 200 countries (2020; LinkedIn.com). Most people use it for new career opportunities, and it is used by older and younger adults alike (Blank & Lutz, 2017; Jobvite, 2015). The following areas of the LinkedIn profile are particularly relevant for job seeker impression management: the profile summary, the list of skills and skill endorsements, the profile photo, network connections, and recommendations. Hiring professionals consider these areas most relevant because they contain the information that they look for when screening LinkedIn profiles to identify potential candidates (Chiang & Suen, 2015; Zide et al., 2014). Moreover, their content tends to be more stable over time than the content of other areas like postings of comments, events, or sharing articles or videos, which change several times per week (Roulin & Levashina, 2019). These factors may also be the reasons why LinkedIn and career consultants urge users to render themselves attractive to employers in the more stable areas particularly (e.g., Fisher, 2016).

The profile summary is a textual statement about the self, created by the user. Consultants describe it as “the one place where you define yourself in your own words (...) the summary is your chance to put your best self out there” (Reilly, 2016). In the skills area, users can list up to 50 skills and competencies. They are encouraged to list several skills because, according to consultants, a higher number of skills is “a signal to others that you’re proficient at your work, which will make you more attractive to potential employers”

(Tanner, n.d.). Other users can validate or endorse these skills. Consultants encourage users to seek out a high number of skill endorsements because it “can elevate you and your profile above the other thousands of people on LinkedIn vying for the same career path as you” (Smith, n.d.). The photo area typically contains a photograph of the profile owner. Users are advised to carefully choose their picture and use a professional photo because it is the “sole opportunity to make a strong visual first impression” (Callahan, 2018). The network area contains the number of contacts the profile owner has with other users. Users are encouraged to seek out a high number of contacts because it shows that they “use LinkedIn to do business, add value and connect” (Yankovich, 2015). Finally, the recommendations’ area contains brief written recommendations from previous or current employers or colleagues. Consultants urge users to seek out recommendations, arguing that they “make a positive difference to your online reputation and have a positive impact on your prospects as a job candidate” (Liu, 2017).

In sum, job seekers are encouraged to use these opportunities for promoting themselves and creating an online persona that is attractive to recruiters. But do job seekers use these opportunities in a comparably proficient manner? Research on older adults’ social media and Internet use suggests that there may be differences between age groups that turn out as a disadvantage for older job seekers.

Potential Age Differences

LinkedIn was launched in 2003, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter shortly after. At that time, younger job seekers, typically defined as being younger than 30 years old, were in their early teens. Being “born into a wired world” (Smola & Sutton, 2002, p. 381) and already familiar with computers, computer games, and the Internet, they straightforwardly adopted SNSs and endorsed the fact that they were easily able to create online profiles, post content, share videos, pictures, or comment on other users’ content. Today, social media are at the heart of the way members of this cohort communicate, learn, work, play, or shop (Cogin, 2012; Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Prensky, 2001; Tapscott, 2009). They spend considerably more time online and on social media, and they use the Internet for a broader range of activities than older adults do (Ofcom, 2018).

In contrast, older job seekers, typically defined as being 55 and older, were in their 40’s when LinkedIn and Facebook were launched. Moreover, they were not exposed to computers or the Internet in childhood or adolescence, and they did not have Internet access until young adulthood. Research shows that this fact goes along with certain challenges. First, there may be attitudinal barriers.

Older adults tend to be more skeptical toward self-presentation on SNS, compared to younger users. They often regard it as self-centered or even vain (Leist, 2013; Lüders & Brandtzæg, 2017) and use less self-disclosure or self-references than younger users (Pfeil et al., 2009; Van den Broeck et al., 2015). Also, older adults do not trust social media as much as younger users do, particularly in terms of privacy protection or control over how service providers use their data (Karahasanović et al., 2009; Van den Broeck et al., 2015). In addition, there may be skill-based barriers. Research has shown that older adults have more difficulties in navigating social media and in producing and sharing contents (e.g., editing pictures; Brandtzæg et al., 2010; Karahasanović et al., 2009). They also struggle more with understanding and applying privacy settings of social media platforms (Brandtzæg et al., 2010; Van den Broeck et al., 2015). This may be related to the fact that certain aspects of fluid intelligence that are particularly relevant for successful computer and internet use (e.g., memory and processing speed) decline with age (Czaja et al., 2001, 2006).

The findings above suggest that older job seekers attempting to promote their skills on their LinkedIn profile may be confronted with challenges that younger job seekers do not face. Feeling uncomfortable to market oneself online, being concerned about how one’s data are used, and having certain difficulties in producing and sharing content or navigating SNS are likely to be an obstacle for effectual impression management in the relevant areas of the profile. The profile summary and list of skills may be primarily affected by attitudinal barriers. Being concerned about appearing vain and self-absorbed may lead older job seekers to point out fewer competencies or professional attainments in the profile summary and to list fewer skills in the skills’ area than younger job seekers would do. Moreover, concerns about privacy and displaying information that could be used for marketing or other purposes may lead older job seekers to provide less information about themselves in these areas. Consequently, older job seekers’ profile summary statements may be shorter and contain fewer mentions of professional qualities and attainments, and their skill lists may contain a lower number of skills compared to younger job seekers.

Hypothesis 1: Older job seekers’ summary statements will be shorter and contain fewer mentions of professional qualities than younger job seekers’ summary statements.

Hypothesis 2: Older job seekers’ skill lists will contain a lower number of skills than younger job seekers’ skill lists.

A similar mechanism may be at play regarding network connections, endorsements, and recommendations. On the one hand, older job seekers have longer careers than younger job seekers and consequently may know more people they could connect with and obtain recommendations and endorsements from. On the other hand, the concern to appear self-centered may render them reluctant to ask their contacts to connect with them, and even more so to endorse their skills, or write a positive recommendation. The same concern may keep them from reaching out to other users whom they do not know personally. Moreover, they may accept invitations from other users to connect or to provide endorsements less frequently, out of privacy concerns. This may be further exacerbated by skill-based barriers such as difficulties in navigating SNS and make use of the proposed features (e.g., messaging). We therefore anticipated the following:¹

Hypothesis 3: Older job seekers' profiles will contain fewer skill endorsements and fewer contacts, and they will be less likely to contain recommendations than younger job seekers' profiles.

Finally, skill-based challenges may be barriers for effectual impression management via the profile photo. Due to less advanced knowledge and skills in producing and sharing contents, compared to younger job seekers, older job seekers may be less versed in editing their profile photo and in managing the appropriate software or platform. Consequently, their profile pictures may look less professional (e.g., low contrast) than those of younger job seekers or present less professional-looking cut outs such as photos on which the body takes up more space than the face (i.e., photos with a low facial prominence; e.g., Abbot, 2019). In addition, older job seekers may pay less attention to the common advice of posting a photo on which one looks somewhat younger than one's age (e.g., Schramm, 2016). Attitudinal barriers may also play a role for the choice of the profile photo. Being reluctant to engage in activities that, in their view, are vain and purely self-centered, they may spend less time and/or money for producing a highly professional profile picture. We therefore expected the following:

Hypothesis 4: Older job seekers' profiles will contain less professional-looking photos, photos with a lower facial prominence and with an older age

appearance relative to one's age than younger job seekers' profiles.

Job Search Success: Employment Opportunities

Ample evidence shows that the use of impression management influences employability positively (Chen & Lin, 2014; Ellis et al., 2002; McFarland et al., 2003). Theories of applicant impression management on social media suggest that impression management on SNS has similar effects (Roulin & Levashina, 2016). Indeed, Chiang and Suen (2015) showed that recruiters make inferences about job seekers' person-job and person-organization fit based on the way they present themselves on LinkedIn and that these fit-perceptions in turn predicted recruiters' hiring recommendations. Roulin and Levashina (2019) showed that more comprehensive (longer) profiles and those with larger networks received more hiring recommendations from independent raters. Consequently, because we expected older job seekers' LinkedIn profiles to contain less elements of impression management than those of younger job seekers, they may also receive less job offers through LinkedIn.

In addition, older job seekers' older age appearance may already be sufficient to trigger disparate treatment, independent of their use of impression management. Even though the date of birth is not displayed on LinkedIn, several cues (e.g., diplomas and photo) indicate how old the profile owner might be. A large body of research conducted in traditional recruitment settings shows that older workers are treated less favorably than younger workers (Bal et al., 2011; Neumark, 2018). This is in large due to negative stereotypes associated with older workers (Krings et al., 2011; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Furthermore, looking older on the photo is a disadvantage. Older-looking faces trigger impressions of low physical and cognitive ability (Palumbo et al., 2017), and these impressions have been shown to reduce hiring chances for candidates who look older, independent of their true age (Kaufmann et al., 2017). Therefore, the profile photo on the SNS profile is a powerful cue that may trigger negative impressions associated with older age, which may override the impact of other profile information for older job seekers. Indeed, an experimental study using mock Facebook profiles found that the photo had more impact on perceivers' judgments than a textual statement about the self (Van Der Heide et al., 2012).

¹ We thank one of the reviewers for the suggestion to include recommendations in the hypothesis.

The arguments above suggest that older age may reduce the positive impact of impression management during recruitment that is regularly observed in research (e.g., McFarland et al., 2003). More specifically, there should be a positive relationship between impression management on LinkedIn profiles and job search success for both younger and older job seekers; however, this relationship may be weaker for older than for younger job seekers due to negative age stereotypes. Thus, even if older job seekers employ various elements of impression management on their LinkedIn profile, these elements may be less effective in positively influencing employment outcomes than for younger job seekers because they are overshadowed by negative age stereotypes. We therefore propose the following hypotheses:

Hypotheses 5a-b: Impression management in the profile summary, skill list, profile photo, skill endorsements, network, and recommendation areas will be positively related to employment opportunities received through LinkedIn (a). This relationship will be moderated by job seeker age, such that it will be stronger for younger job seekers than for older job seekers (b).

Method

Participants

A total of 198 participants were recruited via Qualtrics Online Panels and paid for their participation. Participation in the study was limited to US residents who have a LinkedIn profile and who indicated that they were using LinkedIn to look for a new job at the time of data collection. We recruited a group of older and of younger LinkedIn users on the basis of their birth year, choosing birth years that allow comparing SNS use and employment outcomes between job seekers who grew up with the Internet and social media and those who did not. Younger job seekers were born between 1986 and 1992 ($n = 110$, 70.8% women, $M_{\text{age}} = 27.55$, $SD = 1.82$). Older job seekers were born between 1953 and 1967 ($n = 88$, 51% women, $M_{\text{age}} = 55.38$, $SD = 4.35$). Participants worked in a variety of sectors including information technology (younger 11.8%, older 10.2%), retail, sales and customer service (younger 8.2%, older 11.4%), accounting, banking, finance (younger 9.1%, older 5.7%), and health care (younger 6.4%, older 5.7%). Almost half of the participants had a bachelor's degree (younger 46.4%, older 42.5%), about a quarter held a master's degree (younger 29.1%, older 21.8%), and the

remaining participants had a high school degree (younger 24.5%, older 35.6%). The majority identified as Caucasian (younger 70.9%, older 93.28%). The remaining participants identified as African American (younger 10.0%, older 3.4%), Asian American (younger 10.9%, older 2.3%), or Latino (younger 3.6%, older 0.0%) or mentioned other ethnicities (younger 4.5%, older 1.1%).

Procedure and Measures

After consenting to participate, respondents uploaded their summary statement and their profile picture onto the survey. Then, they filled out a questionnaire about the content of their LinkedIn profile and provided demographic information. We isolated the profile summary and the photo for further coding (see below).

Profile Summaries

We coded the content of 188 profile summaries (11 participants did not post a summary statement on their profile; younger 5.5%, older 5.7%, $\chi^2 = 0.005$, $p = .95$). We coded the presence versus absence of mentions of professional qualities. A student assistant who was not involved in the data collection and unaware of the research questions coded the presence of information about the profile owner's education, profession, and work experience (1 = present, 0 = absent). Two additional student assistants coded the presence of mentions regarding technical skills – defined as abilities and knowledge needed to perform specific tasks and soft skills – defined as personal attributes and interpersonal abilities that enable individuals to work well with others (1 = present, 0 = absent; interrater agreement: Cohen's kappa = .96 and .90, respectively). In the analyses, we used mentions of education, profession, work experience, soft skills, and technical skills separately. In addition, we created a sum score of mentions of these elements and used it as a general index of mentions of professional qualities. Finally, the number of words documented the length of summary statements.

Skill List

Participants indicated the number of skills they listed on their profile.

Endorsements, Network, Recommendations

Participants indicated the number of skill endorsements they received and the number of contacts with other LinkedIn users they had. Moreover, they indicated whether they had at least one recommendations on their profile (0 = no recommendations, 1 = one or more recommendations).

Profile Photos

We received 195 useable photos. Note that five younger participants posted a picture on their profile that did not contain an image of themselves but showed a landscape or a child. We analyzed the profile photos on three dimensions. For perceived professionalism, we collected ratings of professionalism of the photo from 18 independent raters ($M_{\text{age}} = 43.5$, $SD = 10.0$; 55% women) for all 195 photos using a 5-point scale (1 = not at all to 5 = very much; intraclass correlation 0.98, 95% CI 0.96–0.99; for a similar procedure, see Palumbo et al., 2017). For portrait pictures, we calculated an index of the prominence of the face relative to the body of the person. The index is calculated as the distance between the top of the head and the lowest point of the chin, divided by the distance between the top of the head and the lowest part of the body that is visible on the picture (Archer et al., 1983). Finally, we calculated an index for younger looks on the photo by asking participants how old they were on their photo and deducting this age from their current age.

Employment Opportunities

We used a common measure of job search success in terms of employment opportunities, that is, number of job offers (Johnson & Leo, 2020; Kanfer et al., 2001). Participants indicated the number of job offers they received via LinkedIn since they started job searching.

Results

Correlations between the variables are shown in Table 1 separately for each age group.

Differences in Impression Management

To examine age differences in impression management in the different areas of the LinkedIn profiles (see Hypotheses 1–4), we compared the two age groups by performing

Table 1. Correlations among study variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Profile summary														
1. Number of words	—	.44**	.09	.04	.00	.25**	.24**	.12	.00	.08	.00	-.05	-.17	.17
2. Number of professional qualities	.41**	—	.12	.04	-.01	.22*	.24*	.26**	-.17	-.07	-.17	-.06	-.04	-.02
Photo														
3. Perceived professionalism	.26**	.40**	—	.16	.21*	.31**	.26**	.32**	.15	.15	-.11	.14	.22*	.06
4. Facial prominence	.09	.19	-.10	—	.03	-.05	-.00	.00	.23*	.17	.04	.04	-.19	.17
5. Younger age	.23*	.02	.14	-.26*	—	.12	.09	.12	-.24	.23*	-.04	.07	.12	-.11
Skill list														
6. Number of skills	.27*	.52**	.29**	.28**	-.05	—	.62**	.35**	.02	.10	-.13	.04	.09	-.03
Endorsements, network, recommendations														
7. Number of skill endorsements	.00	.17	.06	.02	-.10	.44**	—	.61**	.08	.08	-.11	.03	.15	.00
8. Number of contacts	-.08	-.01	.10	-.10	-.13	.25*	.60**	—	-.09	.17	-.10	-.03	.22*	-.07
9. Recommendation	.31**	.14	.04	-.03	.05	.24*	.33**	.28**	—	-.02	.08	.06	.08	.22*
Control variables														
10. Gender	.06	.05	.05	.01	-.00	-.16	-.04	-.11	-.03	—	-.19*	-.04	.17	.24*
11. Ethnicity	.04	-.03	.08	.06	-.17	-.01	.03	-.04	-.00	.10	—	-.04	.03	.08
12. Education 1	.23*	.16	.12	.01	.09	.18	-.02	-.02	.01	.08	-.05	—	-.59**	-.11
13. Education 2	.00	.13	.17	.08	.06	.02	.01	-.06	.20	.15	-.14	.46**	—	.14
Employment outcome														
14. Number of job offers	.07	.16	-.06	.07	.18	.10	.08	-.00	.14	.06	-.04	-.11	.20	—

Note. Correlations for older job seekers are displayed below the diagonal and those for younger job seekers above it. Demographic variables were coded as follows: gender 0 = female, 1 = male; ethnicity: 1 = Caucasian, 2 = other; education 1: 1 = bachelor's degree, 0 = master's degree, 0 = high school degree; education 2: 0 = bachelor's degree, 1 = master's degree, 0 = high school degree. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 2. Comparisons between older and younger job seekers' LinkedIn profiles

	Older job seekers % or <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Younger job seekers % or <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>t</i> or χ^2	Cohen's <i>d</i> or Cramer's <i>V</i>
Summary statement				
Number of words	48.77 (58.08)	37.53 (43.21)	-1.51	0.22
Mentions soft skills	22.0%	26.0%	0.40	0.05
Mentions technical skills	58.7%	68.3%	1.82	0.10
Mentions experience	35.4%	26.0%	1.93	0.10
Mentions profession	72.0%	51.9%	7.71**	0.20
Mentions education	3.7%	19.2%	10.26**	0.24
Number of professional qualities	2.01 (1.29)	1.82 (1.24)	-1.04	0.15
Photo				
Perceived professionalism	2.80 (0.77)	2.83 (0.82)	0.23	0.08
Facial prominence	0.62 (.21)	0.56 (.20)	-2.04*	0.29
Younger age on photo	2.61 (2.26)	2.01 (1.90)	-2.00*	0.29
Skill list				
Number of skills	11.02 (9.01)	9.40 (8.68)	-1.29	0.19
Endorsements, network, recommendations				
Number of skill endorsements	162.79 (302.74)	48.54 (58.48)	-3.87**	0.53
Number of contacts	369.34 (749.82)	194.71 (277.21)	-2.23*	0.31
Has one or more recommendations	34.1%	22.7%	3.15	0.13

Note. Statistical tests and ESs presented in the two last columns refer to comparisons between older and younger job seekers. The number of professional qualities is the sum of mentions of soft skills, technical skills, work experience, profession, and educational attainments. ESs = effect sizes. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

a series of χ^2 and *t* tests. Results, including *M*, *SD*, and ESs, are displayed in Table 2.

Profile Summaries

To examine both detailed and overall differences in mentions of professional qualities in the summary statement, we included the individual mentions as well as the sum score of mentions of professional qualities. Results showed that older job seekers mentioned their education less often and their profession more often than younger job seekers. There were no differences between the two age groups for mentions of work experience, soft skills, or technical skills. There was also no age difference when considering the more global index of mentions of professional qualities (i.e., the sum scores). Moreover, summary statements did not differ in length between the two groups. Thus, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Skill List

Results revealed no differences between the numbers of skills listed on the two groups' profiles. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

Endorsements, Network, Recommendations

For skill endorsements and network size, results showed that older job seekers had more skill endorsements and a

larger network than younger job seekers did. For recommendations, there were no differences in the likelihood of having recommendations between the two age groups. Hypothesis 3 was thus not supported.

Profile Photos

Results showed that there were no differences for perceived professionalism between the two groups. However, contrary to Hypothesis 4, older job seekers' photos displayed a higher facial prominence and a younger age appearance than younger job seekers' profile photos.

In sum, results did not reveal that older job seekers use less impression management in their LinkedIn profiles than younger job seekers. For 8 of the 14 elements that we examined, there were no differences between younger and older job seekers. For the remaining elements, most results were contrary to what existing research on older adults' computer and Internet skills suggested. Older job seekers mentioned their profession more often, selected more effective profile photos (i.e., photos with a higher facial prominence and younger appearance), and had more skill endorsements. Moreover, they had larger networks than younger job seekers. There was only one element of impression management, mentioning educational

attainments, which older job seekers used less than their younger counterparts.

Differences in the Relationship Between Impression Management and Employment Opportunities

We expected a positive relationship between elements of impression management and the number of job offers (Hypothesis 5a). Moreover, we expected this relationship to be weaker for older compared to younger job seekers (Hypotheses 5b). To test these assumptions, we first regressed the number of job offers on elements of impression management in the different profile areas (see Model 1 in Table 3). In a second step, we added interactions between these elements and job seeker age group (see Model 2 in Table 3). To isolate the effects of age group, we controlled for demographic aspects of the participants that are systematically related to lower employment prospects: being female (Neumark, 2018), being non-Caucasian (Neumark, 2018), and having a lower educational degree (OECD, 2012).

We used negative binomial regression estimation because the outcome variable, number of job offers, is over dispersed count data (older: $M = 1.46$, $SD = 5.52$; younger: $M = 4.14$, $SD = 9.49$). We standardized continuous predictors before entering them into the equation. Moreover, we used the sum score of mentions of professional qualities because we were more interested in the overall effect of mentioning professional qualities than in the differential effect of each quality dimension. Results are displayed in Table 3.²

Profile Summaries

Results of Model 1 showed that posting a longer summary statement was positively related to receiving more job offers while mentions of professional qualities were unrelated to job offers. Results of Model 2 showed that neither profile summary length nor mentions of professional qualities interacted with age group.

Skill List

The number of skills listed on the profile was unrelated to job offers, and there was no interaction between the number of listed skills and age group.

Endorsements, Network, Recommendations

The number of endorsements and number of contacts were unrelated to receiving job offers. In support of Hypothesis 5a, having one or more recommendations was positively related to receiving more of job offers. There were no interactions between age group and these three indicators.

Profile Photo

Posting a photo with a higher degree of facial prominence was positively related to receiving more job offers. Using a younger looking photo was unrelated to job offers while, surprisingly, a less professional-appearing photo was positively related to job offers. Two significant interactions of age group and with elements of impression management emerged, namely with perceived professionalism of the photo and with younger age on the photo. To examine these interactions, we conducted two follow-up regression analyses, one for older and one for younger job seekers. Regressions models were the same as in Model 1, except that age group was excluded as a predictor. Results of the follow-up analyses regarding perceived professionalism of the photo revealed that perceived professionalism and job offers were negatively related for older, $B = -1.13$, $SE = 0.29$, $p < .01$, but not for younger job seekers, $B = -0.15$, $SE = 0.17$, $p = .35$. None of the remaining elements of impression management in the photo, profile summaries, skill list, endorsements, network, and recommendations were significantly related to job offers in either group. Results for younger age on the photo showed that using a younger photo was positively related to receiving more job offers for older job seekers, $B = 0.51$, $SE = 0.20$, $p < .01$, and unrelated to job offers for younger job seekers, $B = -0.36$, $SE = 0.20$, $p = .08$.² Thus, job seeker age moderated the relationship between the use of these impression management elements and receiving job offers. However, their relationships with job offers were stronger for older than for younger job seekers. Again, none of the remaining elements of impression management were related to job offers in either group.

Finally, results of Model 1 and Model 2 showed that age group was a significant negative predictor of job offers: Older job seekers consistently received fewer job offers than younger job seekers, independent of their impression management.

² Among the control variables in Models 1 and 2, being male and identifying as non-Caucasian were positively related to the number of job offers. The last effect should be interpreted with caution because of the low number of non-Caucasians in the sample. Only 18.6% of the sample used in the regression identified as non-Caucasian, and all other participants identified as Caucasian. Nevertheless, the positive effect of identifying as non-Caucasian may be due to the fact that participants who identified as Asian Americans made up 35% of the non-Caucasian participants, and they tended to receive more job offers ($M = 8.00$, $SD = 17.87$) than Caucasians did ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 7.08$).

Table 3. Results of negative binomial regression analyses of impression management on LinkedIn profiles and of age group on the number of job offers

	Job offers	
	Model 1	Model 2
Control variables		
Gender	0.47** (0.23)	0.79** (0.27)
Ethnicity	0.72** (0.26)	0.60* (0.27)
Education 1	-0.24 (0.29)	-0.14 (0.32)
Education 2	0.69 (0.36)	0.64 (0.38)
Impression management indicators		
Profile summary		
Number of words	0.27* (0.13)	0.31 (0.16)
Number of professional qualities	-0.06 (0.13)	-0.14 (0.16)
Photo		
Perceived professionalism	-0.51** (0.13)	-0.26 (0.16)
Facial prominence	0.32** (0.12)	0.32 (0.16)
Younger age on photo	0.22 (0.12)	-0.30* (0.19)
Skill list		
Number of skills	0.09 (0.14)	0.09 (0.23)
Endorsements, network, recommendations		
Number of skill endorsements	0.11 (0.11)	0.23 (1.06)
Number of contacts	-0.30 (0.21)	-0.35 (0.38)
Recommendation	0.79** (0.25)	0.60 (0.39)
Age group		
Younger vs. older	-1.35** (0.25)	-1.25** (0.39)
Interactions between impression management and age group		
Profile summary		
Number of words × Age group		-0.19 (0.26)
Professional qualities × Age group		0.46 (0.29)
Photo		
Perceived professionalism × Age group		-0.80** (0.29)
Facial prominence × Age group		-0.14 (0.27)
Younger age on photo × Age group		0.92** (0.28)
Skill list		
Number of skills × Age group		0.28 (0.38)
Endorsements, network, recommendations		
Number of skill endorsements × Age group		-0.24 (1.08)
Number of contacts × Age group		0.16 (0.53)
Recommendation × Age group		-0.65 (0.57)
Constant	0.65** (0.25)	0.42* (0.39)
Likelihood ratio χ^2	116.35**	138.70**
Degrees of freedom	14	23

Note. $N = 172$. Unstandardized regression coefficients and SE (in parentheses) are shown. Elements of self-presentation were standardized before entering them into the regression. Demographic variables were coded as follows: gender 0 = female, 1 = male; ethnicity: 1 = Caucasian, 2 = other; education 1: 1 = bachelor's degree, 0 = master's degree, 0 = high school degree; education 2: 0 = bachelor's degree, 1 = master's degree, 0 = high school degree; age group was coded as 0 = younger, 1 = older. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

In sum, using more words in the profile summary, posting a headshot with a high facial prominence that appears less professional, and having at least one recommendation were positively related to the number of job offers for both younger and older job seekers, supporting the hypothesis that impression management on LinkedIn is positively related to job opportunities (Hypothesis 5a). Evidence for differential relationships between impression management and job offers as a function of job seeker age group emerged for two elements, and both were related to the photo: Using a younger-looking photo and a less professional-looking photo were related to more job offers for older job seekers and unrelated to job offers for younger job seekers. Nevertheless, independent of these and other impression management efforts, older job seekers received less job offers than younger job seekers. Thus, the evidence for Hypothesis 5b was mixed. While older job seekers received less job offers independent of their use of impression management, results also revealed that using certain elements of impression management may attenuate this bias.

Discussion

Nowadays, SNSs like Facebook and LinkedIn are commonly used in recruitment, but research on the use of these platforms in recruitment and selection largely lags behind practice. Nearly nothing is known about how job seekers from different social groups, including different age cohorts, use SNS to present and promote themselves and how it influences their employability. Focusing on differences between younger and older job seekers is particularly relevant because, unlike younger job seekers, older job seekers did not grow up with SNS, which may reinforce their already disadvantaged position on the labor market.

Evidence for differences in impression management between the two groups emerged in all areas of the LinkedIn profile: Older job seekers mentioned their profession more often, they used younger-looking profile photos displaying a higher facial prominence, had more skills endorsements from other users, and were better connected with other users than younger job seekers. For several other elements of impression management like mentions of technical skills, soft skills, or professionalism of the photo, no differences between the two groups emerged. These results were unexpected. In fact, the evidence at hand suggested the opposite, namely that learning how to use SNS later in middle adulthood goes along with a number of barriers, such as feeling uneasy about online self-promotion, worrying about the use of

personal data or having difficulties in navigating SNS, using the software, and producing and posting content. However, our results suggest that older job seekers are just as proficient and, in some respect, even more proficient in promoting their profile on professional SNS as younger job seekers are.

On the one hand, this observation is encouraging because it refutes concerns about older adults being less versed in using professional SNS. On the other hand, it highlights the need to accumulate more knowledge on how job seekers belonging to different groups present themselves on professional SNS and what their underlying motivation is. It seems that older job seekers were able to overcome typical age-specific barriers when constructing their professional online persona. Theories of professional image creation of stigmatized groups suggest that this achievement may be grounded in their social identity as older workers. These theories posit that professional images of workers belonging to a stigmatized group contain a component that is shaped by the motivation to distance oneself from the stereotypical characteristics associated with the group (Houston & Grandey, 2013; Roberts, 2005). Thus, individuals belonging to stigmatized groups are expected to use impression management tactics that aim at reducing the salience of their stigmatized social identity, communicating favorable attributes, or creating an environment in which others classify the individual on the basis of personal characteristics instead of group membership.

This particular motivation may explain why older job seekers' SNS profiles contained as many or sometimes even more elements of impression management and often precisely those elements which recruiters deem important in online profiles when screening candidates. Stereotypes associated with older workers are widespread and stigmatize them as less competent and less adaptable, particularly when it comes to learning and mastering new technologies (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Older job seekers are aware of these negative stereotypes (Finkelstein et al., 2013), and they are motivated to refute them (Lyons et al., 2014). Driven by this motive, older job seekers may have overcome the barriers typically observed for this group and invested extra care and effort into promoting their competences in a professional manner, particularly on LinkedIn.

In a second step, we analyzed the relationships between impression management and employment outcomes. Some of the results corroborated earlier findings. For example, having a longer profile summary and using a picture with a higher facial prominence was positively related to receiving job offers, which converges with previous research (Levesque & Lowe, 1999; Loughnan

et al., 2010; Roulin & Levashina, 2019). However, importantly, results revealed that irrespective of their impression management efforts, older job seekers received significantly less job offers through LinkedIn than younger job seekers. That is, despite comparable – or in some respects better – online profiles, older job seekers did not receive comparable employment opportunities. Older job seekers were better connected and received more skill endorsements, showing that other professionals deemed it worthwhile to connect with them and give them credit for their competencies. Yet, older job seekers were still disadvantaged at recruitment.

Only one aspect of impression management helped attenuate the negative effect of belonging to the group of older job seekers: using a younger and a less professional profile picture. The linkage between younger age appearance and employment opportunities confirms the advantageous impact of younger looks for older job seekers revealed in experimental research (Kaufmann et al., 2016, 2017). A younger-looking face creates impressions of higher physical and mental fitness, and our results suggest that these impressions may indeed be a powerful driver of favorable employment outcomes of older job seekers in various recruitment settings.

The advantageous effect of reduced professionalism on the photo seems surprising at first sight. However, it may be due to the fact that less professional photos are also less formal and more personal, reflecting the preference for appearing “warm and welcoming, not stiff and formal” on SNS (Callahan, 2018).

Taken together, these results underline the powerful impact of photos and age appearance on online recruitment. Independent of their impression management efforts, older job seekers received significantly fewer employment opportunities than younger job seekers. Only the use of a younger-looking photo and none of the other impression management efforts helped attenuate the preference for younger candidates, suggesting that older job seekers’ older looks on their photo played an important role in explaining this bias. These findings also have practical implications. While photos have been banned from classical résumés for good reasons, they have remarkably found a way back into the recruitment process through SNS. Our results imply that it is time to also ban them from SNS. The absence of profile photos may also help increase recruiters’ attention to the specific contents of the SNS profiles and hence to information that is more relevant for finding the right person for the job. Our finding that older job seekers are just as proficient in crafting their professional online persona as younger job seekers are is encouraging. It implies that the use of SNS is not per se an obstacle and hence does not create an unfair

disadvantage for older cohorts. Thus, banning profile photos from SNS may be an important step forward in transforming the use of SNS in online recruitment into an age-fair practice.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study has limitations that create opportunities for future research on job seeker impression management and online recruitment. First, we did not assess job seekers’ level of digital literacy. It is possible that their level of digital literacy differed from other job seekers who use SNS, casting doubt on the generalizability of our findings. Levels of education are closely related to digital literacy (DiMaggio & Hargittai, 2001). Levels of education in our sample resemble those of most LinkedIn users (Pew Research Center, 2018). Moreover, we controlled for level of education in our analyses. These elements suggest that our results are generalizable to a large range of younger and older job seekers who use LinkedIn to find employment. Nevertheless, future research on differences between social groups’ impression management on SNS should assess job seekers’ digital literacy more directly and control for its potential effects.

Second, we focused on those areas of the LinkedIn profile that are relatively stable over time and that contain the information that recruiters most look for when screening profiles (Zide et al., 2014). Other aspects of the profile change more frequently, like postings of events, sharing articles or videos, or publishing comments. Professional websites recommend posting something new at least two to five times a week. While these frequent changes may be one reason why recruiters concentrate on the more stable profile elements, postings and shared content may not go unnoticed and influence recruiters’ judgments. These aspects could be captured by a longitudinal study, examining the facets and impact of the more dynamic, more rapidly changing elements of impression management on professional SNS.

Third, we focused on one outcome, job offers. The number of job offers obtained during a specific time period is a common measure of job search success, including online job search (e.g., Johnson & Leo, 2020). It is arguably the most crucial labor market outcome, with far-reaching consequences. Unequal treatment at this stage, as discovered in this research, is therefore particularly alarming. Nevertheless, additional aspects like the quality of the job offers would also be important to consider. Other outcomes like being invited to an event or to join a group by other professionals may produce a different picture. Moreover, in the long run, such outcomes may lead to employment opportunities. Attempts

to answer such questions provide an important avenue for future research.

The findings of this research also point to an urgent need to accumulate more data and to develop theories on how job seekers of different social groups present themselves on professional SNS to explain how self-presentation affects their employability. While practice is advancing fast, research on SNS recruitment – particularly those related to questions of impression management and of fairness – is still in its early stages. Both empirical research and theoretical models addressing these questions are scarce. A notable exception is the framework of applicant impression management on social media by Roulin and Levashina (2016). However, this framework does not consider applicants' social group membership or social identity. Our research suggests that these factors may play an important role for impression management and self-promotion. Theories of professional image creation of stigmatized groups may provide a fruitful starting point for integrating such aspects into existing frameworks.

References

- Abbot, L. (2019). *10 tips for picking the right LinkedIn profile picture*. <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/2014/12/5-tips-for-picking-the-right-linkedin-profile-picture>
- Archer, D., Iritani, B., Kimes, D. D., & Barrios, M. (1983). Face-ism: Five studies of sex differences in facial prominence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *45*(4), 725–735. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.45.4.725>
- Bal, A. C., Reiss, A. E. B., Rudolph, C. W., & Baltes, B. B. (2011). Examining positive and negative perceptions of older workers: A meta-analysis. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, *66B*(6), 687–698. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbr056>
- Bartram, D. (2000). Internet recruitment and selection: Kissing frogs to find princes. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *8*(4), 261–274. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2389.00155>
- Blank, G., & Lutz, C. (2017). Representativeness of social media in Great Britain: Investigating Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, and Instagram. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *61*(7), 741–756. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764217717559>
- Brandtzæg, P.B., Lüders, M., & Skjetne, J. H. (2010). Too many Facebook “friends”? Content sharing and sociability versus the need for privacy in social network sites. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, *26*(11–12), 1006–1030. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2010.516719>
- Brown, V. R., & Vaughn, E. D. (2011). The writing on the (Facebook) wall: The use of social networking sites in hiring decisions. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *26*(2), 219–225. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-011-9221-x>
- Callahan, S. (2018). *Picture perfect: Make a great first impression with your LinkedIn profile photo*. <https://www.linkedin.com/business/sales/blog/b2b-sales/picture-perfect--make-a-great-first-impression-with-your-linkedi>
- Chen, C.-C., & Lin, M.-M. (2014). The effect of applicant impression management tactics on hiring recommendations: Cognitive and affective processes. *Applied Psychology*, *63*(4), 698–724. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12013>
- Chiang, J. K.-H., & Suen, H.-Y. (2015). Self-presentation and hiring recommendations in online communities: Lessons from LinkedIn. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *48*, 516–524. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.02.017>
- Cogin, J. (2012). Are generational differences in work values fact or fiction? Multi-country evidence and implications. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *23*(11), 2268–2294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2011.610967>
- Colbert, A., Yee, N., & George, G. (2016). The digital workforce and the workplace of the future. *Academy of Management Journal*, *59*(3), 731–739. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2016.4003>
- Czaja, S. J., Charness, N., Fisk, A. D., Hertzog, C., Nair, S. N., Rogers, W. A., & Sharit, J. (2006). Factors predicting the use of technology: Findings from the center for research and education on aging and technology enhancement (CREATE). *Psychology and Aging*, *21*(2), 333–352. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.21.2.333>
- Czaja, S. J., Sharit, J., Ownby, R., Roth, D. L., & Nair, S. (2001). Examining age differences in performance of a complex information search and retrieval task. *Psychology and Aging*, *16*(4), 564–579. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.16.4.564>
- DiMaggio, P., & Hargittai, E. (2001). From “digital divide” to “digital inequality”: Studying internet use as penetration increases. Working Paper #15. Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Princeton University.
- Ellis, A. P. J., West, B. J., Ryan, A. M., & DeShon, R. P. (2002). The use of impression management tactics in structured interviews: A function of question type? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*(6), 1200–1208. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.87.6.1200>
- Finkelstein, L. M., Ryan, K. M., & King, E. B. (2013). What do the young (old) people think of me? Content and accuracy of age-based metastereotypes. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *22*(6), 633–657. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2012.673279>
- Fisher, C. (2016). 5 steps to improve your LinkedIn profile in minutes. <https://blog.linkedin.com/2016/08/03/5-steps-to-improve-your-linkedin-profile-in-minutes>
- Griffith, R. L., & McDaniel, M. (2006). The nature of deception and applicant faking behavior. In R. L. Griffith & M. H. Peterson (Eds.), *A closer examination of applicant faking behavior*. Information Age Publishing.
- Hargittai, E., & Hinnant, A. (2008). Digital Inequality. *Communication Research*, *35*(5), 602–621. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650208321782>
- Houston, L., & Grandey, A. A. (2013). What we don't know can hurt us: A call for stereotype-congruent impression management tactics. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, *6*(4), 433–437. <https://doi.org/10.1111/iops.12080>
- Jobvite (2015). 2015 job seeker nation study. <https://www.jobvite.com/2015-job-seeker-nation-study/>
- Johnson, M. A., & Leo, C. (2020). The inefficacy of LinkedIn? A latent change model and experimental test of using LinkedIn for job search. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(11), 1262–1280. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000491>
- Jones, E. E., & Pittman, T. S. (1982). Toward a general theory of strategic self-presentation. In J. Suls (Ed.), *Psychological perspectives on the self* (Vol. 1, pp. 231–262). Erlbaum.
- Kanfer, R., Wanberg, C. R., & Kantrowitz, T. M. (2001). Job search and employment: A personality-motivational analysis and meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*(5), 837–855. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.5.837>

- Karahasanović, A., Brandtzægac, P. B., Heiman, J., Luders, M., Vermeride, L., Bram, J. P., Piersen, J., Lievens, B., Vanattenhoven, J., & Greet, J. (2009). Co-creation and use-generated content – Elder people's user requirements. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25(3), 655–678. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2008.08.012>
- Kaufmann, M. C., Krings, F., & Sczesny, S. (2016). Looking too old? How an older age appearance reduces chances of being hired. *British Journal of Management*, 27(4), 727–739. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12125>
- Kaufmann, M. C., Krings, F., Zebrowitz, L. A., & Sczesny, S. (2017). Age bias in selection decisions: The role of facial appearance and fitness impressions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 2065. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.02065>
- Klehe, U.-C., Kleinmann, M., Nieß, C., & Grazi, J. (2014). Impression management behavior in assessment centers: Artificial behavior or much ado about nothing? *Human Performance*, 27(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08959285.2013.854365>
- Kluemper D. H., Mitra, A., & Wang, S. (2016). Social media use in HRM. In M. Ronald Buckley, J. R. B. Halbesleben, & A. R. Wheeler (Eds.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* (Vol. 34, pp. 153–207). Emerald Group Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0742-73012016000003401>
- Krings, F., Sczesny, S., & Kluge, A. (2011). Stereotypical inferences as mediators of age discrimination: The role of competence and warmth. *British Journal of Management*, 22(2), 187–201. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.2010.00721.x>
- Landers R. N., & Schmidt, G. B. (2016). Social media in employee selection and recruitment: An overview. In R. N. Landers & G. B. Schmidt (Eds.), *Social media in employee selection and recruitment* (pp. 3–11). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29989-1_1
- Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. (1990). Impression management: A literature review and two-component model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107(1), 34–47. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.107.1.34>
- Leist, A. K. (2013). Social media use of older adults: A mini-review. *Gerontology*, 59(4), 378–384. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000346818>
- Levashina, J., Hartwell, C. J., Morgeson, F. P., & Campion, M. A. (2014). The structured employment interview: Narrative and quantitative review of the research literature. *Personnel Psychology*, 67(1), 241–293. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12052>
- Levesque, M. J., & Lowe, C. A. (1999). Face-ism as a determinant of interpersonal perceptions: The influence of context on facial prominence effects. *Sex Roles*, 41, 241–259. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1018806329197>
- Liu, J. (2017). How man LinkedIn recommendations do I need? <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-many-linkedin-recommendations-do-i-need-joseph-liu/>
- Loughnan, S., Haslam, N., Murnane, T., Vaes, J., Reynolds, C., & Suitner, C. (2010). Objectification leads to depersonalization: The denial of mind and moral concern to objectified others. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 40(5), 709–717. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.755>
- Lüders, M., & Brandtzægac, P. B. (2017). “My children tell me it's so simple”: A mixed-methods approach to understand older non-users' perceptions of social networking sites. *New Media & Society*, 19(2), 181–198. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814554064>
- Lyons, B. J., Wessel, J. L., Tai, Y. C., & Ryan, A. M. (2014). Strategies of job seekers related to age-related stereotypes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 29(8), 1009–1027. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-03-2013-0078>
- McCarthy, J. M., Bauer, T. N., Truxillo, D. M., Anderson, N. R., Costa, A. C., & Ahmed, S. M. (2017). Applicant Perspectives during selection: A review addressing “so what?,” “what's new?,” and “where to next?”. *Journal of Management*, 43(6), 1693–1725. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316681846>
- McFarland, L. A., & Ployhart, R. E. (2015). Social media: A contextual framework to guide research and practice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(6), 1653–1677. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039244>
- McFarland, L., Ryan, A. M., & Kriska, S. D. (2003). Impression management use and effectiveness across assessment methods. *Journal of Management*, 29(5), 641–661. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-2063_03_00030-8
- Neumark, D. (2018). Experimental research on labor market discrimination. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 56(3), 799–866. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.20161309>
- Oblinger, D., & Oblinger, J. (2005). Is it age or IT? First steps toward understanding the net generation. In D. Oblinger, & J. Oblinger (Eds.), *Educating the net generation*. Educause.
- OECD (2012). How does education affect employment rates? In *Education at a Glance 2012: Highlights*. https://doi.org/10.1787/eag_highlights-2012-11-en
- OECD (2019). *Working better with age, ageing and employment policies*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/c4d4f66a-en>
- Ofcom (2018). *Communications market report*. <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/cmr/cmr-2018/report>
- Palumbo, R., Adams, R. B. Jr, Hess, U., Kleck, R. E., & Zebrowitz, L. (2017). Age and gender differences in facial attractiveness, but not emotion resemblance, contribute to age and gender stereotypes. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01704>
- Pew Research Center (2018). *Social media use in 2018*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/>
- Pfeil, U., Arjan, R., & Zaphiris, P. (2009). Age differences in online social networking – A study of user profiles and the social capital divide among teenagers and older users in MySpace. *Computer in Human Behavior*, 25(3), 43–654. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2008.08.015>
- Posthuma, R. A., & Campion, M. A. (2009). Age stereotypes in the workplace: Common stereotypes, moderators, and future research directions†. *Journal of Management*, 35(1), 158–188. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206308318617>
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants part 1. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10748120110424816>
- Reilly, K. (2016). 10 LinkedIn profile summaries that we love (and how to boost your own). <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/linkedin-best-practices/2016/7-linkedin-profile-summaries-that-we-love-and-how-to-boost-your-own>
- Roberts, L. M. (2005). Changing faces: Professional image construction in diverse organizational settings. *Academy of Management Review*, 30(4), 685–711. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2005.18378873>
- Roth, P. L., Bobko, P., Van Iddekinge, C. H., & Thatcher, J. B. (2016). Social media in employee-selection-related decisions. *Journal of Management*, 42(1), 269–298. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206313503018>
- Roulin, N., & Levashina, J. (2016). Impression management and social media profiles. In R. N. Landers, & G. B. Schmidt (Eds.), *Social media in employee selection and recruitment* (pp. 223–248). Springer.
- Roulin, N., & Levashina, J. (2019). LinkedIn as a new selection method: Psychometric properties and assessment approach. *Personnel Psychology*, 72(2), 187. <https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12296>
- Ruggs E. N., Walker S. S., Blanchard A., & Gur S. (2016). Online exclusion: Biases that may arise when using social media in talent acquisition. In R. N. Landers & G. B. Schmidt (Eds.), *Social media in employee selection and recruitment*. Springer.

- Schneider, D. J. (1981). Tactical self-presentations: Toward a broader conception. In J. T. Tedeschi (Ed.), *Impression management theory and social psychological research* (pp. 23–40). Academic Press.
- Schramm, J. (2016). How to look younger on LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/emphasizing-experience-how-look-younger-linked-in-judy-schramm/>
- Smith, M. A. (n.d.). How to maximize your LinkedIn endorsements. <https://www.topresume.com/career-advice/maximize-linkedin-endorsements>
- Smola, K. W., & Sutton, C. D. (2002). Generational differences: Revisiting generational work values for the new millennium. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 23(4), 363–382. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.147>
- Society for Human Resource Management. (2016). Using social media for talent acquisition: Recruitment and screening. <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Pages/Social-Media-Recruiting-Screening-2015.aspx>
- Tanner, N. (n.d.). Surprise, LinkedIn endorsements do matter! Here's what you need to know. <https://www.themuse.com/advice/surprise-linked-in-endorsements-do-matter-heres-what-you-need-to-know>
- Tapscott, D. (2009). *Grown up digital: How the net generation is changing the world*. McGraw Hill.
- Van den Broeck, E., Poels, K., & Walrave, M. (2015). *Older and wiser? Facebook use, privacy concern, and privacy protection in the life stages of emerging, young, and middle adulthood* (pp. 1–11). Social Media + Society. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115616149>
- Van Der Heide, B., D'Angelo, J. D., & Schumaker, E. M. (2012). The effects of verbal versus photographic self-presentation on impression formation in Facebook. *Journal of Communication*, 62(1), 98–116. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01617.x>
- Yankovich, K. (2015). 8 ways to grow your LinkedIn connections. <https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/8-ways-to-grow-your-linkedin-connections/>
- Zide, J., Elman, B., & Shahani-Denning, C. (2014). LinkedIn and recruitment: How profiles differ across occupations. *Employee Relations*, 36(5), 583–604. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-07-2013-0086>

History

Received July 15, 2020

Revision received November 23, 2020

Accepted November 25, 2020


Published online June 10, 2021

Funding

The authors express their gratitude to the Swiss National Science Foundation for funding this research (Grant Number 100014_156527).

ORCID

Franciska Krings

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2443-6602>

Franciska Krings

Department of Organizational Behavior

University of Lausanne

Quartier UNIL-Centre

Bâtiment Unicentre

1015 Lausanne

Switzerland

franciska.krings@unil.ch