

Age Stereotypes At Workplace: Inspecting Some Common Stereotypes Affecting Organizational Performance

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Abstract: *This article revolves around the various age stereotypes that exist at a workplace that may affect an organization's performance. This piece of literature will inspect these common stereotypes, its contradiction and suggest some moderators to reduce the effect.*

Keywords: *Age stereotypes, contradiction, moderators, Organization's Performance.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Butler (1969) was among the first to define ageism as "a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old." The concept of ageism has become broader bringing under it's per view potential prejudices and subsequent discrimination including bias and unfairness on the grounds of being old. The demographic changes occurring in most countries present an urgent challenge for many organizations. The changes imply that it has a largely heterogeneous workforce resulting in an age diverse workplace.

It is in this age diverse company's age based sub grouping process occurs. It brings out a shared perception of a negative age discrimination climate due to which negative relates to organizational performance.

Such perceptions may develop due to certain interpersonal processes and events between employees and colleagues or supervisors. Likewise it may also be possible that the employee feels certain forms of discrimination with regards to the organizational wide systems or processes or to the firms HR policies.

This paper seeks to identify and analyze consequences of some common age stereotypes upon a firms' organizational performance.

II. SOME COMMON AGE STEREOTYPES

- ✓ There is a primary idea that older workers are more set in their ways making them less adaptable and less flexible.
- ✓ Older people at work are considered to have lower ability, less motivated and less productive as compared to younger workers.
- ✓ Another stereotype that older workers are harder to train, less adaptable, less flexible, less energetic and more resistant to change which as a result will provide a lower rate of return on investment.
- ✓ The notion that older workers have lower ability to learn and therefore considered having less potential for development.
- ✓ Older workers have shorter job tenure and will provide fewer years in which the employer may not be able to reap benefits of investment made on them.
- ✓ Older workers prove to be costly as they draw higher wages, uses more benefits and yet they are close to their retirement.
- ✓ People often tend to think that older workers have both lower mental and physical ability, cannot handle stress, less competent and so their job performance is also lower.
- ✓ Therefore because of these age stereotypes there is a huge influence to the outcome of employment related decisions in variety of settings.

III. CONTRADICTIONS TO THE AGE STEREOTYPES

While an increasing age diversity affecting organizational performance has become organizational reality in most companies, its potential effects on age discrimination, commitment and performance are not yet fully understood and measured.

When managers succumb to the influence of negative stereotypes about older workers and avoid hiring or retaining older people, they miss an opportunity to employ many of the most skilled, experienced and productive workers.

Very little evidence can be found where job performance declines as employees' age increases. Performance generally tends to improve with age. An employees' age is rather less important than individual skills and health.

The notion of older workers having lower returns on investment such as training can be neglected because older workers are less likely to quit and remain absent due to which the payback from such investments comes in shorter term.

An older worker proves to be more stable, dependable, honest, trustworthy, loyal, committed to the job and do not miss job very often.

As a result of age stereotypes older people with same or similar qualifications or attributes commonly receive lower ratings in interviews and performance appraisals. Older workers are likely to have more difficulty in finding or retaining employment or getting promotions. They are deprived of receiving developmental feedbacks and it is due to these negative influences on perception of capacity for development and potential of older workers.

IV. CERTAIN MODERATORS THAT CAN BE FOLLOWED BY AGE DIVERSE COMPANIES TO REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF STEREOTYPES

Age stereotypes such as low productivity, resistance to change, less learning ability, shorter tenure, more costly brings outcomes such as lower evaluation of applicants, fewer promotions, less often selection of old workers for training, lower performance evaluation, lower retention and very frequently laying off old workers.

Such influences of age stereotypes could be moderated by several variables. Following are some of the few moderators that can help curb the ill effects of age stereotypes.

The effects of age stereotypes on employment decisions tend to be reduced when job relevant information is available

and considered. When interviewers have information about the jobs, the use of age stereotyping is reduced. Also when more specific information about an individual is introduced then it is less likely that the individual would be judged by age stereotype. It is also suggested that processes should encourage evaluators to focus on the abilities of individuals rather than their membership in a particular group. This will reduce the negative effects of stereotypes to great extent.

Age stereotypes are more influential when there is a perceived appropriate age for a person to hold a particular job i.e. the thought of a particular job not matching to the candidate's age. The perception that certain jobs should be held by employees of a certain age should be eradicated.

Another main contribution will be when the top managers subdue negative age related stereotypes and diversity- friendly HR policies are introduced in the organizational level which will moderate and attenuate the social categorization process mainly in age diverse companies. It is these low negative top managers' age stereotypes as well as high diversity – friendly HR policies which are potential organizational factors that can prevent the negative relation of age diversity with organizational performance transmitted through the negative age discrimination climate.

However, it is also observed that older workers hold the same stereotypes about older workers as do young workers and more likely to employ these stereotypes in decision making. The effects of these stereotypes diminish only when they identify older workers as their in-groups.

V. CONCLUSION

Each day, we all are getting older. Aging inevitably impacts everyone. The negative age stereotypes have harmful effects for employees, employers and the society as a whole. Measures and ways are to be sought by which the older workers can be made more productive and valued members of workforce and give them the dignity and respect they deserve as it is very ironical because stereotypes about older workers have the potential to affect everyone as we get older and not just the member of one race or group.

REFERENCES

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