

SUBMISSION TYPE

Panel Discussion

TITLE

Organizational Approaches to Effective Management of an Age-Diverse Workforce

SHORTENED TITLE

Effective Management of an Age-Diverse Workforce

ABSTRACT

This session presents evidence-based advice on how organizational practices need to change in response to an increasingly age-diverse workforce. Topics will include reducing barriers, modifying work, and maximizing the advantages of age diversity. We will focus on practical advice stemming from ongoing research and practice and discuss how applied intervention research can stimulate this field.

PRESS PARAGRAPH

Despite the aging workforce representing one of the most significant demographic trends of this century, practical organizational guidance for the most effective ways to approach this phenomenon is extremely limited. This panel brings together four experts to discuss the existing empirical literature on mature workers within organizations, as well as their experiences in conducting research and applied interventions within this field. This session will be informative for researchers aiming to develop more applied research with organizations as well as practitioners looking for evidence-based advice on how to tackle the challenges and opportunities associated with an aging workforce.

WORD COUNT

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Organizational Approaches to Effective Management of an Age-Diverse Workforce

The purpose of this panel discussion is to provide information and advice to researchers and practitioners about current issues for the management of an age-diverse workforce.

Furthermore, this session is designed to generate interesting discussion and debate around the ways research and practice are addressing the aging workforce within organizations. In order to do this, we will focus on the following issues:

- 1) According to current literature, what are key ingredients for effectively managing a mature workforce?
- 2) What practical advice can we give organizations to help them reap the benefits associated with an increasingly mature/age diverse workforce?
- 3) How can we stimulate more applied, intervention-focus research in this space?

Our two-fold aim is to provide an impetus for carefully researched intervention studies that generate evidence-based solutions for organizations, as well as to stimulate and inspire organizational practitioners to more proactively consider aging and its implications for their current and future workforce and human capital.

Brief Background

Population aging represents a major demographic trend of the 21st-century that has been and is projected to significantly impact society, economies, and implicitly organizations. These demographic changes are even more pronounced in developed countries where estimates indicate that by 2050 a third of the population will be aged 60 years or older (United Nations, 2009). In the face of these trends, for many nations, boosting the mature labour force participation rate is or will soon become of critical importance. For example, in Australia the Commonwealth Treasury estimates that increasing the participation rates of workers aged 50-69 years old by 5%

could yield a 2.4% increase in national GDP by 2050. In the United States, the median age of the workforce continues to increase (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). Pressure for increased workforce participation rates of older people, together with increasing life expectancy and changing welfare policies, means that many adults will be expected to, will be able to, and will also need to work until they are older.

What does all this mean for organizations? First, as the overall number of younger workers is on a decreasing trend, there is an expectation for organizations to enhance their efforts towards retaining mature workers (Truxillo & Fraccaroli, 2013). In addition, organizations will be faced with the tremendous challenge of maintaining employees' motivation, health and productivity over an entire, and longer, working lifespan (Bal, Kooij, & Rousseau, 2015). Finally, as the workforce is not only aging, but also becoming more diverse in terms of age, organizations will be challenged to effectively manage this increased age diversity.

Despite these obvious implications for organizations, there is a growing consensus in the I/O psychology literature that very few practice-oriented, rigorous studies have been conducted to identify what works for whom and under what conditions (Bal et al., 2015; Truxillo, Cadiz, & Hammer, 2014). More specifically, despite a strong body of research focusing on the effects of aging at the individual level, there is an obvious gap between the research focusing on older workers themselves and broader management/organizational behaviour concepts such as leadership, employment relationships, employee performance and wellbeing. Moreover, there is also a significant gap between existing knowledge about mature workers and organizational and human resource practices used by contemporary organizations (Bal et al., 2015).

Therefore, it is imperative to stimulate research that is able to guide organizational actions and interventions. At the same time, we need to switch focus from the aging individuals

to the behaviour of organizations and their role in designing work and work practices to attract, retain, and ensure that mature age employees remain productive and healthy throughout their working lives.

Proposed Session

Our main objective with the proposed panel discussion and involvement of the interested audience is to stimulate an open and rich conversation around the implications of the aging workforce for both research and practice. We have assembled a panel of expert researchers who have conducted extensive investigations in this area. The panelists are not only experienced researchers but also have a track-record of conducting applicative research with organizations. We hope the panelists will provide some thought-provoking perspectives stemming from their rich research as well as experience working directly with organizations and aging employees.

Panelist Biographies

Jeanette N. Cleveland, Ph.D., is a Professor of Industrial & Organizational Psychology at Colorado State University. She earned her B.S. from Occidental College and M.S./ Ph.D from Pennsylvania State University. Her research interests include personal and contextual variables regarding work attitudes and performance decisions, workforce diversity issues including older workers and women, and work and family issues. She is the Co-Editor for the Applied Psychology Series for Taylor Francis. Her books include, *Performance appraisal and management* (with K. Murphy & M. Hanscom, 2018) and *Women and men in organizations: Sex and gender issues* (with M. Stockdale and K. Murphy, 2000). She became an Academy of Management (AOM) member in 1987 and elected to the AOM Board of Governors, elected Program Chair for the Human Resources and Gender & Diversity in Organizations Divisions,

Division Chair for HR and GDO. She is an elected Fellow of SIOP (Division 14) and the American Psychological Association.

Barbara Griffin is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University and an endorsed organizational psychologist registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. She has developed and led a substantial research program investigating person-environment fit across the employee career cycle from selection and adjustment to the late-career period and transition to retirement. A recent focus has been leading two large longitudinal studies of older workers, with publications arising from these on changing motivation and the effects of age discrimination. With over \$2 million in competitive research funding, Barbara's collaborations are across disciplines and universities as well as with industry and leading international scholars, particularly in the field of aging. She is an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Personnel Psychology* and on the editorial board of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior* and *Work, Aging and Retirement*.

Gwenith Fisher is an Associate Professor of Industrial-Organizational Psychology at Colorado State University in the United States. She researches aging workforce issues, including health and well-being among older workers; retirement, work ability, and prolonged working life; and the work/non-work interface, including work/non-work conflict, enhancement, and work/life balance. Prior to her current position, Professor Fisher spent over 10 years as a research scientist at the University of Michigan where she worked on the Health and Retirement Study (HRS). She has authored or co-authored more than 50 articles and chapters, has been cited more than 6,200 times, and has received awards for her research (e.g., *Best Paper* by the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* in 2013-2014), and awards from the *Journal of Business and*

Psychology and the Academy of Management conference (2015). Dr. Fisher is an Associate Investigator for the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research (CEPAR) Organizations and the Mature Workforce project, and is active in research on topics such as elder care, cognitive aging at work, age discrimination, retirement timing, and worker burnout and engagement.

Dr. David Cadiz is a faculty member in the Management Department in the School of Business at Portland State University. Prior to joining Portland State University, Dr. Cadiz was a Director of a program at the Oregon Nurses Foundation called WorkHealthy Oregon, which was a program focused on building healthy workplaces. Dr. Cadiz's research broadly focuses on the influence of diversity in the workplace and is influenced by his applied work experiences in the healthcare, training, and technology industries. Specifically, he investigates multiple aspects of the aging workforce, the intersection of behavioral health and the workplace, and has developed and evaluated interventions focused on effectively managing workplace diversity issues. He has co-authored several peer-reviewed articles and book chapters related to these topics and frequently presents his work at academic and professional conferences. He also serves on the editorial board of *Work, Aging, and Retirement*.

Prepared Questions for Panelists

- Diversity & Inclusion has started to break into the main conversations of organizations, but age is rarely an explicit focus. Why are organizations so seemingly oblivious to the current demographic trends? Is it something different about age diversity that makes it less appealing for organizations?

- What does research suggest are some of the factors that contribute not only to retention and increased participation of mature workforce, but also to maintaining performance and wellbeing of this workforce
- What does research suggest are some of the most effective ways in which organizations can reap the benefits of a mature/age diverse workforce?
- What key managerial approaches need to change to ensure effective management of a changing workforce?
- What are your suggestions for conducting and disseminating intervention research to organizations?
- What are your suggestions for “selling” research into the aging workforce in organizations?

Requested Time Slot and Session Flow

We propose a 50 minutes session for this panel discussion. The two organizers, Dr. Daniela Andrei and Dr. Gretchen Petery, will co-chair this session. One of the co-chairs will start the session by providing a short introduction into the topic of the session. Then the co-chairs will jointly facilitate the discussion around the questions proposed for this session. Each panel discussant will have the opportunity to provide input into each question, and audience in the room will be encouraged to follow-up with questions of their own for each theme/topic of discussion. By doing this we hope to stimulate a lively discussion and consistent interaction with the audience throughout the entire session, as opposed to this being reserved only for the end of the session. The co-chairs will be responsible for keeping the conversation on topic and on time so that all the main topics proposed are addressed. The last 10 minutes of the session will be reserved for the audience to ask any other questions on the topic that the organizers might not

have considered. The co-chairs will wrap up the session by summarizing the major points and ideas discussed during the session and conclusions.

References

- Bal, P. M., Kooij, D. T. A. M., & Rousseau, D. M. (2015). Introduction to aging workers and the employee-employer relationship. In P. M. Bal, D. T. A. M. Kooij, & D. M. Rousseau (Eds.), *Aging workers and the employee-employer relationship* (pp. 1-12). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Truxillo, D. M., & Fraccaroli, F. (2013). Research themes on age and work: Introduction to the special issue. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 22*, 249-252. doi: 10.1080/1359432x.2013.786604
- Truxillo, D. M., Cadiz, D. M., & Hammer, L. B. (2014). Supporting the aging workforce: A review and recommendations for workplace intervention research. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 2*, 351-381. Doi: 10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032414-111435
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- United Nations. (2009). *Population ageing and development 2009*. New York: United Nations.

Participant Information

Session Co-Chairs

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Panelists

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