

Sub-theme: Inclusiveness of Ageing Employees in Organizations

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In 2050, there will be more than 2 billion people over the age of 60 in the world, twice as many as in 2020 (United Nations, 2019). Taking a look at studies on ageing in organizations, the concept of age is, however, rather context specific than chronological (Hulko, 2009). In addition, age tends to have a “gendered nature” (Foster & Walker, 2013, p. 3) as women are more prone to exclusion and poverty in older age. Hence, we want to focus in this sub-theme on the inclusiveness of ageing employees and older women, in particular, at the organizational level.

Regardless of the variations in institutional and cultural contexts, organizations have a crucial role in promoting workplace equality. Unfortunately, diversity programs, merit-pay and other more recent workplace practices have not helped much in reducing gender and age disparities in organizations: older employees are frequently the main victims of downsizing or restructuring (Buyens et al, 2009) and women remain discriminated (Belliveau, 2012). In addition, a number of myths still exist (e.g., older employees are less productive, more ill, and generally resistant to change) as well as negative connotations associated with the older employees (Salminen et al., 2019). Demographic trends (Mahon & Millar, 2014) call for a more differentiated view and attitude change.

The purpose of this sub-theme is to bring together a group of researchers keen to advance our knowledge about the antecedents, successful applications and consequences of organizational practices regarding the inclusion of older employees and especially older women in the workplace. Age-sensitive organizational practices such as recruitment and selection, assignment of tasks, extent of autonomy, wages, promotions, talent management, training opportunities, career counseling, workplace bullying, employee participation etc. are topics of interest in this sub-theme.

We are interested in organizational characteristics that are associated with workplace practices concerning ageing. Among others, we encourage submissions exploring the role of multinational enterprises (MNEs) in cultivating or curbing inclusive practices in host countries. Workplace policies are largely affected by MNEs home-country regulations and culture (Sackmann, 2006; Pisani et al., 2017), but their effects for affiliations abroad are debated in the literature (Wang et al., 2016). While larger firms tend to be more socially responsible and, hence, more considerate towards their employees and more “age-aware” (Ehnert & Harry, 2012), Wickert, Scherer, &

Spence (2016) argue that this may be due to their communication and impression management rather than their actual behavior. The degree of ethical conduct (Trevino & Weaver, 2003; Kaptein, 2008) may be another organizational aspect of interest since ethical behavior is at the core of an inclusive culture (Pless & Maak, 2004). Yet, little evidence exists regarding the relationship between workplace inclusiveness and culture or similar constructs (Rabl et al., 2018). Furthermore, the current research on managing ageing employees has been mainly gender-blind (Foster & Walker, 2013).

Hence, our sub-theme invites theoretical, conceptual and empirical contributions that investigate existing business and management practices regarding inclusiveness of the above mentioned employee groups. More specifically, we encourage contributions that explore, for example, the following issues:

- How do organizational size, tenure, ownership structures, industry, or for-profit vs. non-profit affect the inclusiveness of ageing employees?
- How do new ways of working and employment arrangements affect workplace inclusiveness of ageing employees?
- How does organizational culture affect the inclusiveness of ageing employees?
- How do codes of conduct, ethical codes, or honor codes foster the inclusiveness of ageing employees?
- Which kind of trends exist in the expectations of ageing employees themselves regarding inclusiveness? Are there any country differences?
- How does the implementation of new technology including machine learning and AI affect the inclusiveness of ageing employees?
- How do ageing and gender intertwine in the discussions of workplace inclusiveness?

We welcome a broad array of methodologies ranging from qualitative or quantitative analysis to simulations and experimental approaches. We are also interested in studies across industries and countries. Exploring different empirical approaches and contexts, this sub-theme will contribute to enriching our research avenues within the broad topic of inclusiveness, equality and diversity in organizations.

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