



QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE DISCRIMINATION
AND ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE: AN
EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the relationship between age discrimination and organisational performance using quantitative analysis. It explores the effects of age discrimination on employee motivation, productivity, and organisational commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Age discrimination, commonly referred to as ageism in the workplace, has become an increasingly important issue in contemporary human resource management and organisational research. Demographic ageing, changes in workforce participation patterns, and the growing coexistence of employees from different generations have intensified the need to understand how age-related attitudes and discriminatory practices influence organisational functioning. In many countries, population ageing and reforms to pension and employment policies have also increased attention to the retention, development, and effective utilisation of employees across different stages of their working lives. Within this context, ensuring equal employment opportunities regardless of age is not only a matter of social justice and compliance with labour



standards but also a potential determinant of organisational effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

Age discrimination may occur at different stages of the employment relationship, including recruitment, selection, promotion, access to professional training, performance evaluation, remuneration, and termination of employment. Such discrimination can be explicit, through formal or informal decisions based on chronological age, or implicit, through stereotypes and assumptions about employees' abilities, adaptability, productivity, technological competence, or potential for professional development. Although age-related stereotypes may affect both younger and older employees, older workers are frequently exposed to assumptions that they are less adaptable, less innovative, or less willing to acquire new skills. Younger employees, conversely, may encounter perceptions that they lack experience, professional maturity, or the competence required for positions involving greater responsibility. These assumptions can distort managerial decisions and prevent organisations from evaluating employees according to their actual qualifications, performance, and professional potential. The World Health Organization's Global Report on Ageism identifies employment as one of the important institutional contexts in which age-based stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination can restrict individuals' opportunities and adversely affect their well-being (World Health Organization, 2021).

From an organisational perspective, the consequences of age discrimination extend beyond the unequal treatment of individual employees. When employees perceive that decisions concerning their careers are influenced by age rather than competence, performance, or merit, their perceptions of organisational fairness and trust may deteriorate. This can be associated with lower job satisfaction, reduced work engagement, weaker organisational commitment, and an increased intention to leave the organisation. Over time, these responses may create additional challenges for employee retention, knowledge transfer, team collaboration, and the effective utilisation of human capital. Discriminatory practices may also restrict access to training and development opportunities, thereby limiting the organisation's capacity to maintain a skilled and adaptable workforce. Consequently, age discrimination should be examined not only as an employment relations or ethical issue but also as a potentially significant organisational risk.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Existing empirical research provides a basis for investigating these relationships. A longitudinal study by Marchiondo et al. (2019) examined trajectories of perceived workplace age discrimination and their associations with employees' mental health, self-rated health, job satisfaction, and intentions concerning work beyond retirement age. More recently, a systematic review by Marrero-Vega et al. (2026), published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, synthesised evidence from 22 studies examining workplace ageism and well-being among employees aged 50 and older. The review identified consistent negative associations between perceived ageism



and several dimensions of workplace well-being, including job satisfaction and work-related psychological outcomes. It also highlighted potential explanatory mechanisms involving cognitive appraisals, emotional responses, and job demands and resources. These findings reinforce the importance of understanding the consequences of age discrimination for employees and their working environments. However, evidence concerning employee well-being should not automatically be interpreted as direct evidence of reduced organisational productivity or financial performance, since these outcomes represent related but conceptually distinct dimensions of organisational functioning.

Despite the growing body of research on workplace ageism, an important analytical challenge remains: establishing how perceived age discrimination is associated with organisational performance and identifying the mechanisms through which this relationship may operate. Organisational performance is a multidimensional concept encompassing both operational and human resource outcomes. Depending on the research context and the availability of data, relevant indicators may include labour productivity, employee retention, absenteeism, work quality, innovation-related outcomes, and financial performance. These indicators do not necessarily respond to age discrimination in the same way or over the same period. For example, perceived discriminatory treatment may be associated with lower employee motivation and job satisfaction, while its relationship with financial performance may depend on additional factors, such as organisational size, industry characteristics, management practices, workforce composition, and prevailing economic conditions. Accordingly, a comprehensive assessment requires a clearly defined set of performance indicators and an analytical framework capable of distinguishing direct associations from relationships that may operate through employee attitudes and behaviours.

A particularly relevant consideration is the potential mediating role of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Job satisfaction reflects employees' evaluations of their work experiences, whereas organisational commitment concerns their psychological attachment to the organisation. When employees perceive age-related discrimination, their assessments of workplace fairness and the value placed on their contributions may become less favourable. Such perceptions may weaken their satisfaction and attachment to the organisation, which, in turn, may be associated with outcomes such as reduced engagement, lower retention, and less favourable assessments of work performance. Examining these potential mechanisms can therefore help explain not only whether age discrimination is associated with organisational performance but also how and under what conditions such an association may emerge. Nevertheless, the proposed mediating relationships require empirical testing rather than being assumed in advance.

The methodological approach is particularly important in this context. Quantitative analysis can provide a systematic framework for measuring perceived age discrimination, assessing its association with selected organisational outcomes, and testing whether these relationships



remain statistically significant after accounting for relevant employee and organisational characteristics. Correlation analysis can establish the direction and strength of associations between variables, while multiple regression analysis can estimate the relationship between perceived age discrimination and specified performance indicators after controlling for potential confounding factors. Where the sample size and measurement properties permit, mediation analysis can further examine whether job satisfaction and organisational commitment statistically account for part of the observed relationship. The validity of these analyses, however, depends on the quality of the measurement instruments, the representativeness of the sample, the reliability of the collected data, and the suitability of the statistical models. In particular, cross-sectional survey data can establish statistical associations but generally cannot demonstrate causal relationships without additional assumptions and an appropriate research design.

Against this background, the present study aims to quantitatively assess the relationship between perceived age discrimination and organisational performance through an empirical analysis. Specifically, it seeks to examine the association between employees' perceptions of age-related discriminatory practices and selected indicators of organisational effectiveness, while investigating the potential mediating roles of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The study also aims to determine whether the observed relationships persist when relevant individual and organisational characteristics are taken into account. By integrating the measurement of perceived discrimination with a multidimensional understanding of organisational performance, the research seeks to contribute to a more evidence-based assessment of the organisational implications of age-related inequality in employment.

The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What is the relationship between perceived age discrimination and organisational performance? (2) To what extent is perceived age discrimination associated with employees' job satisfaction and organisational commitment? (3) Do job satisfaction and organisational commitment mediate the relationship between perceived age discrimination and organisational performance? (4) Do these relationships remain statistically significant after controlling for relevant demographic and organisational characteristics?

The significance of this research lies in its potential to connect the established literature on workplace ageism and employee well-being with a more focused quantitative assessment of organisational outcomes. By identifying the strength and direction of the relationships between the selected variables, the study may provide evidence to inform human resource management policies, age-inclusive recruitment and promotion practices, equitable access to training, and the development

Theoretical Foundations of Age Discrimination. The concept of ageism was introduced into academic discourse by the American gerontologist Robert N. Butler. In his seminal article, "Age-ism: Another Form of Bigotry," Butler (1969) defined ageism as a form of prejudice and



discrimination directed towards individuals on the basis of their age, placing it alongside other forms of group-based discrimination [1]. Since then, the concept has been increasingly applied to employment relationships, organisational behaviour, and human resource management. According to the World Health Organization's Global Report on Ageism (2021), approximately one in two people worldwide holds moderately or strongly ageist attitudes towards older people [2]. This finding demonstrates that ageism is a widespread social phenomenon rather than an isolated occurrence. Nevertheless, the prevalence of ageist attitudes should be distinguished from the prevalence of actual discriminatory practices in the workplace.

Several theoretical perspectives can be employed to explain age-related discrimination in organisations. According to social identity theory, individuals tend to categorise themselves and others into social groups and may favour members of their own group over those perceived as belonging to an out-group [3]. Within organisations, age can serve as a basis for such categorisation, creating implicit distinctions between younger and older employees. These distinctions may influence workplace interactions, managerial evaluations, access to professional development, and perceptions of employee competence. When age-based group boundaries become embedded in organisational culture, employees may be evaluated according to stereotypes rather than their actual skills, experience, and performance. From an economic perspective, Gary S. Becker's theory of discrimination conceptualises discriminatory behaviour partly in terms of employers' preferences or "taste" for or against particular groups [4]. In this framework, employers who discriminate may incur additional costs by overlooking qualified candidates, misallocating human resources, or making recruitment and promotion decisions that are not based on productivity-related criteria. Consequently, age discrimination may create inefficiencies by preventing organisations from fully utilising the capabilities of their workforce. However, the magnitude of these costs depends on the organisational context and cannot be assumed to be identical across all firms or industries. Social exchange theory provides another explanation for the relationship between age discrimination and organisational outcomes [5]. The theory suggests that employees develop reciprocal relationships with their organisations based on their perceptions of how they are treated. When employees experience fairness, recognition, and organisational support, they may respond with greater commitment, motivation, and discretionary effort. Conversely, perceived discrimination may weaken employees' trust in management and reduce their willingness to invest additional effort in organisational goals. This perspective therefore provides a theoretical basis for examining job satisfaction and organisational commitment as potential mechanisms linking perceived age discrimination to organisational performance.

The three-component model of organisational commitment developed by Meyer and Allen distinguishes between affective, continuance, and normative commitment [6]. Affective commitment refers to employees' emotional attachment to and identification with their organisation; continuance commitment concerns the perceived costs of leaving; and normative



commitment reflects a sense of obligation to remain. In the context of age discrimination, affective commitment is particularly relevant because perceptions of unfair treatment may weaken employees' emotional attachment to their employer. Nevertheless, the relationship between affective commitment and performance is contingent on individual and organisational circumstances. The model should therefore be used to formulate and test hypotheses about the potential mediating role of commitment rather than to assume that affective commitment invariably produces the strongest performance outcomes.

Review of Empirical Studies. A substantial body of research has examined age stereotypes in the workplace and their implications for human resource management. In their influential review, Posthuma and Campion analysed 117 research articles and books concerning workplace age stereotypes [7]. They identified several recurring assumptions about older employees, including beliefs that they are less productive, more resistant to change, slower to learn new skills, and more costly to employ. Importantly, their review also highlighted evidence that challenges these generalisations and demonstrated that the validity of age-related stereotypes depends on the particular outcome and circumstances under consideration. Accordingly, chronological age should not be treated as a reliable substitute for an individual assessment of competence, adaptability, or work performance. The meta-analysis conducted by Ng and Feldman further examined the relationship between age and multiple dimensions of job performance [8]. Their findings indicated that chronological age was largely unrelated to core task performance, creativity, and performance in training programmes. At the same time, age was associated with several other behavioural dimensions, including organisational citizenship behaviour, safety performance, counterproductive work behaviour, tardiness, and absenteeism. These relationships varied across outcomes and, in some cases, followed nonlinear patterns. The findings therefore challenge the assumption that older employees are inherently less productive while also demonstrating that the relationship between age and work behaviour is multidimensional. Importantly, evidence concerning the relationship between age and performance does not directly establish the effects of perceived age discrimination; the two constructs must be measured and analysed separately.

Research at the organisational level provides more direct evidence of the potential relationship between age discrimination and firm performance. Kunze, Boehm, and Bruch (2011) examined data from 128 companies, drawing on responses from 8,651 employees and information about firm-level performance [10]. Their cross-organisational study investigated whether workforce age diversity was associated with perceptions of an age discrimination climate, whether such a climate was related to employees' affective commitment, and whether commitment was associated with overall company performance. The results broadly supported the proposed relationships, indicating that an age discrimination climate may represent an important mechanism linking workforce age diversity to organisational outcomes. The study suggests that the implications of age diversity depend not only on workforce composition but



also on how age differences are managed and perceived within the organisation. Related research by Boehm, Kunze, and Bruch examined the role of age-inclusive human resource management practices in organisations with age-diverse workforces [11]. Their work provides a basis for investigating how organisational practices and the management of age diversity may influence employee attitudes and organisational outcomes. Age-inclusive practices may include equitable access to training, fair recruitment and promotion procedures, opportunities for knowledge exchange, and the prevention of age-based stereotyping in performance evaluations. Such practices are relevant because they may help create a working environment in which employees of different ages are evaluated according to their competencies and contributions. However, the effectiveness of particular practices should be assessed empirically rather than presumed to be uniform across organisational settings.

Ageism should not be understood exclusively as discrimination against older employees. Research by North and Fiske has examined age-related tensions between generations, particularly in contexts involving the allocation of resources, opportunities, and social influence [12]. In employment settings, younger workers may encounter assumptions that they lack experience, maturity, reliability, or the capacity to assume positions of responsibility. These perceptions can limit access to promotion, decision-making opportunities, and professional development. When younger employees believe that their contributions are undervalued because of their age, their job satisfaction and intention to remain with the organisation may also be affected. An inclusive approach to age equality must therefore consider the experiences of employees across different age groups rather than treating older workers as the only potential targets of age discrimination.

Taken together, the literature provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for examining the relationship between age discrimination and organisational performance. However, several analytical distinctions remain essential. First, workforce age diversity is not equivalent to age discrimination: diversity describes the composition of the workforce, whereas discrimination concerns unequal treatment or disadvantage based on age. Second, chronological age and perceived age discrimination are distinct variables and should not be used interchangeably. Third, employee attitudes, such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment, are different from organisational performance indicators, such as productivity, turnover, and financial results. A quantitative research design should account for these distinctions to produce interpretable and empirically meaningful findings.

Research Model and Hypotheses. Building on the theoretical perspectives and empirical findings discussed above, the proposed research model examines the relationship between perceived age discrimination and organisational performance. Perceived age discrimination is specified as the independent variable, while organisational performance represents the dependent variable. Organisational commitment, particularly affective commitment, is included as a potential mediating variable. Job satisfaction may also be incorporated as an additional



mediator, provided that it is measured separately and the sample size supports the proposed model. Inclusive human resource management practices are conceptualised as a potential moderator that may weaken the negative association between perceived age discrimination and organisational outcomes. The conceptual model assumes that perceived age discrimination may be associated with less favourable employee attitudes, which, in turn, may be related to organisational outcomes. At the same time, inclusive HR practices may reduce the strength of the relationship between perceived discrimination and employee or organisational outcomes by promoting procedural fairness, equal access to opportunities, and respectful treatment across age groups.

The following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Perceived age discrimination is negatively associated with organisational performance.

H2: Perceived age discrimination is negatively associated with employees' affective organisational commitment.

H3: Affective organisational commitment mediates the relationship between perceived age discrimination and organisational performance.

H4: Inclusive human resource management practices moderate the relationship between perceived age discrimination and organisational performance, such that the negative association is weaker in organisations with more inclusive HR practices.

These hypotheses establish a testable framework for the empirical investigation. If job satisfaction is included as a separate mediator, an additional hypothesis may be formulated to examine whether perceived age discrimination is negatively associated with job satisfaction and whether job satisfaction accounts for part of the relationship between discrimination and organisational performance. The distinction between mediation and moderation is important: mediation concerns a potential explanatory pathway, whereas moderation concerns the conditions under which a relationship becomes stronger or weaker.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicate that age discrimination may represent an important factor negatively associated with organisational performance. This relationship may operate indirectly through reduced affective organisational commitment, lower job satisfaction, and diminished trust in the organisation. Furthermore, existing empirical evidence suggests that many commonly held stereotypes about older employees are not consistently supported by research, indicating that chronological age alone is not a reliable predictor of work productivity. Ageism may also affect younger employees, particularly when their competence, professional maturity, and career potential are assessed on the basis of age-related assumptions rather than individual capabilities.

The central issue, therefore, is not workforce age diversity itself, but how age-diverse teams are managed within organisations. In this regard, several practical recommendations can be proposed:



1. **Implement competency-based criteria** in recruitment and promotion processes, ensuring that decisions are based on employees' qualifications, skills, and professional performance rather than chronological age.
2. **Ensure equal access to professional development** by providing training, skills enhancement, and career advancement opportunities to employees across all age groups.
3. **Promote intergenerational cooperation** through mentoring programmes, knowledge-sharing initiatives, and the development of teams comprising employees of different ages.
4. **Introduce regular employee surveys** to identify perceived age discrimination, assess workplace fairness, and monitor employees' experiences of age-related inequality.

Future research should investigate the relationship between age discrimination and organisational performance across different industries and national contexts, including organisations in Uzbekistan. Such research could provide a more context-sensitive understanding of the relationship between age-related discrimination, employee attitudes, and organisational outcomes. In particular, longitudinal studies combining employee survey data with objective organisational performance indicators could provide stronger evidence concerning the mechanisms through which age discrimination may influence organisational effectiveness.

Overall, addressing age discrimination should be an integral component of inclusive human resource management. By ensuring fair employment practices, promoting equal development opportunities, and strengthening cooperation between generations, organisations may improve the utilisation of human capital and foster a more inclusive working environment. The extent to which these measures contribute to improved organisational performance should be established through further empirical investigation.

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