[Original Article]

Style has no age
- Reconstructing age identity on Pinterest -

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Abstract

Sociocultural and demographic shifts have resulted in a changing perception of older age. Older women, historically subjected to age-ordering rules of dress, have increasingly refused to be marginalized fashion consumers and have been striving to construct a more positive age identity. Although studies have examined consumers' negotiation of marginalized identities, age identity has not received much attention as a type of marginalized identity. This study argues that Pinterest acts as a platform for identity work by allowing older women to creatively reconstruct their sense of self by saving images and organizing them into thematic boards. Drawing on symbolic interactionism theory and notions of digital self-presentation, this paper seeks to explore the discursive practices that older women employ on Pinterest to resist ageist fashion discourses. The sample consisted of 15 fashion-oriented Pinterest profiles of older women. Netnographic inquiry was employed first to examine what images were saved and what thematic boards were created. Three analytical frameworks for visual data analysis were integrated to further scrutinize the visual texts within the thematic boards. The analyses revealed three main themes—rejecting age, accepting age, and consuming age. The themes that emerged formed the basis for an age identity reconstruction process whereby women attempted to bridge the existing gap between older age and mainstream fashion discourse.

Keywords: age identity, Pinterest, digital possessions, digital self-presentation, appearance management

I. Introduction

Fashion field and fashionable dress have always been an exclusive domain of young—there was no place for older age. However, recent proliferation of economically powerful older demographics, rise of consumption culture, and overall democratization of fashion have transformed the ways older women interact with fashion.

In the context of declining narrative on age-related dress rules (Twigg, 2009), and fast-growing activism for visibility of older women (Biron, 2017; Kay, 2017), it has been suggested that older women will perceive fashion consumption as one of the strategies to recover their age identities from ageist discourse (Twigg, 2009, 2013).

Renegotiation of age identity through fashion-related consumption practices is the focus of this work. Age identity is a marginalized identity because it occurs in the

social context where aging process is subjected to heavy stereotyping (Lin, Hummert, & Harwood, 2004). Fashion context especially contributes to the development of negative, stigmatized identity due to very narrow and stereotypical definition of what is considered beautiful and therefore, attractive (Biron, 2017). Stigmatized identity and its renegotiation processes were examined with regard to plus-size women, who are, like older women, excluded from fashion mainstream fashion discourse (Gurrieri & Cherrier, 2013; Harju & Huovinen, 2015). However, to the best of our knowledge, no studies so far have attempted to examine how older women oppose fashion ageist stereotypes.

1. Research aim and research questions

In general, stereotypical notions regarding aging process result in identity issues and challenges to the self-concept that can be negotiated through the acts of identity work (Lin et al., 2004; Tajfel, 2010). Existing research that explored the notion of older women's identity construction by means of fashion consumption practices was conducted based on textual interview data (e.g., Birtwislte & Tsim, 2005; Clarke, Griffin, & Maliha, 2009; Thomas & Peters, 2009). Such data, while providing researchers with in-depth insights, has one major shortcoming − self-reported fashion practices described by women might differ from their actual practices in everyday life. This study, therefore, aims to investigate reconstruction of age identity as occurring in natural and uncontrolled setting − on Pinterest, image-based social media platform.

Pinterest is justifiable platform for the study because older demographics constitute a significant share of all users. Statistical data shows that 50~65+ age group constitute approximately 40% in comparison to younger age group (18~29) that accounts for only 36% of total users. Moreover, Pinterest is considered a "female" social media as women comprise the majority of users (York, 2017). In comparison, on Instagram, another popular image-based social media platform,

the majority of users (90%) are under 35 years-old (Hutchinson, 2017). In addition, Pinterest has recently attracted scholastic attention as a space where identity and self-related acts can be performed (Almjeld, 2015; Gantz, 2013; Phillips, Miller, & McQuarrie, 2014).

In order to examine identity negotiation process, Pinterest will be considered from symbolic interactionist perspective as a platform where digital self-presentation via prosumption practices takes place. Symbolic interactionist perspective states that people employ appearance management techniques in order to foreground or downplay different aspects of self in different social situations. Moreover, by selecting, combining, and modifying clothes, fashion consumers "create their own realities⋯express themselves visually", and with that construct their identity (Kaiser, Nagasawa, & Hutton, 1991). The notion of digital self-representation through acts of prosumption implies that identity online is constructed through the means of digital possessions (imagery) that are simultaneously "consumed" (Belk, 2014; Schau & Gilly, 2003) and produced (Beer & Burrows, 2010). Therefore, this study argues that identity work on Pinterest is the appearance management technique taken online. In other words, it is a space where women actively consume (pin images) and produce (assemble image collections in a new way) various fashion imagery, manipulate its symbols and juxtapose various meanings, thus creating new contexts from which alternative identity emerges.

Accordingly, research objective is to examine the strategies older women use in order to create new age identity using online appearance management techniques. In line with the research objective, following research questions are developed: What kind of fashion imagery is "consumed" on Pinterest by older women? What symbolic meanings do these images acquire when they are assembled into various boards? And finally, how age identity is negotiated?

Based on a netnographic approach (Kozinets, Dolbec, & Earley, 2014) and frameworks adapted for

visual data analysis (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; Salo, 2007), visual and textual data on 15 fashion-oriented Pinterest accounts were examined. On Pinterest, through acts of digital consumption, women actively rejected age as a significant variable in their fashion choices. With that, they promote acceptance of age and consequently reposition the notion of older age from marginalized position into mainstream fashion discourse. The study contributes to the literature on marginalized consumer identity in general and age-identity in particular. It also provides contribution on digital self-presentation and usage of Pinterest.

Ⅱ. Theoretical Background & Literature Review

1. Defining "older" in fashion context

It is not always clear what constitutes "older" age. Currently, no unified definition has been offered by scholars who examine fashion consumption practices of "older" women. Some scholars refer to older women as those who belong to baby boom generation (Kozar & Damhorst, 2008). Others, although not explicitly, identify older women as women who belong to a generation preceding baby boom generation (Clarke et al., 2009). "Mature consumers" is another way to define older women, however, the exact "cut off" point also varies depending on a researcher's perspective. Birtwistle and Tsim (2005) define such market as 45+, while in the study by Nam et al. (2007) it is set as 55+. Research by Holmlund, Hagman, and Polsa (2011) refers to older women as 50+ consumer group. Older women are also identified as "silver seniors" over age 65 (Thomas & Peters, 2009).

It has been claimed that constitution of "older" age can also vary greatly depending on the cultural context in which age is defined. Twigg (2013) suggested that with regard to fashion field, the threshold of older age is especially low due to the nature of industry that is focused on youth. Indeed, fashion media

is notoriously known for "age slippage" practises where actual users of the product are older than model advertising this product (Twigg, 2010, 2012a). Fashion magazines targeted to women over 40 and beyond, almost never use images of women over 40 (Lewis, Medvedev, & Seponski, 2011), and younger models are used to advertise expensive designer clothes that only older women can afford (Horyn, 2007). As a result of such ageist practices, women feel excluded from mainstream fashion discourse as early as 40 years-old, despite great financial abilities, appearance and health (Bassett, 2017; Hardy, 2017). Therefore, because women start feeling ignored by fashion field long before they can "officially" be called old, the current study will broadly define "older" women as 40 plus.

2. Fashioning age identity: A symbolic Interactionist perspective

Age identity can be defined as one of the instances of social identity where individuals evaluate selves based on their affiliation with a particular membership. Older age is subjected to negative stereotypes, therefore, such marginalization that members of older age group experience will in turn negatively affect their individuals' identity (Lin et al., 2004; Tajfel, 2010). Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 2010) suggests that members of disadvantageous groups tend to apply various social creativity strategies in order to achieve more positive personal and social identity.

In terms of older women, their negative age identity is formed not only because of general ageist discourse, but also specific fashion ageist discourse. In contemporary culture, consumption, and especially fashion consumption, is one of the crucial practices whereby one's identity can be constructed (Gilleard & Higgs, 2014). Fashion consumption in the era of postmodernity is considered to be free from any normative boundaries, and individuals have the right to express themselves through fashion choices in any way they see fit (Polhemus, 2010). When it comes to older

women, however, their ability to freely use symbolic nature of clothes for the purposes of self-expression is still restricted (Armstrong, 2015). Fashion has not yet fully embraced older women as a rightful consumer segment, and, therefore, does not provide older women with the same variety as younger consumers. In addition, broad sociocultural norms of age-appropriateness (Twigg, 2013) still regulate the way older women are required to dress after they reach a certain age limit. If such norms are not followed, a woman risks to become socially stigmatized (Armstrong, 2015).

However, increasingly, it has been argued that age-related dress rules are becoming less strict (Twigg, 2013); and women feel more and more uncomfortable within such rigid boundaries. Studies show that women have high interest in fashionable and trendy clothing (Birtwislte & Tsim, 2005; Clarke et al., 2009, Thomas & Peters, 2009). In addition, more and more women challenge the notion of age-appropriateness in dress, and assert their right to dress according to their own personal rules, rather than follow socially imposed norms (Sciacca, 2015). In light of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 2010), appearance management can be considered the creative strategy older women apply in order to negotiate their stigmatized identity through manipulation and re-appropriation of fashion symbols.

In fashion studies, appearance management is defined as a part of symbolic interaction process. As such, this perspective is based on the assumption that people use visual, symbolic and ambivalent nature of dress and engage in appearance management behaviour in order to construct a desirable identity (Kaiser, 1997). Moreover, the process of identity construction by means of appearance and subsequent negotiation of such identity allows individuals to resolve inner contradictions between personal desire for self-expression and socially acceptable norms (Kaiser et al., 1991). Fashion consumption can be considered as a part of appearance management process. As a symbolic type of consumption, it allows individuals to communicate identity by creating a desirable visual imagery. In other words, individuals construct "a visual metaphor for identity" that is presented in various social contexts (Davis, 1994).

An extensive body of research exists that examines how identity can be constructed through symbolic fashion consumption and appearance management. The topic of gendered identity construction through means of appearance and clothing have been theoretically asserted (Crane, 2000; Davis, 1994) and empirically tested. For instance, Rudd and Lennon (2000) found that women engaged in appearance management behaviour as a response to gendered social norms and to manifest control over their lives. Frith and Gleeson (2004) explored construction of masculine embodied identities through clothing practises.

Another strand of research, albeit limited one, addresses the issues of non-heterosexual identity construction by means of clothing and appearance (Clarke, Hayfield, & Huxley, 2012; Clarke & Spence, 2013; Clarke & Turner, 2007; Hayfield, Clarke, Halliwell, & Malson, 2013; Hutson, 2010; Krakauer & Rose, 2002). Findings indicate that for members of gay and lesbian communities, positive identity was achieved by conforming to existing communal appearance rather than opposing to them. Choosing appropriate clothes and hairstyles (ex. butch/androgynous look) was seen as a process of identity negotiation where conformity was agentive and strategic behaviour that provided codes to communicate their sexual identity and allow others to recognize it.

Scholars also explored identity construction in different groups who were subjected to the outside marginalization and stigmatization. In that case, identity was negotiated by resisting, rather than conforming to the norms of appropriate appearance. For instance, it was found that people with physical disabilities strategically used clothing to conceal, deflect attention, compensate for disability, or to express uniqueness (Kaiser, Wingate, Freeman, & Chnadler, 1987). Number of scholars (Contois, 2013; Gurrieri & Cherrier,

2013; Harju & Huovinen, 2015; Peters, 2014; Scara-boto & Fischer, 2012) examined fat identity formation by looking at the role of fashion consumption prac-tises in resisting marginalized status.

Sociology and cultural studies have to some extent addressed the issue of age identity construction. Stu-dies exist that examined how older women negotiate their identities and resist ageist stereotypes in the everyday talk (Hurd, 1999; Trethewey, 2001) and in on-line discussion forums (Lin et al., 2004). In addi-tion, age identity construction was studied in the con-text of ageing celebrity culture who promote the idea of successful ageing and active lifestyle (Marshall & Rahman, 2015). However, fashion scholarship has not paid much attention to construction and negotiation of age identity. So far, research on aging issues within fashion field include the analysis of age-representa-tion in fashion magazines (Lewis et al., 2011; Twigg, 2010, 2012b), examination of reasons for exclusion of aged consumer by retailers (Birtwistle & Tsim, 2005; Twigg, 2012a), and inquiries into older female con-sumers' attitudes towards clothing (Birtwistle & Tsim, 2005; Thomas & Peters, 2009; Clarke et al., 2009; Holmlund et al., 2011; Nam et al., 2007). Exami-nation of older women's age identity negotiation prac-tices, however, have not yet been explored.

3. Pinterest as a site for constructing "new" old age

1) Pinterest and older women

Pinterest.com is a social networking site where any image, web or personal, can be "pinned" (saved) to a board. The number of boards a user can create as well as the number of images that can be pinned onto a board is unlimited. The collection of images and boards can be publicly accessed and viewed. Pinterest is not a platform exclusively reserved for women, however, female users still constitute the majority of users (Aslam, 2017). Some researchers explain such gender imbalance by connecting the idea of Pinterest to the traditionally female activity of scrapbooking

(Phillips et al., 2014) and fantasy space where women can dream (Almjeld, 2015; Gantz, 2013; Phillips et al., 2014). With regard to age, statistical data indicates that users' age demographics is fairly evenly distri-buted ranging from 18 to over 65 years (Hutchinson, 2017). Specifically, data shows that although younger demographics (18~49 years old) still constitute the majority of users, older demographics are continuously adopting the platform with number of users aged 50~ 65+ accounts for approximately 40% of all users (York, 2017). Pinterest is not specifically fashion-oriented site; however, women's fashion is one of the website's core categories that women can engage with.

Rise of digital media, social networking sites and overall democratisation of internet allowed older wo-men to openly address fashion-related ageist stereo-types. Many women started personal fashion blogs and later increased their online presence at different social networking sites (SNS) as a response to invisi-bility of older women. For instance, women report starting blogging due to the absence of relatable images of older women in fashion media (Kay, 2017). Another reason for increasing activity online is to promote the idea of embracing age, and oppose the notion that some clothes are inappropriate to wear for women after certain age (Biron, 2017). In short, by sharing visual imagery of self and outfits they are wearing on various social media accounts, these wo-men are attempting to provide inspiration for other women and encouraging them to follow their exam-ple.

The current study chooses to focus on Pinterest in order to examine older women's practices in natural, uncontrolled environment. Pinterest as a platform for digital self-presentation was chosen over personal blogs that were also theorized as a "significant space for identity construction" (Rocamora, 2011) because of its user − rather than audience − oriented nature. While fashion blogs are written for a specific audience, and therefore, carefully curated, nature of Pinterest gravitates towards being more self-oriented. As pre-

vious studies suggest, women use Pinterest for day-dreaming, discovering and refining their taste (Phillips et al., 2014). In addition, as Pinterest is extensively used by fashion bloggers, it can be considered as a platform that contains visual gist of bloggers' styles and fashion preferences (Sabra, 2016).

2) Pinterest as the site for digital consumption

Pinterest – a visual social media that is based on the idea of collecting various commercial and non-commercial images – can be used as a lens through which consumer identities are examined. Activity on Pinterest is similar to the process of digital self-repre-sentation on personal websites by means of digital consumption of images and hyperlinks ("digital po-ssessions") that reflect an identity of a user (Schau & Gilly, 2003). Following the notion that offline identity is constructed by means of acquired material po-ssessions, Schau and Gilly (2003) argued that in online space consumers perform the same practices, only by means of digital possessions. This gives consumers advantage because they are not constrained by "phy-sical body, ownership and proximity", and therefore are free in their choices of brands, products and other entities to represent self (Schau & Gilly, 2003). Si-milar idea was proposed by Belk (2013) in his up-dated version of the original concept of consumers' self-extension via material possessions (Belk, 1988). In his conceptualization of self-presentation and con-sumption in digital world, author points to the value of dematerialized possessions on social networking sites (Belk, 2013, 2014).

These views on digital self on Pinterest can be further extended by the notion of "digital prosump-tion" – simultaneous production and consumption of the content – that is endemic to the majority of be-havior occuring on social media platforms (Beer & Burrows, 2010). According to this notion, consump-tion is passive reproduction of existing meaning, whereas production is active process whereby new meaning is created. On Pinterest, such prosumption

activity can be clearly observed. The act of pinning images is the act of passive consumption. However, the act of assembling these images in different boards is production activity, as a result of which new mea-ning emerges. Notion of digital prosumption can be useful in studying digital identity because consump-tion/production artefacts that are left as a result of prosumption activity contain personal values and mea-nings through which one's identity can be understood. Therefore, "consuming" (pinning) fashion imagery on Pinterest and at the same time producing (creating boards) can be understood as the process of building one's identity.

Recent studies acknowledge the role of Pinterest in the identity construction process. In an exploratory study by Phillips et al. (2014), Pinterest was referred to as "virtual scrapbook" or "digital collage" where fe-male consumers gather appealing images to refine their taste, "play with possible future selves" and ima-gine alternative consumption trajectories". It was also called a modern version of mid-century commonplace books where women create and consume possible identities drawing from all possible sources such as recipes, wedding, and fashion (Almjeld, 2015). Gantz (2013), although not referring explicitly to the idea of Pinterest as online space for identity construction, presented empirical evidence regarding capacity of Pinterest to act as "alternative rhetorical zone" for women. The evidence, thus, points to the suitability of the platform in research on the issues of identity, and age identity in particular.

3) Pinterest as the site for appearance manage-ment

Pinning fashion imagery and board creating pro-sumption activity on Pinterest for the purposes of pu-tting it on public display can also be considered from symbolic interactionist perspective. "Pinned" images of clothing or pictures of people wearing various out-fits are digital possessions that are consumed for its symbolic value. Symbolic nature of such image collec-

tions then allows to draw parallel between Pinterest account as a whole and appearance that also consists of material possessions (clothing, accessories). That is, they are both an example of visual medium that can communicate meaning. Activity on Pinterest whereby consumers strategically manage, manipulate symbols existing in images, and invest them with new meaning is comparable with the appearance management behaviour in real life. In addition, it has been argued that image sharing on social media is considered to be a form of identity creation (Van Dijck, 2013). As such, it is logical to assume that appearance management is similar to the process of pinning and curating one's account where identity is negotiated through interacting symbolically with other users. This assumption finds support in theoretical essay by Kaiser et al. (1991) who compared appearance management with the formal technique of collage (which Pinterest is). Authors argued that similarly to collage technique, managing appearance assumes transfer of materials from one context to another as well as juxtaposition of different interpretations of the same idea. On Pinterest, result of such juxtaposing is the new visual context created by pinners that invites viewers of their profile to "consider the interplay between an element's preexisting message and its participation in the newly constructed grafted form" (Kaiser et al., 1991).

The noticeable difference between the appearance management in real life and on Pinterest, is in the vast availability of options for identity expression. In the real-life individuals are restricted to the material realm of clothing and accessories. On Pinterest, possessions are "dematerialized" and "disembodied" (Belk, 2013), and thus, there are no restrictions in the choice of symbols for one's identity expression. Consequently, usage of various digital images presents older women with more options for identity communication that go far beyond women's physical wardrobes. For instance, a woman who wants to communicate her feminine identity can save a picture of a flower from the website related to a gardening activity and pin it to her own board "style inspiration". The picture of the flower in the context of website dedicated to gardening previously did not have any gender-related meaning attached to it. However, when taken out of gardening context and placed within a context of "style inspiration" board, will be invested with new meaning. In other words, the woman will inscribe the picture with different meaning by transferring it into a new context.

Potential problem that Pinterest can present as online appearance management technique for identity negotiation process is availability of resources. Just as with availability of fashionable and affordable clothing for older women that seems to be a scarce resource (Clarke et al., 2009; Twigg, 2012a), the same issue can potentially occur with imagery. Fashion magazines as well as retailers and marketers have long been criticized for underrepresentation of age in their publications and advertising campaigns (Borland & Akram, 2007; Kozar & Damhorst, 2008; Twigg, 2010, 2012b). At the same time fashion advertisement is considered to be a main source of inspirational imagery in fashion. Therefore, the availability of appropriate images that will help women to construction their positive age identities might present a problem. However, some evidence exists that suggests the opposite – due to the growing popularity of older fashion models, more fashion imagery that depict older women have become available (Biron, 2017; Feldman, 2017; Okwodu, 2017). Whether the image scarcity issues exist, and if it does, what strategies women use to overcome this obstacle in order to perform and negotiate positive age identity, is yet to be determined.

In the following sections the sample collection and analytic procedures are discussed. Then, findings are presented followed by discussion on what practises older women use in order to negotiate age identity. Finally, conclusion is drawn and managerial implications are discussed.

Ⅲ. Methodology

The study was conducted during the months of August~September 2016. The data collection was conducted over a period of two week in August and then analysed during the remaining weeks of August and throughout September.

1. The data & selection process

Data for this study consist of 15 fashion-oriented Pinterest profiles of older women. Because Pinterest profiles by default do not provide specific information on age, it is impossible to create a selection within the digital boundaries of the site. Therefore, authors consulted personal fashion-oriented blogs edited by older women first. Present-day blogging's main feature is omni-presence. It is rare to find blogs that do not provide links (widgets) to other social media for readers to follow them on other platforms. 〈Fig. 1〉 shows one blog in the sample with social media icons line-up visible on the top right. Even standard free blogging templates on a popular blog hosting website as Blogger.com or Wordpress.com allow users to add social media widgets to the blogs. Therefore, links to Pinterest accounts were obtained through personal blogs.

The first step was to generate a sample of fashion blogs edited by older women. Sampling followed the procedure described by Huffaker and Calvert (2005) in the research on teenage blogs. Due to the significant changes in the way blogosphere functions today, some changes to the procedure have been made. Specifically, Huffaker and Calvert (2005) used weblog search engines as well as direct search on *Blogspot*
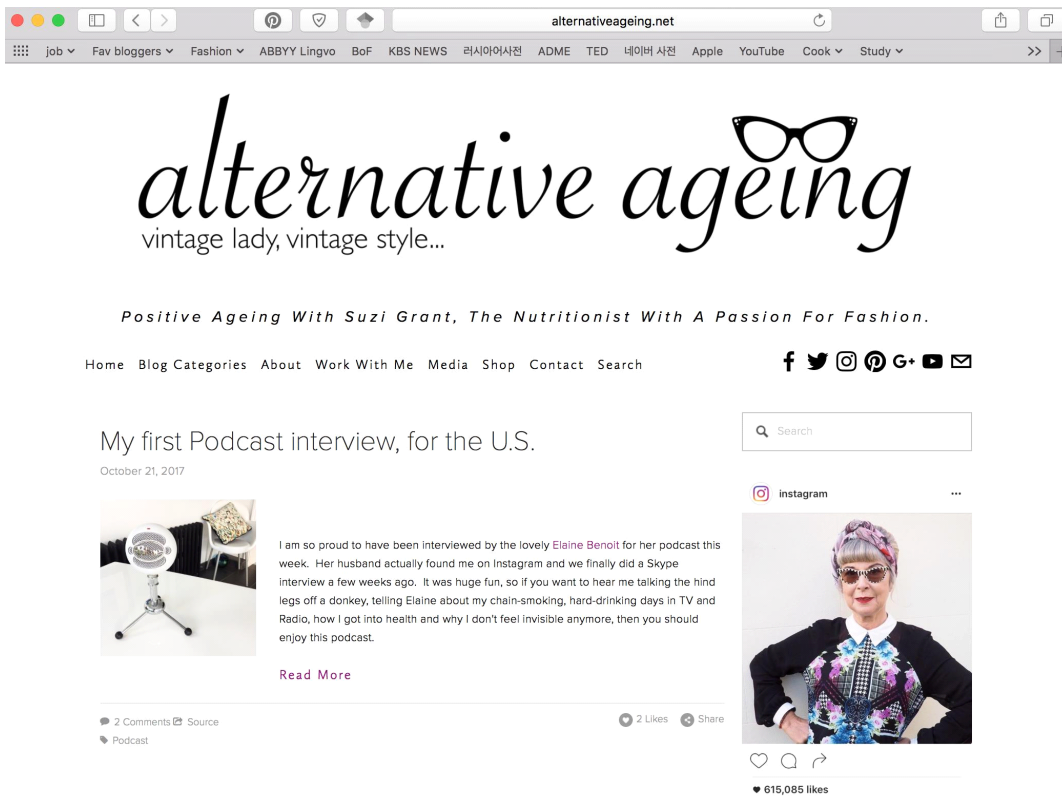
<Fig. 1> Fashion blog *alternative aging* with links to other social media accounts. From. Alternative aging. (2007). http://www.alternativeageing.net

and *Liverjournal* platform, because at the time of study blogs were mainly hosted on the blog hosting sites. Recently, however, blogging activity became more than a hobby, but also a part-time or full-time career (Collamer, 2015). As a result, most of the good quality, popular personal blogs are now self-hosted websites with a vanity URL (www.blogname.com) and cannot be found via weblog search engines. Blogging sampling procedure then became more akin to personal web space sampling procedure described in Schau and Gilly (2003)'s study who used several search enginges to generate a list of personal Web sites. Following Schau and Gilly (2003), Google and Yahoo search engines were used to locate blogs. While Schau and Gilly (2003) were interested in personal Web spaces in general, the current study focused on niche blogs. Therefore, following Huffaker and Calvert (2005)'s procedure search strings such as "blogs by older women", "mature fashion blog", "fashion for mature women", were used and initial sample consisting of 5 fashion blogs edited by older women was generated. As this study conceptually defined "older women" as 40 plus, no specific age limit was set during the initial search. It was found that in terms of age, initial sample was fairly evenly distributed with one 40 plus blog, three 50 plus blogs, and one 60 plus blog. Because older women's fashion blogosphere can be described as community of like-minded people, every blog had special section with a list of recommended fashion blogs edited by other older women. Therefore, subsequent blogs were selected using purposive snowballing sampling technique where next blogs were found through the list of recommended fashion blogs. This procedure resulted in a sample of 30 blogs. Using researcher judgment filters (Schau & Gilly, 2003), the blogs were reviewed focusing on representative features (Gurrieri & Cherrier, 2013; Harju & Huovinen, 2015), that is, similarity of content across the blogs. In the case of this study, the blogs must be edited by older women who clearly described themselves as "over 40, 50, 60 bloggers". For in-

stance, one blog edited by Suzi Grant was called *alternative aging* (Fig. 1), which clearly indicated the type of message that blog strives to convey. In addition, important criteria in the selection of representative blog sample was the focus on personal experience of older women with fashion and fashion consumption rather than on collaborative, forum-like websites that would not provide appropriate data for this study. Based on this criterion, blogs *Fabulous after 40* and *40 plus style* were excluded from the sample because they contained very little account of personal fashion experiences and focused more on giving advices and creating shopable selections.

Every blog in the sample was further assessed based first, on the presence of Pinterest account, and second, on the quality of the account. 2 women did not have or chose not to provide a link to a Pinterest account, and, therefore, were excluded from the sample. Out of remaining 26 Pinterest accounts, 11 were further excluded as it contained only a few boards with only a few images that would not provide rich enough data for visual analysis (Kozinets et al., 2014; Phillips et al., 2014). For instance, *Midlifechic* account had 25 boards, but number of overall pins (622) was not sufficient for meaningful analysis (Phillips et al., 2014), therefore it was not selected.

On the contrary, *Fashion Should Be Fun − Style Over 40* account had only 19 boards, but they were rich in imagery (3,284 images) which was deemed sufficient for the analytic procedure. Remaining 15 accounts constituted the final sample. 〈Table 1〉 summarizes the profile of pinners and their accounts. Because very small number of women specified an exact age number, table provides an information on which category participants belong to (e.g. 40 plus, 50 plus). In addition, three women did not provide any age information on any social media platforms. Researchers had to consults with additional sources, such as interviews or newspaper articles featuring participants, in order to find the age of participant. Personal names and names of accounts have not been changed as all

<Table 1> Summary of Pinterest accounts used in analysis

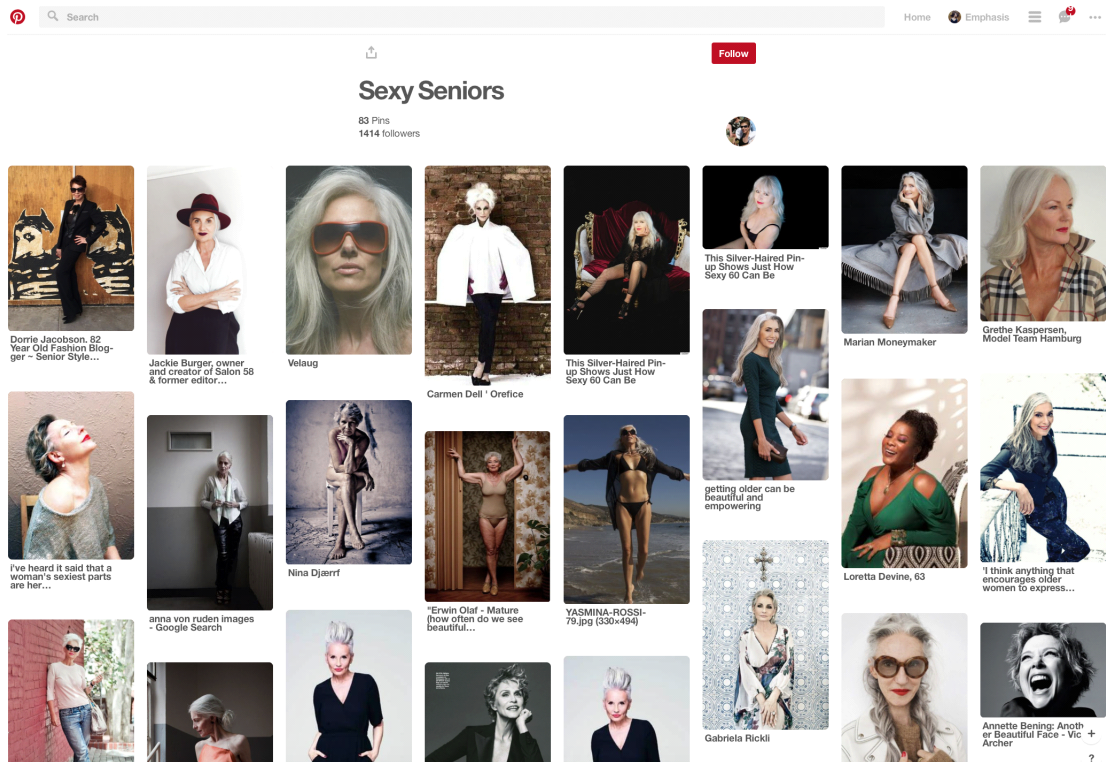| Pinner	Account name	Age	Number of boards	Number of pins
Suzi Grant	Alternative Ageing	60+	20	2,654
Beth Djalali	Style at a Certain Age	50+	73	9,946
Susan B.	unefemme.net	60+	45	3,282
Catherine Summers	Not Dressed As Lamb	40+	60	8,724
Susan Street	SusanAfter60	60+	33	4,934
Josephine	Chicatanyage	50+	26	1,422
Michelle	Barefaced Chic	50+	22	1,573
Annette Holdrich	Lady of Style	50+	27	13,232
Elizabeth Yowart	What Lizzy Loves	40+	30	1,770
Jess	Jess Jannenga	40+	67	3,300
Lucy Dawn	Fashion Should Be Fun – Style Over 40	50+	19	3,284
Samantha	Samanta @FakeFabulous	40+	22	2,285
Cherie	Style Nudge	50+	65	8,624
Cathy Williamson	The-Middle Page	50+	46	7,409
Dorrie Jackobson	Senior Style Bible	80+	30	2,243

accounts were public and therefore open to the public viewing (Phillips et al., 2014).

2. Analysis procedure

The research design for this study was data-driven that allowed the finding emerge from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This approach provides flexibility and allows for capturing rich information that qualitative data contain. Data analysis followed the netnographic procedure (Kozinets et al., 2014) in order to understand the essence of constructed identities. "Netnographic fieldwork" was conducted by means of unobtrusive observation and exploration of Pinterest accounts. First researcher had an over a year of user-experience on Pinterest which secured the successful "cultural entrée" in the field as the researcher have already gained understanding on how this particular social media functions (Kozinets et al., 2014). In the process of online fieldwork, visual text in 585 boards in total with amount of boards ranging from 19 to 73,

with average of 39 board per profile were analysed. The unit of analysis was a single board that contained various imagery. ⟨Fig. 2⟩ presents a snapshot of a board called Sexy Seniors from Senior Style Bible's account that constitutes an analytical unit.

Three main analytical frameworks for approaching visual data were integrated in the process of Pinterest profile analysis. These are behaviour analysis on Pinterest technique developed by Phillips et al. (2014), fashion imagery analysis adopted for the study on marginalized consumers (Harju & Huovinen, 2015), and finally, multimodal analytical framework proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996). The framework developed by Phillips et al. (2014) was the main analytical framework because of its good fit for examining behavior on Pinterest. Remaining two frameworks were adapted in order to address specifics of the current study, such as focus on fashion and symbolic interactionist perspective. Although the application of these techniques was interactional and mutually informative

<Fig. 2> An example of analysis unit – Senior Style Bible's Sexy Senior board (partial).
From. Senior Style Bible. (2017). https://www.pinterest.com

process, each of them will be described in detail below.

First technique was proposed by Phillips et al. (2014) specifically for the analysis of behaviour on Pinterest. It was developed based on the analysis of traditional scrapbooks and other visual constructions, where visual and textual analyses were performed. A Pinterest board comprised of images was treated as a primary source, while profile description, board title and image captions as secondary. As Pinterest profiles can change daily, visual data were captured in screenshots, and textual data were copied into the Microsoft Word document (Kozinets et al., 2014). With regard to visual analysis, the images within the boards were analysed for behaviours related to identity negotiation that were studied within the literature on symbolic interactionism and digital self-representation. Specifically, the following sensitizing questions were asked: What kind of boards did women choose to create?

What was the possible reason for imagery choice within that boards? How these images are related to each other and what possible meaning these images acquired within a context of a given board? Overall, how boards within one account related to each other? What type of images were missing or, on the contrary, present in abundance? For instance, it was found that personal pictures featuring women wearing various outfits constituted the large proportion of the data. Each board was systematically analysed picture-by-picture (Phillips et al., 2014) in order to fascilitate preliminary themes. With regard to textual analysis, description of profile pages, board names and image captions were analysed in order to support visual analysis findings.

Second framework was the fashion imagery analysis framework adapted from the study on gender representation in plus-size fashion blogs (Harju & Huo-

vinen, 2015). Because study on Pinterest behaviour by Phillips et al. (2014) did not analyze personal images, there was a need for additional analytical procedure to facilitate further insights into the meaning behind such images. This technique was informed by Salo's (2007) fashion photograph analysis that specifically focused on such elements as poses, positioning, facial expressions, gaze, composition of the photos, locations of the photo-shoots, and overall quality of photos (Harju & Huovinen, 2015).

Finally, as this study positions the activity on Pinterest within symbolic interactionist perspective, the multimodal analysis framework developed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) was also employed as a supplementary analytical tool. The framework highlighted several important aspects that allowed for more rigorous analysis. First aspect was the focus on the overall style and aesthetics of the content. Specifically, were the boards and constituting images more narrative, personal, and interactional or rather conceptual and self-oriented? Asking this sensitizing questions provided another point of entry in understanding of identity negotiation process. The second aspect was how different modes in online environment interacted together in order to create new meaning. This aspect was especially useful for obtaining further in-depth insights into how visual and textual information fit together in order to symbolically communicate a coherent identity of a user.

Preliminary themes were reviewed, discussed, and tested in order to ensure that they were significantly different from each other. This process was followed by further refining and reworking of themes. As a result of this iterative analytical process, preliminary themes were transformed into 3 main themes that form the basis for the analysis.

Ⅳ. Results and Discussion

1. Rejecting age

Explicit rejection of age as a strategy in construc-

ting a more positive age identity was prominent across the sample. Data showed that explicit age-related messages as one of the "creative strategies" (Tajfel, 2010) were important acts for negotiation of marginalized status of age identity. Contrary to Phillips et al. (2014) who found that users almost never filled the profile description or changed the captions of re-pinned images, data indicate that all women in the sample, to greater or lesser extent, used a combination of images and textual description to express their rejection of ageist notions. Textual evidence of rejection can be observed in the brief profile descriptions as well as board descriptions and images captions. It served as supporting and clarification element in the overall message that women tried to deliver with their profiles. For instance, Suzy from *alternative ageing* described her board "Fashion over 50, 60 & beyond" in following terms: *"To inspire women & men, of any age, to be fabulous fashionistas and lead the ageless revolution!"*. The board showcased personal pictures from Suzi's blog mixed with other images of women (and men) wearing bold, colourful outfits. Catherine put a profile description calling herself "*40+ style blogger who's into colour & anti age appropriateness!*". She also featured herself wearing pink, orange, and other supposedly "inappropriate" colours (Twigg, 2013). In similar vein, Lucy also encourages viewers to *"show the world you are never too old to have fun and be fierce"*, and she, indeed, showed that, as all of her 19 boards contained her own personal images.

Close examination of personal style images that were saved to the boards from their personal blogs, showed that women's poses such as contrapposto, crossed legs, leaning against the wall, walking past the camera are very similar to those used in fashion advertisement (Salo, 2007). They were also similar to poses that younger fashion bloggers adopted. This finding is similar to findings by Harju and Huovinen (2015) who suggested that the reproduction of poses and styles from mainstream fashion is an act of positioning self in the fashion narrative and thus, feeling

empowered as "legitimate subjects" in fashion field. In addition, often women featured themselves wearing "age-inappropriate" (Twigg, 2013) items such as shorts, sleeveless tops, bikini, bright colours, massive jewellery or bold hair colour. By uploading the images on Pinterest and making themselves visible to other users they challenge the notion of appropriateness by creating an alternative visualization of aging. In doing this, women gained the sense of power and feeling of control over their identity resulting from exhibiting self (Rocamora, 2011).

Rejection of age in terms of fashion choices was evident not only in boards dedicated to personal style, but also in "style inspiration boards" that also were present in all the profiles in the data set. These boards often contained non-personal imagery such as pictures of celebrities or other people wearing outfits. The prominent motif of such boards was that age indeed did not matter when it came to style inspiration. Images of older and younger females co-existed within the boundaries of one board. Often the board and its images was accompanied by descriptions such as *"ageless style", "at any age", "regardless of age"*. Such juxtaposition of young and old within a context of style might be interpreted as a shortage in the images of older women in fashion (Kozar & Damhorst, 2008; Twigg, 2010, 2012b) and, thus, point to problematic nature of Pinterest with regard to age identity representation. Another reading, however, can be proposed. Symbolic interactionist perspective in the context of clothing states that symbols people use to communicate their identity acquire their meaning from the social context they are positioned in (Kaiser, 1997). The accounts and specific boards can be considered such contexts that provide new symbolic meaning for the images of younger women wearing "young fashion". If before it represented mainstream fashion field that older women were excluded from, now such behaviour opens the possibilities for alternative interpretation. For instance, Susan from *unefemme.net* describes the reason why a certain image was saved. The

caption under the image of young thin model featuring autumn fashion look read: *"This boiled wool vest hits that softly structured spot for me. I'm really liking this olive color…"*. Another image of a young girl wearing a ripped t-shit and a pair of black jeans contains following description: *"Not crazy about the shirt, but love the flared raw edge cropped jeans with polished boots…"*. By strategically selecting and emphasizing features of the outfits Susan engages in the process of appropriation of "younger styles" at the same time communicating the idea that there is no "young" and "old" ways of dressing. In the context of older woman's style inspiration board, the image of a young girl wearing trendy piece of clothing does not read anymore as highly aspirational, and therefore unattainable. On the contrary, it reads as an idea or inspiration for styling that can be appropriated and adjusted by women in many different ways. The age as a variable that supposedly has to be considered in the process of dressing is excluded from the equation; and "ageless" nature of style and taste is emphasized.

Beth from *Style At a Certain Age* adopts similar, but slightly different strategy to achieve the same result. She has numerous inspiration boards that feature various styles and a mix of younger and older women wearing those styles. Although, unlike Susan, she rarely changes the original caption, parallels between Beth's inspirational boards and personal outfit boards are easily traceable. Beth has a very definite preppy-like style with bold colours and statement jewellery, and the origins of that style are present in the inspirational boards where younger women wear colourful pants, jumpers layered over the white shirt and fitted jackets – all classic manifestations of preppy style. Once again, pictures of young models/ women wearing something that can be considered "age-inappropriate" when placed in the context of Beth's profile, convey the meaning of possibility. While this finding does not serve as evidence that older women do not experience struggle with the age representation in the media, it supports the notion suggested by

Twigg (2013) that socially accepted rules on what is appropriate or inappropriate to wear for women as they grow older are fading.

Other age-mentioning strategies involved board names across the sample that addressed the issue of resisting age-related cultural stereotypes included such names as *"the art of ageing"*, *"sexy seniors"*, *"ageless style"*, *"age with grace"*, *"glamorous grannies"*, *"style should not be determined by age"*. In this activity, re-negotiation of age comes from the attempt to destigmatize the negative labels attached to the notion of age. Such "relabelling behaviour" that plays an important part in "construction and alteration of social identity" was found common across plus-size consumers (Harju & Huovinen, 2015) who put their body size forward instead of hiding it. Similarly, older women in this study attempted to provide positive labels to the word "age" by explicit acts of verbalization.

Another example of such relabelling activity was boards that contained pictures of older women, most often older celebrities, that were described in such terms as "*looking stunning*", "*real beauty is ageless*". Often boards and/or images featured older women wearing swimsuits or grey hair which can be also considered as instances of relabelling behaviour. Pictures of women with grey hair were especially popular in the data and often had captions that read *"grey and gorgeous"*, *"beautiful silver"*, *"perfection"* or just *"beautiful"*. Therefore, ageing on the pages of Pinterest was transformed from the lacklustre process associated with illness and decline to the "*art*" and "*revolution*" that is a fun, beautiful graceful, and even glamorous process that has no boundaries.

On Pinterest women were engaged in strategic behaviour of downplaying and foregrounding different types of identities in order to present more harmonious self. It was achieved by combination of personal pictures, images sourced on the web and textual descriptions. Gender identity was emphasized through the category of numerous boards related to beauty,

hair and make-up that is traditionally a "feminine" area. In doing so, the tacit message was sent that womanhood and desire for beauty is not lost with age. The images varied from profile to profile with some women only choose to include commercial images of products and portraits of older women, while other women also included the personal images showing their own manicures and make-up looks. It can be assumed that those collection aimed to normalize the idea of age by presenting it as just another stage in life that much like youth also requires some maintenance.

Another type of identities that were foregrounded on the Pinterest was an identity of a professional, a mother, and an active traveller. Lucy dedicated a special board called *"teacher outfits"* to show what clothes she wears to work. Samantha self-identified herself as a *"mum"* in the profile description, Jess and Beth had special boards dedicated to mother-child relationship, while others include less explicit ways to incorporate their "mom identity" into their fashion-oriented profile. Travel was one of the topics that consistently appeared on every profile, however the nature of imagery varied. Women included their own pictures from airports featuring *"travel outfits"*, pictures of places that they had been to and activities they did or images of destinations they wanted to go to. In doing so, they reinforced the idea that getting older does not imply the absence of activity. On the contrary, these images showed interesting life full of events. Such behaviour can be explained through the notion of identity salience within appearance management practices. According to this notion, when desirable identity is "overshadowed by another identity that is highly visible or obvious to others⋯it is necessary to vie for identity that one wants to be recognized in a given context" (Kaiser, 1997).

2. Accepting age

The creative practise of rejecting the fact that older age is a specific variable that needed special adjust-

ments implied that acceptance of age was needed. If rejecting behaviour meant denying age to certain extent by claiming that women can wear what they like "*regardless of their age*", acceptance behaviour implied acknowledgement of age and taking pride in being older. The most apparent evidence is the profile names, such as "*Fashion Should be Fun − Style over 40*" and "*SusanAfter60*", self-descriptions, and most of the board names. "*Over 40 Style − Dresses*", "*style over 40, 50*", "*style for women over 50*", "*focusing on easy style and beauty for women over 40*" − these and other similar headings point to the fact that women were striving to make age visible and with that achieved greater acceptance of age within society in general and fashion industry in particular. This strategy could be further observed in the community spirit created on Pinterest. Many women feature each other in general style inspiration boards or specific boards dedicated to "*over 50 style*". For instance, Beth from *Style At a Certain Age* was featured on Annette's "*Favourite blogger looks*", Lucy's "*Style over 40, 50*" board and Dorrie's "*Fashion Bloggers We Love*". Catherine from *Not Dressed As Lamb* was featured in the same board by Annette. In addition, there were several shared boards such as "*over 40 collective*", "*over 40 style bloggers we love*", "*pin your style*" and "*fearless fashion we love*" that were present on almost all profiles. Image sharing is a form of identity creation through bonding (Van Dijck, 2008). Therefore, by featuring each other on Pinterest boards and contributing to shared boards, women strive to not only strengthen the acceptance of age within the community, but also possibly spread the idea of age acceptance to the larger audience.

Acceptance was also apparent in beauty and health related boards that had affirmative captions. Suzi from *alternative ageing* wrote the following caption under the picture of a glass filled with home-made green smoothie: "*Ok, I have wrinkles, but I also have my health*". Another caption under the image of Suzi wearing bikini read: "*Here I am, in my mid-60s, sporting a bikini! It's not been photo shopped so you can see my bingo wings and flab in all it's reality! Well blogs are supposed to be honest & sharing!*" (spelling and punctuation as in original). By uploading this picture and writing the caption Suzi makes the case for not only acknowledging her aged body, but also accepting it.

In attempt to accept age and ageing not only on a personal level, women often included boards and images of "style icons" − celebrities from past who were famous for their style as well as present-day aged celebrities. Following the notion of the role of digital possessions in the process of self-presentation (Belk, 2014; Schau & Gilly, 2003), it can be argued that the images of older celebrities were gathered for their symbolic value. Ageing celebrities and ageing fandom function as the object of nostalgia reminding aged individuals of their youth; it also provides legitimization and normalization of age-related transformations such as grey hair and wrinkles (Marshall & Rahman, 2015). Our data show that both functions are present on Pinterest. Majority of women chose to include "*iconic*" celebrities like Audrey Hepburn, Elizabeth Taylor, Grace Kelly as well as present-day aged celebrities such as Linda Rodin, Iris Apfel, and Helen Mirren who are praised for their looks and sense of style. Photos of "icons", on the other hand, are more conceptual (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996) and convey the overall mood of the by-gone era rather than accentuating clothing these icons were wearing. In terms of present-day celebrities, their fashion and stylistic choices were emphasized. Unless the image was saved to the board dedicated specifically to beauty, images of celebrities were full street style shots or advertisement campaigns where the outfit is easily discernible. All in all, the images were saved for their capacity to re-negotiate of image of age and ageing in general. Such ascribed symbolic meaning therefore, helped women to accept and celebrate their later years, reasserting the positive image of age.

3. Consuming age

Consumption is a powerful tool for self-expression as products and brands are consumed for their symbolic value and power to represent the desirable self (Belk, 1988; Schau & Gilly, 2003). On Pinterest women not only engaged in consumption activities in an abstract sense by consuming ideas and inspiration, but also by saving pictures of various garments that they saw aligned well with their idea of self. Such digital consumption activity often took a form of separate boards dedicated to shoes or bags. Alternatively, it could be incorporated in the style/outfit inspiration boards. This behaviour also fits with the notion of prosumption activity (Beer & Burrows, 2010). Consuming images of garments and assembling them into boards allowed women to produce new meaning of age and subsequently, new type of identity. For instance, Annette from *Lady of Style* had a board dedicated to feminine lace lingerie. By digitally consuming these images and assembling them together, Annette not only associated self with the symbolic meaning that such lingerie conveys, but also introduced the possible new meaning of age as sexy and sensual. Digital associations with symbolic meaning of brands or products are considered to be genuine even if in real life an individual does not own or wear this product (Schau & Gilly, 2003). Therefore, regardless of whether she actually wore such lingerie or not, Annette succeeded in creating an alternative identity of feminine and sexy older woman. And with that, resisting the rules of appropriateness and ageist stereotypes.

In this sense Annette's board stands in the opposition to other similar boards in the sample. Other boards that features garments women were digitally consuming had a stronger link between the fantasy and reality. This supports the theorisation of digital self-representation made by (Schau & Gilly, 2003) that although in digital reality consumers are not restricted by "corporeal" or monetary boundaries, they still build their digital collages within the material

boundaries. Suzan from *unefemme.net* had two boards that featured the garments she wanted to acquire. However, unlike Annette's board, these product images were mixed with photos of Suzan wearing exactly same or similar products. In the board *"greater goods"* she played with an idea of trendy leopard print slip-on shoes, and in the board *"shoes shoes shoes"* there was a picture of Suzan's legs with the similar shoes on. Jess brings the "digital shoe shopping" further down to reality by naming her board *"over 40 comfortable yet stylish shoes"* with the description stating: *"Since I have some issues with my legs and disease, FINALLY these companies are making stylish and comfortable shoes. No more granny wear!"*. The board features sensible footwear mixed with occasional images of Jenn's legs featuring some of these shoes.

Brands are essential part of Pinterest as it is actively used by fashion companies as an advertisement platform ("Why Pinterest ads work," n.d.). Therefore, brand names were indispensable part of the boards that featured acquired "possessions". In general pinners were found not to be concerned with the origin of the picture and use them mostly for purpose of personal fantasies (Phillips et al., 2014). However, our findings suggest that brands were important part of the product "consumption". Brand name was almost always included in the caption, especially when it was a personal picture wearing this item *("clarks original pale tan sandals"*, *"style blogger Susan b. from unefemme.net wears brocade mules with rhinestone accents from Brown's Couture"*, *"these Gabor slip ons are perfect"*). Alternatively, if the image was a commercial shot of the item, the picture where brand name was clearly visible was chosen. This activity was more similar to that of fashion blogging where full description of item is supposed to be provided to the readers (McQuarrie, Miller & Phillips, 2012). As all women in our sample were fashion bloggers, it is likely that attention to the brand name on Pinterest is a reflection of their blogging activity that prompts them to endorse brands, especially if it is a paid

collaboration. However, featuring branded footwear, eyewear or bags as well as personal styling examples may serve the purpose of associating self with mainstream fashion and thus, repositioning self from the role of fashion outcast to the role of fashion expert.

V. Conclusions and Implications

In this paper, negotiation of marginalized age identity was explored using the notion of symbolic interaction and specifically appearance management by means of manipulation and reappropriation of various imagery on Pinterest. Pinned images and created boards were considered as digital possessions that serve an important function in presentation of self and communicating identity. The analysis of fashion-oriented Pinterest accounts of older women revealed three main practices － rejecting age, accepting age and consuming age. These practises were concerned with bringing age to mainstream fashion as well as adapting mainstream fashion for older consumers. Through uncovered strategies women attempted to stimulate the two-way integration of age and mainstream fashion and therefore, renegotiate old age identity.

The first practise involved explicit and implicit rejection of later years as a distinctly different stage in life that would need specific adjustments. The meaning of age was reconstructed on psychological level (Lin et al., 2004) which helped to create a more positive and healthy age identity. Such rejection was observed in the explicit language statements, self-fashioning practises including clothes and poses that mimicked traditional fashion advertisement as well as negating the idea of division of clothing into "younger" and "older" styles. It can be argued that by doing so, women reject the idea of getting old by succumbing to stereotypical feminine representations and making an attempt to increase the proximity to fashion market ideals, that is, looking younger. As such, they resonate with growing concerns that such representations can further exacerbate ageism in a way older

women will be required to "grow old without ageing" (Katz, 2000). However, here the nature of age rejection is different. Personal outfit pictures as well as taking inspiration from both young and old is an attempt to reconstruct existing ideals rather than conform to normative standards, therefore the real rejection is rejection of prejudices associated with older age. Another practise that is a logical extension of the first practise involved acceptance of age by making an attempt to present verbal and visual discourse on age and ageing as a natural process that has occupies a rightful place within mainstream fashion. In order to achieve that women used a sense of community to assert their normalcy as well as to make references to older celebrities that currently challenging notion of older age. By doing so, women did not attempt to erase their age, but rather to invest it with new meaning, which, in turn, would result in improved age-identity. The final practise is consumption of age in which older women reinforce their position in the mainstream fashion by means of associating self with mainstream fashion brands and fashion products. Importance of consumption for older people in the process of successful reintegration in mainstream culture was theoretically asserted (Gilleard & Higgs, 2014). Moreover, it was proposed that consumption of fashionable and stylish dress can be one of the means with which ageist stereotypes can be resisted (Twigg, 2013). The analysis provides empirical evidence that symbolic digital consumption of fashion in fact is important part in age identity negotiation.

In age-identity reconstruction process, women attempted to bridge the existing gap between older age and mainstream fashion through Pinterest activity. By rejecting the significant of older age as a factor in older women's dress choices and at the same time explicitly stating their right to be accepted as older women, participants claimed the space for older age within mainstream fashion field. Also, by digitally consuming mainstream fashion imagery and symbolically appropriating it to the older age older, women

brought the notions of older age and fashion closer together. All in all, through uncovered creative strategies women attempted to stimulate the two-way integration of age and mainstream fashion and, therefore, reconstruct more positive age identity.

Pinterest as a platform emerges as place for mature female consumers to engage not only in self-oriented daydreaming (Phillips et al., 2014), but also as platform where alternative ageing discourses are constructed (Gantz, 2013), thereby challenging age-related stereotypes of appearance and fashion consumption. Similarly to personal websites (Schau & Gilly, 2003), personal Pinterest accounts provide older women with infinite digital consumption opportunities in order to engage in meaning-making behaviour. Symbolism of images allow women to create digital collages where every board and images pinned to that board, sometimes literally and sometimes figuratively, can be compared to careful managing one's appearance in order to construct and renegotiate age identity.

The findings of the study provide relevant managerial implications for fashion advertisers, and marketers who want to target older consumers. It is clear that older women are interested in looking fashionable, however, results suggest that they do not necessarily want to be treated differently from other consumers because style-wise they do not see age as a significant variable. At the same time, "accepting age" strategy suggested that presence of older women imagery or images of older celebrities was still important in the process of reconstructing positive age identity. Existing studies in advertisement field support that finding by providing evidence that older model elicit more positive responses from women as compared to younger model, which also results in increased purchase intention (Kozar & Damhorst, 2008; Wray & Hodges, 2008). In addition, study by Marshall and Rahman (2015) asserted that images of ageing celebrities were important in constructing the positive vision of ageing. Therefore, it still can be financially beneficial, for advertisers to use older models and older celebrities as they receive a wide resonance within older women. Advertisers can also utilize Pinterest for promoting their brands among older women as these pictures have a potential to be included in one of the inspirational boards and thus obtain additional symbolic meaning and value from the context of the board within which it will be situated.

The identity construction on Pinterest was studied based on the sample of older women each of whom has a personal fashion blog. It is possible, that their blogging activity significantly influenced the way Pinterest is used. In particular they might pay more attention to captions and board organization because they consider Pinterest as an extension, or visual portfolio, of their blog. Future researcher therefore, can focus on more general, non-blogging audience in order to see how their identity negotiation strategies might differ. The study also relied on visual and textual analysis of images on Pinterest. Further research can combine visual analysis and interviews with users in order to obtain more in-depth data on the imagery selection process. This, in turn, can facilitate a better understanding of age-related issues as well as the possibility of Pinterest to act as a meaningful space for construction of alternative identities. Alternatively, subsequent studies can further examine age identity construction process by analysing personal fashion blogs edited by older women.

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