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AGE, GENDER, AND THE UNFINISHED WORK IN ACADEMIA

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Age, Gender, and the Unfinished Work in Academia

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1. Introduction - aging as a relevant factor in today's organizations

1. Different Perspectives on Ageing

This research adds to the literature concerning the role played by age diversity in the innovation strategies of companies, examining inter-personal as well as intra-personal elements. It also sheds light on the impact of age diversity on genderism and the intersection of generations. Intra-personal problems, including employees' attitudes towards aging, play a significant role in their attitudes, motivation, and innovative behavior. Individuals' perception of their own aging process has the power to affect their willingness to accept new challenges, take risks, and participate in exploratory as well as exploitative innovation. For instance, older employees, who view aging as decline, are more likely to be opposed to learning new tasks or adapting to new technology. On the other hand, a positive view of aging is more likely to trigger ongoing learning and innovation. Ayalon and Tesch-Römer (2018) observe that ageism in society has the power to lead to internalization of negative attitudes towards aging, and through that, to affect individuals' self-esteem, motivation, and well-being negatively, ultimately deciding their potential for innovative behavior in organizations.

This study aims to account for how inter- and intra-personal influences, as influenced by the complexity of aging, impact a firm's ability for exploratory innovation (pursuing new knowledge and opportunities) and exploitative innovation (developing and leveraging existing knowledge and processes). Exploratory innovation entails a departure from standard practices and pursuing new, unexplored territory, whereas exploitative innovation entails the improvement and development of existing products, processes, and services. Both types of innovation are essential to organizational performance and long-term competitiveness. This study aims to contribute to knowledge on the conditions under which age diversity can be used to effectively enable the pursuit of both exploratory and exploitative innovation, considering the complex dynamics of individual attitudes towards aging. (Wong et al., 2017).

Additionally, this study responds to the noted gap in the literature concerning the relationship between age diversity and team performance and innovation. It also explores the organizational culture in developing age diversity, and the interplay among age and other forms of diversity, like gender and race. In addition, it endeavors to contribute to knowledge in the realms of the role of leadership, technology, and information flow in the age diversity context, as good leadership, suitable technology, and free information flow can circumvent the obstacles of ageism and lead to the creation of an increasingly diverse and innovative workplace in terms of age. Through an examination of these relationships, this study aims to build a more cohesive understanding of how organizations can leverage age diversity to build a more innovative and inclusive culture. The anticipated findings of this study are aimed at informing the development of more effective interventions and strategies that maintain age diversity while eliminating the adverse impacts of gendered ageism, ultimately leading to higher organizational performance and innovation returns. (Kearney & Gebert, 2009).

2. Gendered aging and the need for an intersectional perspective

Gendered aging refers to the way that cultural expectations and norms related to gender intersect with the aging process to produce distinctive experiences and issues for men and women over the course of time (Calasanti & Slevin, 2020). For instance, older women might face double discrimination based on age and gender, with negative stereotypes that downplay

their contribution and appearance (Twigg, 2023). Older men, on the other hand, can face social expectations to maintain conventional masculine roles of strength and autonomy, which may deter them from seeking assistance (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2021). Such gendered experiences have a lasting influence on individuals' social roles, health, and well-being in older life. Studies of aging have more and more focused on the social and organizational environments of aging instead of isolating it as an individual, standalone process. Aging is now understood to be influenced by larger societal structures such as cultural norms, workplace habits, and institutional policies, according to scholars (Saks & Gruman, 2024; Boddington, 2024; Locke, 2021). Perhaps most importantly for this redirection of focus is the identification of how societal structures fuel disparities and discrimination in aging experiences. Gender discrimination, for example, contributes significantly to the experiences of aging, both in corporate and academic settings. Women especially experience special and cumulative challenges as they get older, which requires examining these experiences through the prism of intersectionality (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018).

Research also shows that women suffer from what has been commonly termed as "triple jeopardy," a co-occurring experience of ageism, sexism, and "lookism" (Granleese & Sayer, 2006). This is the practice of evaluating the worth of women employees not on professional competence, which technically should be the only criterion, but also on age and appearance. As women grow older, they lose worth in the workplace, as culture emphasizes youth and beauty, especially for women in leadership roles. In addition, the process of "double jeopardy" demonstrates how the compounding effect of age bias and gender bias increasingly reduces professional opportunities with age (Riach et al., 2015). Older women have their professional worth progressively eroded, leading to a reduction in promotions, leadership positions, and career advancement opportunities. These resulting prejudices add up to systemic disadvantages that detract from the professional sustainability and success of women. Another unfortunate dynamic is that women who are not damsels in distress are treated differently from those who are. A resourceful woman faces bias and constructive dismissals because men in leadership positions are accustomed to having their female counterparts depending on them.

On the other hand, men do have to bear the pressure of being the problem solver and being someone who will always be available to travel on behalf of the organization. Normally, the men of the society are expected to bear the pressure of being a breadwinner, and they have to put up with inconsiderate demands just to keep the role of provider alive and serving. Men are not allowed by organizations to give importance to their mental or physical health, as they are always assumed to be active and fit to get the job done (Wong et al., 2017).

The intersection of today's society offers a multi-faceted intersection of competing values, experience, and communication (Eyring, 2020). For example, the technological comfort typically associated with younger cohorts can offer innovative solutions and technological ingenuity at work, with the aggregation of experience and institutional understanding of older generations delivering valuable stability as well as mentorship opportunities (Costanza et al., 2021). Yet, these differences are also capable of creating misunderstandings and conflicts when not managed adequately, which accounts for the need for inclusive styles that facilitate respect and cooperation among generations (Rudolph et al., 2021). In the long term, discovering and leveraging each generation's personal strengths can help create more alive and resilient communities and organizations.

In Higher Education Institutions, gender-based assumptions introduce extra layers of complexity into the professional lives of women (Baker, 2010). Evidence has shown time and again that academic settings, though commonly regarded as meritocratic, or based on merit, are actually shaped by deep-seated and deep-rooted biases that work against female academics. Systemic gender bias tends to result in the "leaky pipeline" effect, where women disproportionately leave academic careers at critical points in their professional lives because they have been alienated due to prejudice against their gender. Furthermore, the "chilly climate" of the academic setting adds to the obstacles against women, as overt and covert discrimination prevent them from advancing in their careers (Nielsen, 2017). For example, female academics commonly report implicit biases in hiring and promotion, where male candidates are preferred because of perceived leadership potential. These biases are further supported by poor mentorship and institutional support structures, leaving numerous women feeling unsupported and undervalued in their careers (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). The effects of these systemic obstacles go beyond personal experiences, shaping the wider academic culture and determining gender balance in leadership positions.

Intersectionality, or differences in ethnicity, merely adds to such complexities, particularly for women and men of color, who are subjected to additional layers of discrimination. Turner et al. (2008) elaborate on how the intersectionality of race, gender, and age produces distinct barriers that require purposeful interventions. Women and men of color are often subjected to exclusion from professional networks, restricted opportunities for leadership, and institutionalized marginalization within the academy. This is so massively ingrained within Western society that even areas of entertainment, such as television shows, have also depicted the biases people of color have to face, whether it be in relation to education, organization, or job opportunities. These issues lie at the foundation of the necessity for institutions to have policies that promote inclusivity and diversity.

The effects of these biases are not limited to the individual professional career field but spill over into the wider academic community and its potential for innovation. When a large percentage of the academic community is made to feel devalued or marginalized, the range of ideas and opinions is limited, thus inhibiting innovation and development. To address these systemic problems, there is a need to adopt an all-encompassing approach that entails policy reform, mentorship programs, and a concentration on the creation of a more inclusive professional environment. By recognizing and actively working to eliminate these obstacles, academic institutions can create a more inclusive and dynamic environment that benefits the entire academic community. (Bourabain, 2021).

3. Research Designs

This dissertation adopts a multi-method qualitative research design, organized into three distinct yet interrelated chapters. Each chapter uses a different methodological approach tailored to the specific research objectives of that stage. This structure allows for a comprehensive analysis of how age diversity, shaped by gendered aging, affects innovation within Higher Education Institutions.

The first chapter conducts a Systematic Literature Review to identify existing research patterns, theoretical gaps, and emerging areas related to age diversity and innovation. A total of 66 peer-reviewed articles were selected through a rigorous multi-stage search and screening process across multiple academic databases. To ensure consistency and relevance, studies were

included only if they directly addressed the research themes of age diversity and explorative and exploitative innovation. The review revealed the most frequently used theoretical frameworks, highlighted key organizational drivers of age diversity, and examined how age diversity supports both explorative and exploitative innovation. It also identified significant gaps, including limited understanding of how age diversity affects team performance and innovation, the overlooked role of organizational culture, and insufficient research into the intersection of age with other diversity dimensions. The review's findings contribute a conceptual framework that can guide managers in leveraging age diversity through targeted leadership, inclusive practices, and technological integration.

The second chapter uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore how gendered ageism is constructed and maintained through institutional language and workplace narratives. CDA is particularly suited to uncovering the power relations and social ideologies embedded in discourse (Pesci, 2023). Data was collected via semi-structured interviews with employees from an American university, chosen through purposive sampling and expanded via snowball sampling to include diverse participants across age, gender, and professional levels. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke (2006), was applied to identify patterns within the data. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of how individuals experience and perceive gendered aging in professional settings. To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, the research incorporated triangulation, comparing data across sources and member checking, where participants reviewed and validated the initial findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This chapter provides critical insight into how discourse influences perceptions of innovation, career advancement, and intergenerational collaboration in Higher Education Institutions.

The third chapter applies deconstruction theory to examine how generational identities and age-related assumptions are constructed within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Focusing on the intersection of generations, this analysis explores how institutional narratives shape perceptions of age, innovation, and value. Using deconstruction as outlined by Martin (1990), the study analyzes semi-structured interviews from educators and administrators in an American University to uncover hidden meanings, contradictions, and exclusions. The goal is to reveal how generational hierarchies are embedded in discourse and how they intersect with broader structures of gender and authority. This approach challenges binary stereotypes, such as older as resistant or younger as inexperienced, and highlights how such assumptions can limit intergenerational collaboration and innovation in HEIs. The overall research inquiry aimed to explore the biases related to aging and gender in both corporate and academic workplaces, structured around two broad research questions:

1. How does age function as a social and organizational construct within academic and professional settings, and in what ways does age diversity influence innovation, collaboration, and institutional practices?
2. How do age-related norms, stereotypes, and intersecting identities, such as gender, generation, and institutional role, shape the lived experiences, opportunities, and resistances of individuals within Higher Education Institutions?

Each chapter addresses these overarching questions from a different angle, using distinct methodologies. While Chapter One focuses on age diversity and innovation across general workplace settings, Chapters Two and Three narrow in on how age is experienced and negotiated within Higher Education Institutions. Together, these inquiries offer a comprehensive

exploration of age as both a structural and experiential category.

All of these research questions are mentioned below, entailing the elaboration to establish the impacts of age diversity and the negative impact of discrimination based on age and gender.

Chapter 1:

Research Question 1: Which theoretical frameworks are most frequently acknowledged in the literature when considering age diversity, explorative, and exploitative innovation?

Research Question 2: What are the key variables that lead to age diversity in the organization?

Research Question 3: When individuals from diverse age groups converge, what specific occurrences transpire, and how does this subsequently foster both explorative and exploitative innovation?

Research Question 4: What are the mechanisms and outcomes of explorative and exploitative innovation in promoting age diversity?

Chapter 2:

Research Question: How is gendered aging experienced in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)? How do gender and age intersect to perpetuate discrimination? Do academic workers resist gendered ageism, and if so, how?

Chapter 3:

Research Question: How do generational stereotypes and biases impact intergenerational relationships, professional development, and career progression within Higher Education Institutions?

4. Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided and categorized into three main chapters. All chapters are integrated to provide an enhanced understanding of the topic of research. They are meticulously tailored to complement each other, guaranteeing a logical sequence of thought development and results being driven based. This introduction of the thesis aims at amalgamating the gist of all three chapters, establishing the impact of age diversity, genderism, and the intersection of generations.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the research topic, in which a detailed synthesis of the observations has been provided to establish the foundation for the study. It begins by laying the groundwork, that is, providing the core research problem for the solution discovery, for which the entire thesis is performed. It has been done through a clear-cut definition, stating its scope and significance. The chapter also specifies the main goals of the research, expounding on what is being targeted by the research. Further, it explains the significance of the research, pointing out why the research topic is vital and how the research contributes to knowledge. The introduction ends with a concise summary of the later chapters, providing an overview of the structure of the thesis to the reader. The main theme of this chapter is the growing importance of age diversity management for organizational performance and innovation in today's competitive landscape. It emphasizes that recognizing and valuing age differences within the workforce is crucial for achieving strategic goals and enhancing overall effectiveness.

Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive literature review of the literature related to the study. It examines empirical research on aging and gender bias in an educational environment. The chapter presents a critical evaluation of previous research, highlighting important findings as well as limitations. Through the synthesis of previous studies, this section lays the

groundwork for the study, illustrating the need for the present study and situating it within the larger academic literature. The chapter also discusses the sampling technique deployed to acquire the basic feedback to feed the research questions. It also explains the research methodology used in the study. Through analyzing interviews with academics at a US public university, the chapter explains how women must carefully manage how they are perceived to fit this "ideal." This means avoiding being seen as students (due to the sexualization of youth) while also challenging stereotypes of older women as intellectually weak and "soft." The study concludes that these norms are harmful to those who don't conform, leading to "impossible" academic lives

Chapter 3 discusses in great detail the intersecting generations through exploring the age diversity in Higher Education Institutions. This chapter lays great emphasis on the importance of multiple generations in the academic industry and how the effective management of the generations can create an impressive constellation, mapping the knowledge of the elderly with the energy of the young. The chapter continues to discuss the old worker and the young worker by emphasizing the butler's perspective. The chapter also includes a selection of feedback from the participants to further solidify the observations and to put the actual experience under the research lens to provide a future framework.

The conclusion highlights the overall impact and intersection of age diversity and how genderism and ageism affect the productivity and effectiveness of both corporate workplaces and academic institutions. It also highlights how the change in academic approach and the policy-making in the corporate world can bring about a change in the perspective.

By this systematic approach, the thesis guarantees a logical and systematic investigation of the research issue, adding meaningful contributions to the academic and professional world.

Introduction

Papers

Chapter 1 – Inter and Intra-Personal Antecedents of Age Diversity and Its Impact on Explorative and Exploitative Innovation: A Systematic Literature Review
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Conclusion

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Chapter 1: Inter and Intra-Personal Antecedents of Age Diversity and Its Impact on Explorative and Exploitative Innovation: A Systematic Literature Review

1. Introduction

Companies have made strategic shifts in recent years to boost their performance and efficiency to stay competitive. Research has emphasized the importance of a diverse workforce, which enhances organizational performance (Arif & Ahmed, 2023); therefore, it is essential for the organization to recognize the importance of diversity management in achieving the strategic management priorities and improving their overall performance (Goi, 2023). Diversity management refers to the practice of recognizing and valuing the differences between people in terms of demographics such as age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, cognitive ability, physical appearance, national origin, level of education, line of work, religious affiliation, and so on (Gupta et al., 2023). Organizational growth and change are impossible without diversity management of age (Hertel et al., 2013; Rafaqat et al., 2022). Diversity in terms of age is becoming increasingly influential in shaping 21st-century workplaces, communities, and industries (Harmeling, 2017). Due to the demographic change in society, considering diversity management of age is very important, as the changing shift in society dynamics has posed significant challenges for human resources to hire young employees while retaining older employees (Afif, 2023). In doing so, Organizations can benefit from having employees and leaders of varying ages according to several theories, including the Socio-Emotional Selectivity Theory, the Similarity Attraction Paradigm, the Social Cognitive Theory (Jungmann et al., 2020; Lawson & Hughes, 2020; Tsui & Ashford, 2017) and many more.

Diversity in terms of age is becoming an important factor in today's market structures. Workers of all ages, genders, races, religions, etc., should be treated fairly in today's evolving job market (Florek, 2022) to promote innovation. Research has shown how several innovations, such as product, market, and organization innovation, can be influenced by age diversity (Galia, 2013). Furthermore, research has explained how it moderates between organizational culture, technological change, and organizational innovativeness (Alamsjah & Kosasih, 2020). The propensity of employees towards innovation and openness to new ideas may be affected by shifts in the age composition of a company as age diversity can contribute to bringing different mind-sets, perspectives, and experiences to the table, in such regards, we can say that the propensity of employees towards age diversity can be influenced by emotional support and competent emotional commitment. Emotional support and competent emotional commitment can indirectly impact the age diversity-innovation behavior relationship (Addington, 2022). Having employees of all ages in the workplace can boost productivity, creativity, and success (Sunago, 2020) and enhance talent management, resilience, open innovation, and knowledge co-creation (Hysa & Themeli, 2022). However, businesses can and should do more to embrace age diversity in the workplace. Evidence suggests that a company's ability to innovate is impacted by age diversity and leadership (Kumar, 2023; Lu et al., 2022). For instance, older leaders are more likely to back efforts to go above and beyond regulatory requirements. In contrast, a more diverse young leader's team is more likely to develop creative solutions to urgent problems in the innovation context (Kumar, 2023).

Furthermore, companies can welcome additional collaborative efforts resulting from responses to performance comparison by boosting age diversity (Jirásek, 2023), due to the insecurity of being an employee of undervalued performance. Therefore, businesses need to become more welcoming places to work for people of all ages, address concerns related to age diversity, and implement appropriate initiatives. Young employees in organizations may experience several

challenges related to their ability to advance in their chosen fields and compete with the seniors, in such context, Ng & Feldman, (2012) found that younger workers may face obstacles such as inexperience and lack of credibility because of their age and Allen, (2003) found that numerous indications imply that young candidates in organizations may confront practical difficulties that can impede their career growth and development, including exclusion from vital networks and possibilities. However, these challenges are not recognized by organizations, and there are steps that businesses can take to help young workers grow and succeed in their careers (Oh & Jang-Tucci, 2023).

These strategies to provide dynamic solutions to age diversity challenges can promote organizational innovation. In addition to excelling in leadership roles, a blend of innovative thinking and extensive experience is important, even though younger employees often bring forth fresh thinking and ideas. Various research findings indicate differences in job responsibilities and communication patterns between generations might offer opportunities and prospects (Lipscomb, 2010).

Organizational culture, technological shift, and innovativeness are interconnected, yet age diversity in the workplace can reduce some of the effects of these interdependencies (Veronica et al., 2020). This suggests that people of all ages have something to offer an organization in terms of sparking innovation. As an illustration, an inclusive climate has been cited as a primary driver of inventiveness in organizational culture (Bicho & Cascalheira, 2018). Here, climate change does not refer to environmental factors but the culture of quota systems, such as in Italy, where companies are legally obligated to actively seek and promote a larger workforce (Galia, 2013). Whereas, contemporary organizations can benefit from leadership that encourages fairness, equality, and performance in employees (Rusdiyani & Prasoj, 2023) thus promoting innovation and diversity since that is the only way to succeed in today's fast-paced, ever-changing world (Edwards, 2021).

Moreover, a study of French businesses indicated that age diversity benefits product creativity but hinders internal innovation (Galia, 2013). Gigauri & Mushkudiani (2021) found that young employees place a premium on leadership that encourages a positive work environment, promoting internal innovation. This is because young employees are less concerned with their boss's demographic attributes than with the leader's actual abilities, attributes, and behaviour. This implies that organizations can use young workers' choices for leaders to design leadership strategies that better appeal to and retain that demographic. Ozdemir et al. (2021) suggest that to grasp the Y generation's working perspective fully, to win them over, keep them, retain them, cultivate organizational commitment, guide their talents, meet their expectations, and build long-term relationships with them, a coaching style of leadership is increasingly crucial.

Several types of research use literature review to investigate how age diversity represented in leadership positions can help foster innovation (Mothe & Nguyen-Thi, 2021; Hammermann et al., 2019). This research seeks to answer how age diversity promotes different types of innovation and identifies the factors that foster the organization toward several types of innovation. According to Hammermann et al. (2019), a group's ability to think creatively and strategically and develop new product or process innovations improves when its members represent a wide range of ages. However, the relationship between age diversity and technological innovation is significant but negative (Mothe & Nguyen-Thi, 2021), which concerns age diversity's impact on innovation. However, organizational practices emphasizing collaboration amongst employees of similar age groups can positively influence innovation (Mothe & Nguyen-Thi, 2021). There is no clear evidence in the previous stream of research that determines whether or not age diversity increases technical

innovation. Despite the potential of age diversity to solve innovation concerns and the leadership process, there appears to be a lack of research on the subject.

Scope of the study

Research on age diversity has recently developed in various fields, including economics, organizational behaviour, and innovation studies. As a result, researchers have shifted their attention to other aspects of age diversity, such as creativity (Pitt-Catsoupes et al., 2013), HR practices (Mothe & Nguyen-Thi, 2021), and innovation to fit (Gkypali et al., 2017). Therefore, there has been much progress in our understanding of age diversity and its ramifications. However, not nearly enough attention is paid to the challenges of organizations towards age diversity and effective strategies of successfully supporting age diversity, promoting both explorative and exploitative innovation. Until now, only one literature review has considered technological advancement and age diversity (Mothe & Nguyen-Thi, 2021).

Given the recent emergence of discussions on how a diverse workforce can enhance innovation, it is crucial to conduct a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to address knowledge gaps and identify areas for potentially valuable new research. The extant literature on age diversity and innovation encompasses various issues. These issues encompass the influence of research routes on agriculture, the function of innovation intermediaries in sharing knowledge, and the moderating effects of alliance partner variety on explorative and exploitative innovation and innovation performance. A diverse workforce is an excellent strategy for fostering open innovation and collaborative knowledge generation in the workplace. By employing a systematic review, which can combine these diverse findings and identify gaps or emerging trends, a more comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge may be attained, and novel possibilities for research can be identified. This is achievable due to the utilization of a systematic review.

This study uses an SLR approach to analyze the scattered literature on age diversity, comprising 66 chosen articles, to better identify and describe the theoretical and conceptual foundations, empirical findings, and research gaps. The research deepens our appreciation for a company's age diversity's role in facilitating explorative and exploitative activities in the innovation process. Knowledge of age diversity in the workplace can be expanded using a conceptual framework and suggestions for future research. By doing so, we present a conceptual framework to aid international managers and decision-makers and a fresh research-based viewpoint on age diversity and innovation in an organizational setting.

Collectively, our aim for this literature evaluation is to address the following research questions.

1. Which theoretical frameworks are most frequently acknowledged in the literature when considering age diversity, explorative and exploitative innovation?
2. What are the key variables contributing to age diversity in the organization?
3. When individuals from diverse age groups converge, what specific occurrences transpire, and how does this subsequently foster explorative and exploitative innovation?
4. What are the mechanisms and outcomes of explorative and exploitative innovation in promoting age diversity?

2. Theoretical background

Age diversity can bring a range of interpersonal skills to a team, such as communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration, which can enhance team dynamics and foster creativity and innovation. On one hand, older team members may have extensive industry experience and knowledge, which can be shared with younger team members, promoting learning and innovation. On the other

hand, age diverse employees can also highlight intrapersonal capabilities, such as adaptability, resilience, and the ability to navigate change, which are crucial for innovation in dynamic environments (Hammermann et al., 2019). Age diversity can help mitigate groupthink, as individuals from different age groups may have different biases and cognitive styles, leading to more critical thinking and diverse solutions. Age diversity can foster a climate of creativity by encouraging the exchange of ideas, challenging assumptions, and promoting a culture of continuous learning and improvement (Tshetshema & Chan, 2020). When your organization supports a diverse age-oriented culture, it means encouraging employees to be resilient in their work. This evidence suggests that promoting innovation through age diversity can lead to explorative and exploitative innovation. Explorative innovation refers to searching, experimenting, and taking risks to develop new technologies, capabilities, or solutions that meet the needs of new customers or enter emerging markets. Exploitative innovation involves refining, improving efficiency, implementing, and executing existing technologies, capabilities, or solutions. It delivers value through incremental improvements and optimizing existing processes (Park & Kim, 2015). Rudolph & Zacher (2022) suggested that age diversity in the workplace can create a dynamic and inclusive environment that promotes both explorative and exploitative innovation. By harnessing the diverse perspectives, experiences, and expertise of employees from different age groups, organizations can tap into a rich pool of ideas and knowledge, driving innovation and competitive advantage. This is supported by socioemotional selectivity theory (Carstensen et al., 1999). According to this theory, as individuals age, their goals shift from instrumental goals to goals emphasizing positive emotions and meaningful experiences. Age diversity within organizations leads to a more heterogeneous mix of employees with different levels of focus on opportunities and work engagement. This diversity can foster a variety of group-level communication and collaboration, including the exchange of information and perspectives. These processes, in turn, can lead to different understandings and representations of goal-relevant constructs, such as organizational innovation (Knippenberg et al., 2004). Therefore, age diversity can contribute to the emergence of a climate for innovation by promoting both explorative and exploitative innovation. Cui et al. (2019) also state that age diversity mitigates the negative relationship between horizontal pay dispersion (compensation design) and explorative innovation. The negative relationship between pay dispersion and exploration is muted in firms with immense employee age diversity. This suggests that age diversity allows for a more positive impact of compensation design on explorative innovation. Age diversity can lead to the discovery of new knowledge, insights, and network ties.

However, it can also result in communication differences and competition among members, which may affect task performance. Ganglberger (2020) suggests that creating an environment that accommodates different views and encourages participation can help harness the benefits of age diversity and promote innovation. This is consistent with social category heterogeneity, which is supposed to increase relationship conflict in groups. This is based on the different social identities and categorization processes found in diverse groups, which can lead to discomfort and tension. Different social category characteristics will likely lead to different experiences or values and cause task conflicts. These task conflicts can also lead to process conflicts and revolve around the coordination of the task (Jehn & Greer, 2013). However, not every conflict has to be necessarily bad; low levels of conflict can be beneficial because individuals are confronted with issues that demand a different perspective. Moreover, if conflict is absent, individuals might be oblivious to inefficiencies. Pre-discussion disagreements stimulate decision-making quality (Østergaard et al., 2011). When

individuals anticipate cooperative negotiations with other individuals, the parties involved are supposed to be more flexible and creative in their cognitive processes. This was not true if individuals anticipated competitive or hostile negotiations that resulted in mental rigidity (Carnevale & Probst, 1998). This highlights how age diversity can foster innovation by emphasizing the positive aspects of conflict and cognitive flexibility within diverse groups (Gerhardt et al., 2022).

Thus, further SLR is useful for illustrating the impact of age diversity on explorative and exploitative innovation. Recent studies indicate that having a diverse range of ages within a group can enhance innovation by cultivating a culture of ongoing learning and advancement and encouraging creativity and analytical thinking. Nevertheless, it recognizes that members' conflicting interests and communication styles may provide difficulties. SLRs can assist businesses in preserving innovative capabilities by consolidating these discoveries and comprehending the impact of age variation on explorative and exploitative innovation. The following section explains the methodology and results of the SLR.

3. Methodology

We applied SLR following the recommendations on literature review (Sibo et al., 2024), which ensures the standards of reliability, quality, and transparency of our results as we cover the most relevant literature in our research. As initial research on age diversity to foster explorative and exploitative research is limited, we extended our search to similar topics such as Age diversity for Innovation, Age diversity for product and process innovation, and Age diversity for radical and incremental innovation. Thus, we included most of the research related to behavior, culture, and leadership (focus on inclusivity) along with the research on inter and intrapersonal level (Scheel & Gockel, 2017a, 2017b). The literature on diversity related to other demographic diversity, such as gender diversity or ethnic diversity, was excluded. We thus use the platforms Web of Science and Scopus for research containing search queries: ("Age" AND "diversity" AND "explorative" AND "Exploitative" AND "Innovation"). The author concluded that using this query as a final search after multiple rounds of investigating and searching different alternatives of search engines produced fewer articles, which was not enough to study. The article retrieved from the final search string carries all the articles that the authors investigated in the initial screening of the search query. This ensures the reliability of the article retrieved from the final search query. Since the articles retrieved from Science Direct are higher in number, the author decided to opt for Science Direct only.

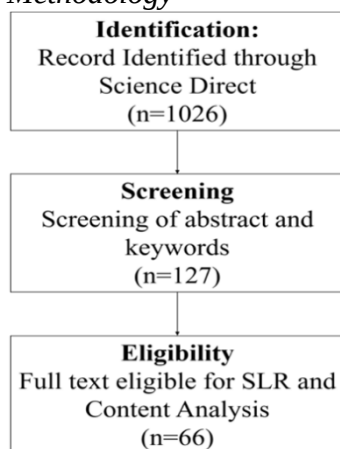
Table 1
Search Query Alternatives

Round	Search Query	Scopus	SD
1	("Age diversity" AND "innovation")	22	272
2	("Age diversity" AND "explorative innovation")	1	2
3	("Age diversity" AND "explorative innovation")	0	0
4	("Age diversity" AND "exploitative innovation")	1	3
5	("Age" AND "explorative innovation")	2	202
6	("Age" AND "exploitative innovation")	4	314
Final	("Age" AND "diversity" AND "explorative" AND "Exploitative" AND "Innovation")	1	1026

Previous research offers theories that resemble our conceptualization of age diversity described above, which we included in our search. To encompass a wide range of literature, we incorporated all available documents up until the point of our search, except research materials such as conference papers, book chapters, and editorials. As part of our selection criteria, the literature had to meet two requirements: it had to be written in English and address the four research questions defined in our literature review. A comprehensive path of our literature search is presented in the detailed flowchart:

Figure 1

Methodology



4. Results and findings

Before presenting the review's conclusions, we provide a concise overview of the key theories identified in the literature. As mentioned before, achieving results through explorative and exploitative innovation mechanisms involves categorizing the literature into antecedents, phenomena, and outcomes related to age diversity. The papers included in our SLR and their main findings are shown in Appendix 1. Furthermore, Figures 3, 4, and 5 illustrate our age diversity framework that integrates and pulls data from this review, explicitly emphasizing explorative and exploitative innovation.

5. Research Question 1: Which theoretical frameworks are most frequently acknowledged in the literature when considering age diversity, explorative and exploitative innovation?

We identified the theoretical framework of innovation scholars by systematically examining the abstracts, explicitly focusing on the presence of keywords such as "theory" and "model". This enabled us to scrutinize the concepts and frameworks proposed in previous studies. Multiple theories elucidate the impact of age diversity on innovation. Previous studies have examined various theories, including social dominance theory, information processing theory, lifespan theory of socio-emotional selectivity, cognitive-affective perspectives on innovation, motivational theory, theory of team cognition, contingency theory, upper-echelons theory, similarity-attraction theory, and social categorization theory. These theories have been discussed in 38 abstracts that explicitly mention a specific theory or model. A total of 20 theories and models were derived from those papers.

Amongst them, we employ five theories—social identity theory (Tajeddini et al., 2023; Pesch et al., 2015), Similarity attraction theory (Abbasi et al., 2023; Tshetshema & Chan, 2020),

socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen & Hershfield, 2021), upper echelon theory (J. Chen & Liu, 2022; Ji & Yi, 2022), and innovation diffusion theory (Rahmi et al., 2019)—to establish a theoretical framework for our literature review that is highly relevant to the process and outcomes of explorative and exploitative innovation facilitated by age diversity. After thoroughly examining the existing literature, we identified these five theories as fundamental frameworks for comprehending the mechanisms via which heterogeneous teams derive advantages from explorative and exploitative innovation.

First, social identity theory explains and predicts age-diverse group perceptions based on social identity (Tajeddini et al., 2023). This theory provides insight into how the composition of a diverse people in an innovation training group influences the degree of engagement and comprehension. According to this theory, the trainees' interactions and engagement with the training content can be influenced by factors such as the age diversity (Gerpott et al., 2021), thus in an organization characterised by diversity, individuals' social status, particularly about age, can influence their inclination to pursue and adopt novel concepts actively. This is consistent with Ali et al.'s (2014) analysis on the impact of age diversity on organisational effectiveness. It demonstrates that the performance is optimal when there is a moderate level of age diversity, as excessive diversity can lead to unfavourable group dynamics. The results support social identity theories by demonstrating that age diversity has varying effects on performance across different levels.

Second, similarity attraction theory proposes that individuals desire to engage with those who are similar to them. This theory posits that individuals are inclined to feel more at ease and enthusiastic about engaging with those who possess similar beliefs, perspectives, and dispositions. This theory suggests that individuals form social connections with others in their social group who experience similar emotions and beliefs (Abbasi et al., 2023). Tshetshema & Chan (2020) offer valuable insights into the correlation between age diversity and the achievement of team innovation. Age diversity has the potential to either enhance or hinder team effectiveness. Organisations can employ Similarity-Attraction Theory to harness age diversity to enhance innovation. Organisations can foster diverse workplace relationships across different age groups to enhance innovation and creativity. This can be achieved by promoting the exploration of similarities, cross-generational learning, and different perspectives (Dietz & Fasbender, 2022; Jabeen et al., 2021).

Third, socio-emotional selectivity theory proposes that the hierarchy of outcomes shifts with age and the passage of time. Initially, goals that focus on exploration are prioritized because of the extensive time frames involved. As people age, they prioritise emotionally significant jobs because of limited time availability. The theory posits that one's impression of their lifespan has a more significant impact on their motivation and aspirations than their actual age (Carstensen & Hershfield, 2021). As individuals grow older, they tend to prioritise activities and interactions that hold emotional significance, rather than focusing on acquiring new skills or abilities. Organisations can utilise this principle to foster innovation by embracing age diversity. Organisations can promote collaboration and inclusivity by embracing age diversity and acknowledging the strengths and perspectives of older workers. Elderly employees provide valuable perspectives and recommendations based on extensive experience and expertise. Enhancing emotional satisfaction and establishing significant connections can enhance teamwork, collaboration, and creativity within an organisation, thus resulting in innovation. The diverse perspectives and extensive experiences of older employees can disrupt conventional thinking and enhance innovative approaches to problem-solving and novel solutions.

Additionally, the inclusion of socio-emotional selectivity and age diversity in the workforce can effectively harness the collective expertise and creativity of employees, hence enhancing innovation and productivity (Appelbaum, Wenger, Buitrago, et al., 2016b, 2016a; Appelbaum, Wenger, Pachon, et al., 2016). The fourth one is Upper Echelon Theory. According to the theory, leaders' cognitions, values, and experiences significantly shape organizational decisions and outcomes. This emphasizes the influential role of leaders in shaping organizations and highlights how executive characteristics impact individuals' perceptions, decision-making, and actions, consequently influencing organizational outcomes (J. Chen & Liu, 2022). Leaders' beliefs, expertise, and experiences are pivotal in determining organizational outcomes. This suggests that leaders from different age groups can bring fresh perspectives, experiences, and ideas to drive innovation.

Organizational diversity can foster innovation and new approaches (Khidmat et al., 2020). Leaders' perceptions and behaviours are influenced by their personal experiences. The presence of age diversity can stimulate creativity by introducing new ideas and alternative approaches. Younger members can contribute innovative ideas and a willingness to take risks, while older members can offer wisdom and expertise. An organization's diverse age range can improve performance and competitiveness by promoting creativity and innovation (Schumann et al., 2023). This highlights the impact of leaders on the development of organisational strategy and performance.

Lastly, innovation diffusion theory posits that age diversity within a team can positively or negatively affect the team's outcomes. The relationship between age diversity and team outcomes has been subject to inconsistent investigation, resulting in an ambiguous understanding of whether it yields positive or harmful effects, or if there is any connection. The presence of individuals of different ages within a team might result in the categorization of team members based on their age, which in turn can restrict the range of perspectives and expertise relating to the tasks at hand. Age diversity can facilitate the collaboration of team members with distinct organisational, job, or lifespan proficiencies, hence fostering the generation of innovative solutions (Rahmi et al., 2019).

The collective assumptions posited by these theories influence the process and outcome of both explorative and exploitative innovation. According to social identity theory, individuals of diverse ages may classify their colleagues into separate social groups, perhaps amplifying differences, also known as intergroup accentuation (Rothermund & Deutsch, 2023). In line with similarity attraction theory, establishing robust connections depends on cultivating interpersonal attraction, which is impeded by a focus on distinctive characteristics. Despite their age differences, co-workers may have certain traits that foster innovation. In order to address the effects of the strong appeal of technology on creativity, academics often rely on interpersonal attraction theory and the perspective of relationship management (Shen et al., 2019). Simultaneously, socio-emotional selectivity theory proposes that people's age and perception of future time influence their social and emotional goals. Meanwhile, the Upper Echelons theory suggests that a company's strategic results and organizational performance can be more effectively comprehended and anticipated by considering distinct characteristics, such as the age of its senior management. Finally, innovation diffusion theory can show how individuals from various age groups utilize technology, thus promoting explorative and exploitative innovation. There are limited numbers of studies that are linked to an inclination of age diversity towards explorative and exploitative innovation in organizations, which is necessary for the development of new relationships. In the

following sections, we will present previous findings relevant to age diversity, explorative and exploitative innovation, and align them with the predictions of the five theories outlined here.

6. Research Question 2: What are the key variables contributing to age diversity in the organization?

In line with work on the development of age diversity at organizations to promote and enhance explorative and exploitative innovation (Rudolph & Zacher, 2022), we have identified two categories of antecedents for age diversity dimensions, namely interpersonal and intrapersonal level (Dietz & Fasbender, 2022).

Interpersonal antecedents include characteristics connected to employees. We identified the following age-related, interpersonal characteristics as important to age-related motivation (growth, generativists, future time perspective), age-related attitude (Stereotype and meta-stereotype), and age-related identity (Relational, social, and Plurality) and intergenerational interaction. In the context of intrapersonal level dimensions of age diversity to foster innovation, we found the following antecedents: knowledge and experience, communication and collaboration, risk tolerance, and adaptability and flexibility.

6.1 Age-related motivation

The Individual antecedents of age diversity to foster explorative and exploitative innovation include age-related motivational aspects. The various contributing variables to age diversity that promote innovation may encompass distinct perspectives, experiences, and approaches for addressing challenges. Age-related motivating factors may encompass inner motivators, such as personal growth, and extrinsic motivators, such as recognition (Heimonen, 2013). Research relying on socio-emotional selectivity theory repeatedly shows that individuals who perceive time as abundant are more inclined to establish and strive towards objectives associated with personal growth (Fasbender et al., 2021). These objectives may encompass acquiring knowledge and pursuing novel experiences, resulting in explorative and exploitative innovation. Additionally, utilizing socio-emotional selectivity theory (Perry et al., 2016), which provides a life-span development perspective, facilitates the comprehension of age-related differences in management motivations. This theory posits that individuals' social objectives and behavioral patterns are significantly shaped by their subjective perception of their remaining lifespan. It can be thus argued that their perception of time may change, leading them to emphasise generativity (the act of caring for and fostering future generations) over their personal development. Due to this shift in mindset, innovation methods may transition from being focused on development to being more focused on explorative (generativity-oriented) and exploitative (development-oriented) innovation.

Furthermore, age-related motivation is also associated with leadership. Organisational practitioners can assist leaders in developing a greater understanding of how their age influences their motivations. They can also help leaders reinforce their beliefs about having a lasting impact, especially as they age. Companies can assist leaders by allocating dedicated time to work on "challenging projects" and emphasising the positive impact that leaders have made on the firm and its employees. Organizations can also enhance the possibility of senior leaders mentoring junior staff or acting as brand champions (Zacher et al., 2011). Integrating explorative and exploitative innovation into their activities helps strengthen leaders' belief in their lasting impact and their capacity to maintain effective leadership behaviours as they age. By integrating these elements, leaders are inclined to undertake daring endeavours and gain insights from their errors, enhancing their capacity to adjust to evolving situations.

6.2 Age-related identity

Gerhardt et al. (2022) suggest that age-diverse teams are valuable because they bring together people with complementary abilities and skills. This phenomenon has arisen due to the increasing dependence of individuals on technology in several domains of their lives, ranging from work to social connections. The theory states that in settings with a high level of age diversity, people are more likely to be biased against those of different generations because they are more likely to be self-categorized and identify with their age group (Bellotti et al., 2022).

Furthermore, two types of identities are essential to understanding and managing diversity within various social and organizational contexts: dyadic (relational) identities are specific to individual relationships or interactions, while social identities are associated with larger collective groups or communities (Clair et al., 2005). Similarly, by building on social identity theory, research on cultural diversity at work shows that gap bridging behaviors, which aim at facilitating and enhancing socio-emotional collaboration in diverse teams, are connected to cultural identity plurality (Backmann et al., 2020). This is aligned with the concept of identities and identification (Clair et al., 2018), which is closely linked to the antecedent of enhancing explorative and exploitative innovation via age diversity. For instance, according to social identity theory, the feeling of being part of a specific department at work can be strengthened by the perceived excellence of one's professional connections established through technology. This idea emphasizes the significance of intergenerational collaboration and recognizing the valuable contributions of individuals of all age groups. An individual's openness to novel ideas and ability to generate original ideas, influenced by factors such as their perception of their age-related self-identity and affiliation with social groupings, can be affected. Research has underlined the importance of treating employees equally, regardless of their age, to promote notions of justice and foster social work identities across multiple generations. The research of workplace dynamics and employee interactions can be effectively conducted using the Social Identity Theory paradigm, which examines the impact of different generations on these aspects. Relational and age-related social identities can significantly influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors towards innovation. This all-age identity is characterized by the simultaneous experience and display of emotions and behaviors that might stereotype-typically be attributed to different age groups (Dietz & Fasbender, 2022). Additionally, research has indicated that the relationship between employees of different ages might impact these identities (Dietz & Fasbender, 2022). An inclusive and collaborative work environment can be fostered by cultivating a shared organizational identity that transcends age differences, wherein employees of all age groups collaborate harmoniously towards a common objective. Individuals across different age groups may possess varying levels of technology ease and familiarity, which can subsequently impact their approach towards innovation and their social perception within the organization (Nam, 2013). These findings may be transferred to an age diversity context, as gap bridging behaviours to span bridges between age diverse individuals through shared identity may provide a fertile ground for developing close relationships. According to social identity theory, a "younger" and "older" set of employees could emerge in a company because people tend to classify themselves and others into pre-existing categories. Furthermore, the convergence of technology use among workers of various age groups impacts social identity in the organization and the acceptance of explorative and exploitative innovation. This may have an impact on the dynamics and outcomes of the organization.

6.3 Age-related attitude

In exploring the impact of age diversity on explorative and exploitative innovation, it is crucial to consider the attitudes held toward different age groups and how these attitudes may influence intergenerational collaboration. Just as Wilk & Makarius (2015) found that demographic dissimilarity in voluntary friendships outside the work context shapes preferences in workplace friendships, it is plausible that similar patterns could influence collaborative innovation efforts. Research on cultural diversity also emphasizes prior attitudes' role in forming intercultural relationships at work (Vassou et al., 2017). This implies that pre-existing positive or negative attitudes toward specific age groups could significantly impact the dynamics of collaboration and knowledge sharing in the context of explorative and exploitative innovation. For instance, age-based stereotypes and meta-stereotypes may influence how individuals from different age groups perceive and engage with each other in innovation tasks. Empirical evidence, such as Cadieux et al. (2019), showing that stereotypes held by young individuals about older adults significantly predicted their general attitudes toward older adults as a group, serves as a reminder of the potential influence of preconceived notions on intergenerational collaboration. In particular, establishing inclusive perceptions and positive attitudes toward out-groups at work has been linked to more effective collaboration and communication, drawing parallels to the potential impact of age-related attitudes on innovation dynamics. Given the influence of social norms, expectations, and intergroup dynamics, Age diversity could pose opportunities and challenges for explorative and exploitative innovation efforts within an organization.

6.4 Intergeneration interactions

The organisation, which implements intergenerational management and age management practices, will be able to effectively attract and retain highly skilled employees (Košir & Šoba, 2016). Age management encompasses a comprehensive approach that considers all aspects of individuals' lives, including different generations and stages of life (Schroder et al., 2013). The increased proportion of elderly employees in the workforce will lead to a broader range of generations in organisational workforces compared to what has been observed recently (Košir & Šoba, 2016). In order to foster a culture of inclusivity and advance age diversity, it is imperative to promote intergenerational relationships actively. This can be achieved through a comprehensive and ongoing process that facilitates stronger connections between individuals at various life stages and age groups (Lazazzara & Bombelli, 2011; Loth & Silveira, 2014). Walker (2005), in turn, outlines various age management strategies, including career development, ongoing training, flexible scheduling, multi-generational teams, job redesign, ergonomics, health promotion, combating age bias, and fostering intergenerational collaboration.

Employees from many age groups within the company are crucial for effective intergenerational and age management (Košir & Šoba, 2016). Moreover, technological innovation is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses the involvement and interactions of persons from many generations, thus posing challenges to the transfer of knowledge and coherence between different age groups. Consequently, effectively handling age variety to facilitate this innovation has become progressively crucial (Mothe & Nguyen-Thi, 2021). In other words, the development, transmission, and assimilation of different skills and information throughout generations contribute to improving problem-solving methods and promoting new endeavours. Age diversity can generate distinct knowledge pools that are

distinctive to different age groups, resulting in synergistic effects (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007) as employees of varying ages possess unique expertise, comprehension, and perspectives regarding technology and emerging trends (Mothe & Nguyen-Thi, 2021). Various factors influence the propensity for intergenerational cooperation among various generations. Some examples of important qualities include loyalty, work ethic, cultural understanding, practical communication skills, change management abilities, autonomy and independence, problem-solving skills, and strong values (Košir & Šoba, 2016).

Our findings were supported by a prior study that found that employees' team choices indicated the perceived advantage of working together across different generations. To promote collaboration between different age groups, firms must know the importance of knowledge management and its various processes, including knowledge collection, utilisation, transfer, and storage. However, they can unknowingly exacerbate the age discrimination in technology, which has consequences for the unity and harmony among different age groups (Behaghel et al., 2014), limiting the innovation performance. Intergenerational interactions have a crucial role in shaping the strategic direction of organisations, especially for innovation-focused firms that aim to integrate diverse knowledge bases (Clercq & Belausteguigoitia, 2015). Intergenerational strategy involvement can enhance the drive for innovation in family firms. The collaboration of family members from multiple generations in strategic decision-making can foster a continuous process of re-evaluating perspectives and uncovering novel pathways for innovation, owing to their extensive expertise and diverse viewpoints. This increases the likelihood of pursuing new goals and enhances the perception that they are achievable. An instance of this is a hotel franchise managed by a Mexican family. Although the initial generation leveraged the family's renown in Mexico, the subsequent generation aimed to tap into Spain as a promising market for expansion. After extensive discussions between the two generations, the organisation combined the two techniques into a single purpose focusing on innovation. Their objective was to establish a strong presence in the global market by forging a strategic alliance with a foreign hotel conglomerate.

Thus, Clercq & Belausteguigoitia (2015) identified a positive relationship between intergenerational strategy involvement and firms' innovation pursuits. By engaging individuals from many generations in developing strategies, firms can cultivate a wide range of specialised knowledge and skills. This diversity enables them to explore more opportunities for innovation. This enhances their trust in the viability of innovative endeavours and motivates them to pursue their innovative objectives. The participation of many generations in strategic decision-making can yield advantages. However, various impediments have the potential to disrupt this connection. Insufficient participation in intergenerational strategy can decrease the motivation of individual members to pursue innovation, as they perceive limited options outside their current activity. The nature of relationships between individual members of different generations is another influential aspect in determining the effectiveness of an intergenerational strategy in promoting creativity. This includes factors such as various approaches to handling conflicts and the distinctive attributes of social capital (Clercq & Belausteguigoitia, 2015).

The most significant problem for organisations is effectively managing change and innovation within the context of ongoing intergenerational interaction. The succession effect demonstrates that the increased innovation observed in subsequent generations of enterprises is attributed to the successors' abilities and the accumulation of capabilities through

intergenerational interaction (Dieleman, 2019). In addition, Intergenerational coexistence facilitates proactive succession management by including descendants at an early stage, fostering their personal growth, and providing long-term mentoring.

6.5 Knowledge and experience

Knowledge and experiences are crucial beyond the individual level, facilitating personal development, innovation, adaptation, and collaboration. The closely linked age diversity and intrapersonal experiences and knowledge (Lewis, 2016; Collins et al., 2024) are significant to this purpose. Intrapersonal antecedents of age diversity refer to an individual's experiences and education. Innovation within an organization hinges on comprehensively considering how experience and education contribute to intrapersonal antecedents of age diversity. By recognizing and leveraging diverse experiences and educational backgrounds, companies can effectively harness the following benefits:

Utilization of Past Experiences – Drawing from the Upper Echelons Theory by Hambrick & Mason (1984), individuals bring their prior experiences and expectations to bear in processing information effectively, thereby conserving cognitive resources.

Enhanced Receptiveness to New Experiences – individuals with significant intrapersonal age diversity demonstrate a heightened openness to new experiences, countering the narrow-mindedness often observed in executives with limited educational backgrounds (Cannella et al., 2008; Syed et al., 2021).

Promotion of Inclusiveness - High intrapersonal age diversity in individuals correlates with a greater inclination to demonstrate inclusiveness, thus providing equal access to decision-making, resources, and advancement opportunities due to shared functional experiences with team members (Martins, 2020).

Enhanced Task Mental Models - Shared functional experiences among executives lead to a more remarkable similarity in Top Management Team (TMT) task mental models, facilitating better anticipation of each other's behavior during challenging strategy formulation discussions.

Strengthened Team Connections - Common experiences among team members foster stronger connections within the team, creating a more unified and connected workforce.

Effective Communication - Executives with diverse functional backgrounds can effectively communicate different perspectives in a manner that is easily understood by others, thereby enhancing overall team communication (Hambrick & Mason, 1984).

Balancing Functional Variety - While high intrapersonal functional variety can lead to homogeneity within teams, excessive everyday experiences may hinder effective dispute resolution and limit access to fresh information, explanations, and coping strategies, reducing decision effectiveness.

Influence on Team Efficacy - Team efficacy, primarily influenced by first-hand experiences according to Bandura (2012), is crucial for a team's belief in its capability to achieve tasks effectively. Successful experiences boost team efficacy, while repeated failures may diminish it.

Adaptability to External Threats - Top Management Teams led by individuals with varying levels of functional experience exhibit different adaptability traits towards external threats; those led by individuals with limited experience may excel in severe dangers, whereas those led by experienced individuals may be more adaptive in handling mild threats.

Additionally, diverse educational backgrounds among team members introduce varied perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. At the same time, experience in different industries or sectors can bring innovative practices and strategies to the organization. Continuous learning and development opportunities based on diverse experiences foster a culture of innovation and adaptability. Implementing mentorship programs that pair individuals with varying experience levels can promote knowledge sharing and creativity within teams. Furthermore, encouraging cross-functional collaboration leverages diverse experiences to drive innovation and enhance decision-making processes (Ma et al., 2021).

6.6 Communication and collaboration

Effective communication and teamwork are essential for promoting innovation, particularly within diverse teams in the workplace. Research on communication and collaboration in the light of explorative innovation has highlighted the knowledge management exchange, which includes technical and technological information exchange as a high-quality form of communication and collaboration at work, and most importantly, intrapersonal antecedents of an age-diverse workplace to foster explorative and exploitative innovation (Karamanos, 2015). In contrast to these findings, communication and collaboration are not necessarily bound to physical closeness (Islam & Babgi, 2023).

Besides this, Sias et al. (2012) observed that age diversity in an organization can have different communication and collaboration methods, such that the younger generation is more inclined towards technology for communication than physical communication. Young individuals use technology for communication and collaboration, and perceive it as a higher quality tactic than older individuals. This line is consistent with Yang & Mishra (2018), who indicated the positive relationship between technology usage at work by each individual and high-quality work. However, younger and older employees have different preferences regarding their communication and collaboration methods (Sias et al., 2012). This could hinder the promotion of age diversity, particularly in organisations utilizing communication platforms favoured by specific age demographics (Dietz & Fasbender, 2022). Thus, it is important to reduce the consideration of personal benefit or comfort zone due to each individual's emotional meaningfulness, which may hinder organizational communication and collaboration. This is consistent with socio-emotional selectivity theory (Carstensen et al., 2003). Thus, Technology can enhance communication and collaboration among people of different ages to promote innovation by offering advanced communication channels beyond physical distance. Studies have demonstrated that successful communication and collaboration are crucial for fostering innovation, especially in diverse working teams. Technology-mediated communication, such as digital platforms and mobile devices, can facilitate various tasks such as communication, interaction, cooperation, information exchange, and resource sharing (Elena-Ancuta et al., 2020). This aligns with research indicating that an individual's use of technology in the workplace is associated with producing high-quality work (Yang & Mishra, 2018). Technology can aid communication and teamwork, but it does not entirely replace the necessity of in-person engagement. The socio-emotional selectivity theory proposes that people may prefer different communication and collaboration methods, which could impede the promotion of age diversity in organisations that predominantly use platforms preferred by specific age groups (Sias et al., 2012).

Ultimately, technology can effectively facilitate communication and teamwork in the

workplace. It is crucial to consider the varied preferences of different age groups and to utilise technology to encourage inclusivity and creativity among all age groups.

6.7 Risk tolerance

On a certain level, research has highlighted the role of risk tolerance as one of the antecedents of age diversity that can foster innovation in the organization. Supported by the evidence of Xia et al. (2022), who stated that age is a crucial background factor for predicting management actions (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Both older and younger managers can contribute positively to corporate innovation. Fransson & Gärling's (1999) famous "age hypothesis" suggests that younger generations are more inclined to focus on innovation. Conversely, literature suggests that older individuals tend to be more risk-tolerant than younger individuals. Buccioli & Miniaci (2011) discovered that advancing in age correlates with decreased risk tolerance. This study suggests that companies with board members of diverse ages are better knowledgeable about innovation practices, making them more inclined to invest in innovation initiatives (Xia et al., 2022). Furthermore, Saeed et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of age diversity on innovation and discussed risk tolerance. Age diversity is correlated with beneficial outcomes for the firm. Age diversity is positively correlated with both the intensity and scope of innovation. Age diversity can enhance innovation by providing valuable solutions and advantages (Galia, 2013).

When individuals inside an organisation are inclined to take risks, it can result in chaos as they may feel empowered to follow their ideas, even if they are not in line with the organization's objectives and vision. When employees perceive a lack of support for their ideas from the company, it can result in dissatisfaction and inaction (Tofel, 2024). On the other hand, risk-averse organisations may reduce their risk tolerance, focus on their core competencies, and take shortcuts to prevent short-term failures. However, the low probability of execution can lead to a lack of new and transformative ideas (Clarke, 2021). This shows that risk tolerance can be theorized as a driver to influence innovation through the relation between an age-diverse individual (Khazanchi et al., 2018).

6.8 Adaptability and flexibility

Adaptability, demonstrated by an individual's ability to adjust to new situations and environments, is a key competency that fosters innovation (Loughlin & Priyadarshini, 2021). In the context of age diversity, employees of different age groups bring unique perspectives and experiences. By being adaptable, individuals can embrace these diverse viewpoints, leading to a rich exchange of ideas and innovative solutions within the organization. Conversely, flexibility allows organizations to pivot their strategies, processes, and products in alignment with market demands. This adaptability to changing market conditions is essential for leveraging the diverse skills and knowledge of employees of different ages. By encouraging flexibility in work styles and approaches, organizations can create an environment where age diversity is acknowledged and celebrated for its potential to drive innovation.

Flexibility refers to adjusting and adapting to changing circumstances and demands. In the context of age diversity, organizations that embrace flexibility create an environment that accommodates older workers' diverse needs and preferences. This can include flexible work arrangements, such as part-time or remote work options, to allow older workers to balance their personal and professional responsibilities effectively. Organizations can attract and retain older workers by providing flexibility, leading to a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

Adaptability refers to the capacity to respond and adjust to new situations and challenges. In the context of age diversity, organizations that promote adaptability recognize and value the unique skills, experiences, and perspectives that older workers bring. This can involve creating opportunities for older workers to continuously learn and develop new skills, providing training and mentoring programs, and offering career development opportunities. By fostering adaptability, organizations can tap into the wealth of knowledge and expertise that older workers possess, leading to increased innovation and productivity (Sousa et al., 2021; Syed et al., 2022).

7. Research Question 3: When individuals from diverse age groups converge, what specific occurrences transpire, and how does this subsequently foster both explorative and exploitative innovation?

Understanding how individuals behave in varied age groups can promote explorative and exploitative innovation. The process comprises many internal elements linked to an individual's perception of age diversity or the promotion of age diversity. This section elaborates on how age diversity perception in the workplace converges and transpires into consequences, specifically explorative and exploitative innovation.

7.1 Inclusive leadership

In recent research, scholars have emphasized the transformative impact of inclusive leadership, particularly in fostering innovation. Jin et al. (2017) highlight the significance of inclusive leadership, stressing its positive effects on work group performance and its role in empowering followers, thus promoting age diversity for fostering explorative and exploitative innovation through visible commitment from leadership. Reinforcing this notion, Carmeli et al. (2010) present a comprehensive view of inclusive leadership, emphasizing attributes such as openness, accessibility, and availability in leader-follower interactions. Nishii & Mayer (2009) further support this stance, proposing that inclusive leadership, by allowing greater discretion, influences followers' creativity and innovation, while creating stronger resistance against employee turnover when coupled with high levels of demographic diversity. Inclusive leadership is seen as instrumental within diverse organizational environments, as it provides credible traction for managing diversity globally. This underscores the need for leaders to embody inclusive leadership by addressing the unique needs of each follower, regardless of their backgrounds. Overall, these findings highlight the pivotal role of inclusive leadership in redefining demographic differences as catalysts for organizational progress and innovation.

Furthermore, as Nielsen et al. (2010) discussed, leader humility and its association with positive traits such as self-awareness and empathy play a crucial role in fostering diversity and inclusivity. Leaders with humility are likely to demonstrate a high awareness of others, recognizing and appreciating the unique strengths of their team members, thereby fostering innovation through age diversity. The relationship between leader pro-diversity beliefs, humility, and cognitive complexity further underlines the contribution of leader humility to inclusive leader behaviors, which ultimately allow for diverse contributions and full participation from group members. Inclusive leadership is also tied to humility, as leader humility may increase the likelihood of engaging in inclusive leadership, positively welcoming others, and appreciating team members' unique strengths. Contextual influences from the members themselves, such as their pro-diversity beliefs and humility, could bolster the effect of a leader's inclusive behaviours, emphasizing the cascading effects of inclusive leadership within an organization.

Moreover, embracing diversity and demonstrating an interest in learning is crucial for

leaders of diverse and inclusive organizations, as it encourages authenticity in others and fosters inclusion of all ages, allowing for innovation. Additionally, fostering curiosity about others and incorporating cultural intelligence from leadership is essential for valuing uniqueness and encouraging diverse contributions from all age groups, leading to innovation through various skills and perspectives. Also, the active engagement of leaders in inclusive leadership practices, which entail being attuned to the individual needs of each follower and acknowledging their contributions regardless of their backgrounds, is pivotal in fostering an environment where all individuals feel valued and empowered (Bourke & Titus, 2020). Finally, effective collaboration, facilitated by inclusive leadership, fosters innovation within workgroups by encouraging cooperation across ages and enhancing both explorative and exploitative innovation.

The factors, such as visible commitment, humility, awareness of bias, cultural intelligence, effective collaboration, and empathy, can foster age diversity in the workplace. Promoting an inclusive and respectful environment, where young and older employees are valued and their perspectives are heard, can encourage innovative thinking and collaboration. A visible commitment to diversity and inclusion can help break down stereotypes and barriers between different age groups. At the same time, humility and awareness of bias can allow for open-mindedness and the recognition of diverse perspectives and ideas. Cultural intelligence and effective collaboration can lead to a better understanding and appreciation of different backgrounds and experiences, fostering creativity and innovation. Additionally, empathy and perspective taking can create a sense of personal connection and understanding between different age groups, allowing for a more inclusive and collaborative work environment that promotes innovation (Caver & Livers, 2021; Lee & Chung, 2022; Majczyk, 2022; Qu et al., 2024; Shore et al., 2018).

7.2 Inclusive culture

An important element in fostering age diversity within organizations is an inclusive culture. This inclusive culture encompasses factors that promote age diversity, such as an innovative culture mindset, collaboration, and engagement. An innovative culture mindset promotes innovation by creating an environment encouraging creativity, risk-taking, and collaboration. Empowering employees to think outside the box and share their ideas fosters a culture of innovation. Additionally, leadership support for innovation initiatives sends a clear message to employees that innovation is valued and encouraged, leading to the development of new products, processes, and solutions (S. A. Boehm et al., 2014; Del Mar Fuentes-Fuentes et al., 2023). Furthermore, a positive age-diversity climate within the organization, influenced by age-inclusive HR practices, can further promote innovation and collaboration. By valuing and embracing age diversity, employees are more likely to feel included and motivated to contribute innovative ideas, ultimately improving firm performance. Additionally, an innovative culture mindset can play a pivotal role in recruitment, emphasizing the importance of hiring individuals who are creative, open-minded, and willing to take risks, thus building a team that is primed for innovation and continuous improvement (Saqib & Khan, 2023). By fostering an environment that encourages creativity, risk-taking, and continuous improvement, organizations can inspire employees to develop innovative solutions to challenges and opportunities through collaboration and knowledge sharing (Teo et al., 2022).

7.3 Inclusive behavior

In the literature, authors also learn how to define, practice, and promote inclusive

organizational behavior. This includes showing mutual respect, social inclusion, being mindful of cultural differences, and making inclusivity an intentional habit. It is important for leaders to define and prioritize inclusive behavior and to empower employees to speak up about exclusion. This is consistent with findings of (Chen et al., 2023; Triana et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2023). In the context of age diversity in organizations, fostering inclusive behaviour is crucial for leveraging the potential of age diversity and driving innovation. The research study by Zhao et al. (2023) revealed that inclusive leadership stimulates collective thriving, promoting team proactivity. Additionally, team power distance negatively moderates the relationship between inclusive leadership and collective thriving and the indirect effect of inclusive leadership on team proactivity via collective thriving.

Furthermore, Chen et al. (2023) found that inclusive leadership positively affects collective behavior through the mediating mechanisms of group psychological safety and information elaboration. The study also suggested that the effect of inclusive leadership on collective voice behavior is more potent in groups with high faultiness.

Previous research has indicated that inclusive leadership creates an environment where team members feel valued and empowered, which is essential for age-diverse teams. In the context of age diversity, inclusive behavior encourages individuals from different age groups to contribute their unique insights, leading to a more dynamic and creative work environment. This is vital for innovation as it enables diverse perspectives to be integrated into problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability in the face of changing organizational needs (Triana et al., 2021).

Thus, fostering inclusive behavior, particularly inclusive leadership, is fundamental for organizations to embrace age diversity and drive innovation. By prioritizing inclusive behavior, organizations can tap into the collective knowledge, experiences, and perspectives of individuals from different age groups, ultimately enhancing organizational creativity and adaptability.

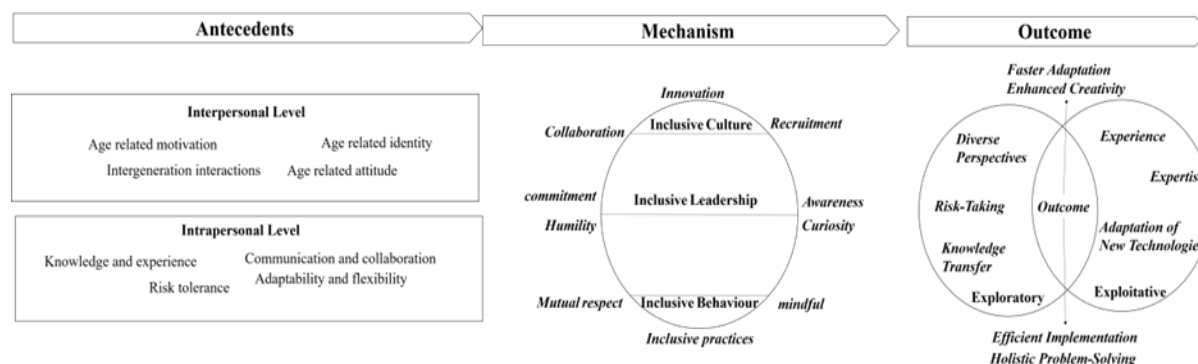
8. Research Question 4: What are the mechanisms and outcomes of promoting age diversity in explorative and exploitative innovation?

Organisations in today's dynamic business climate increasingly recognize diversity management as a crucial factor that drives innovation, growth, and success (Oliveira & Júnior, 2019). An extensive study has been conducted on gender, race, and cultural diversity, although age diversity is frequently neglected in exploitative and explorative innovation. Nevertheless, studies have demonstrated that including individuals from various age cohorts can significantly influence an organization's culture, innovation, and competitiveness (Khan et al., 2021). This article delineated the fundamental factors contributing to a heterogeneous workforce about age. These dynamics occur when individuals from various generations collaborate, strategies for fostering age variety in exploitative and explorative innovation, and the resulting consequences of these endeavours.

Organisations must prioritise attracting, retaining, and growing individuals from all age groups to foster diverse and inclusive work environments. Organisations can get advantages from a workforce that is more diverse in terms of age, as depicted in the conceptual framework.

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework



8.1 Source: Author's contribution

A varied team of individuals from various age groups is crucial in the modern corporate environment to enhance innovation, broaden prospects, and achieve success. Organizations can enhance age diversity in their workforce by prioritizing characteristics that foster mutual respect (Kunze et al., 2013), inclusive behavior (Saleem et al., 2021), mindfulness (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015), experience (Talavera et al., 2021), expertise (Ellwart et al., 2013), adaptation of new technology (Sung & Choi, 2021), and inclusive practices (Silverstein et al., 2022). Multiple age groups' convergence can facilitate explorative and exploitative innovation through fast execution and comprehensive problem-solving (Nagy et al., 2023).

Encouraging age variety can lead to different methods and consequences, such as faster adaptation and increased creativity (Tjimuku & Atiku, 2024), inclusive recruitment practices (Shum et al., 2023), collaboration (Schloegel et al., 2016), motivation based on age (Froidevaux et al., 2020), age-related identity (Benhayoun et al., 2020), intergenerational interactions (Rudolph & Zacher, 2015), age-related attitudes (Gellert & Schalk, 2012), diverse perspectives (Luksyte et al., 2022), inclusive leadership (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015), humility (Lavelock et al., 2014), awareness (Li et al., 2011), curiosity (Heyns & Kerr, 2018), risk-taking (Setiawan et al., 2023), knowledge and experience (Dietz et al., 2022), communication and collaboration (Froidevaux et al., 2020), adaptability and flexibility (Ortlieb & Sieben, 2013), and knowledge transfer (Burmeister et al., 2018). Leveraging the diverse skills, backgrounds, and perspectives of employees from different age cohorts can strengthen an organization's innovation and competitiveness. It can also improve performance, decision-making, problem-solving abilities, and the ability to react to changing market and industry trends.

Organizations should emphasize age diversity and inclusion in their plans, policies, and practices for managing diversity to foster an inclusive and diverse workplace culture (Ponting & Dillette, 2023). By adopting this strategy, companies can foster a more positive and supportive work environment, boost employee engagement, commitment, and efficiency, and effectively meet the needs and preferences of a diverse customer base.

9. Theoretical Contribution

The results indicate a substantial theoretical comprehension and significant elements that contribute to the presence of a diverse workforce by age. Furthermore, they provide valuable understanding of the collaboration of individuals of varying age groups in fostering innovative thinking and novel concepts. Works that delve into age diversity, explorative, and exploitative innovation often incorporate ideas from established theoretical frameworks. The Social Identity Theory elucidates how individuals of varying ages engage and comprehend (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Similarly, the Similarity Attraction Theory suggests that teams comprising individuals of

different age groups exhibit higher levels of productivity and innovation (Mannix & Neale, 2005). The Socio-Emotional Selectivity Theory highlights the influence of an individual's internal clock on their motivation and aspirations, mainly as they grow older (Stirzaker et al., 2019). Moreover, the Upper Echelon Theory highlights that leaders of different age groups can stimulate creativity by introducing fresh perspectives, attitudes, and ideas (Tian, 2022). The Innovation Diffusion Theory elucidates the impact of generational perspectives on teamwork, hence fostering the production of novel ideas (Lyytinen & Damsgaard, 2001).

The research reveals significant characteristics linked to the leading causes that contribute to age diversity. Age influences multiple elements that affect individuals and their interpersonal connections, such as motivation, identity, attitude, and intergenerational interactions. These attributes impact both explorative and exploitative forms of imaginative thinking in the workplace. Age-related motivation is positively associated with pursuing personal growth goals connected to exploration and exploitative innovation. Individuals who commonly report having abundant free time demonstrate a more pronounced correlation with this occurrence than others. The perspectives and approaches of persons from various generations towards the ageing process also impact their ability to collaborate and exchange information. The age-related identities that individuals attribute to themselves play a vital role in promoting inclusivity and cooperation among diverse age cohorts. Moreover, fostering an environment that encourages both explorative and exploitative innovation and the interaction between persons of different age groups greatly enhances the culture of ongoing progress and creativity.

In the context of diverse age groups coming together, innovation can thrive through two distinct approaches: explorative and exploitative. Crucial elements in this situation include a varied leadership team and a culture that promotes inclusivity. Inclusive leadership is essential for promoting creativity since it empowers followers, enhances group performance, and stimulates proactive collaboration. In order to foster innovation and accept diversity in the workplace, businesses must actively welcome and encourage individuals from all age groups and generations. Businesses might gain advantages by prioritizing diversity and inclusion and actively seeking input from individuals of all age groups. Consequently, the levels of creativity and adaptability are enhanced.

An essential aspect of comprehending the transformative impact of age diversity in the workplace is thoroughly analyzing the techniques and outcomes of promoting participation in innovation initiatives among individuals of various age groups. Organizations can foster explorative and exploitative innovation by promoting diverse perspectives, taking cautious risks, leveraging collective knowledge, and embracing emerging technologies. This facilitates the resolution of problems creatively, enables swift reactions, and enhances the efficiency of work execution.

The results underscore the importance of firms acknowledging and utilizing age diversity to promote creativity. By embracing diverse viewpoints, fostering inclusive leadership, and prioritizing an inclusive culture, companies can establish a conducive atmosphere that appreciates diversity and fosters collaboration among employees across all ages. Companies may enhance innovation and maintain a competitive advantage by using their employees' extensive knowledge and expertise.

10. Practical Implications

The present literature provides important insights on fostering age diversity in practice to enhance explorative and exploitative innovation.

Figures 3, 4, and 5 provide an overview of the practical implications that can be drawn from the information presented. Organizations can enhance the dissemination of information and facilitate its continued existence through a range of factors that anticipate it. To achieve this, Research highlights the importance of rewards, internal competition, and social status in influencing organizations' knowledge-sharing behaviors. This finding is also supported by social exchange theory.

In addition, the importance of age diversity in educational and employment settings is increasingly recognized. Training opportunities incorporating age diversity exercises, such as

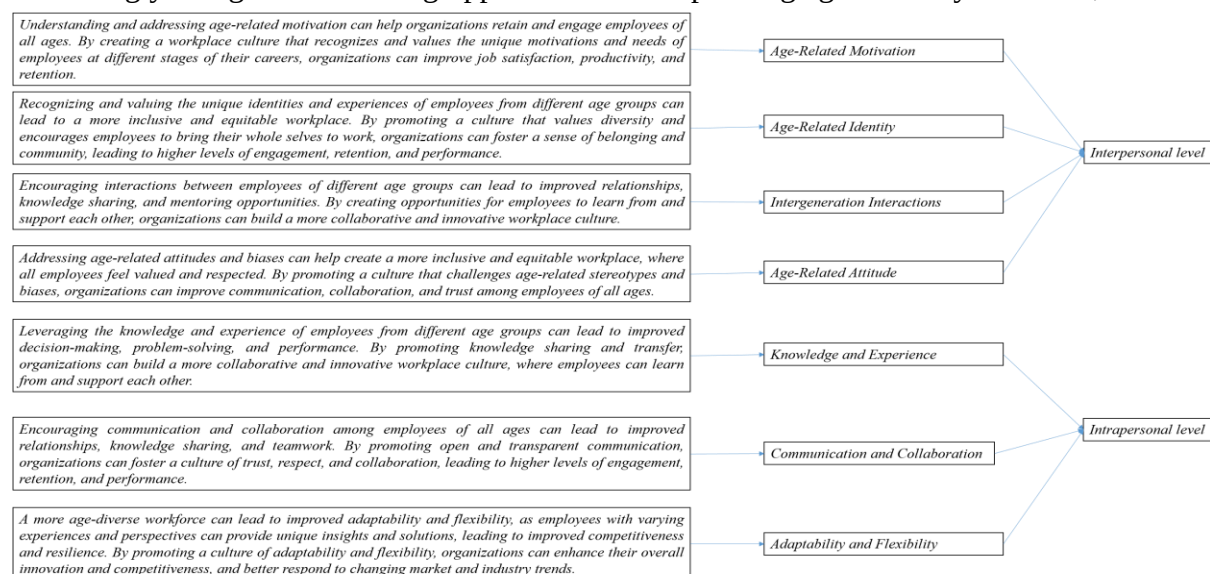


Figure 1 Interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions

communication, collaboration, adaptability, and flexibility, can enhance employee perspectives and outcomes. Research highlights the benefits and challenges of serving older adults, emphasizing the need for organizations to promote age diversity

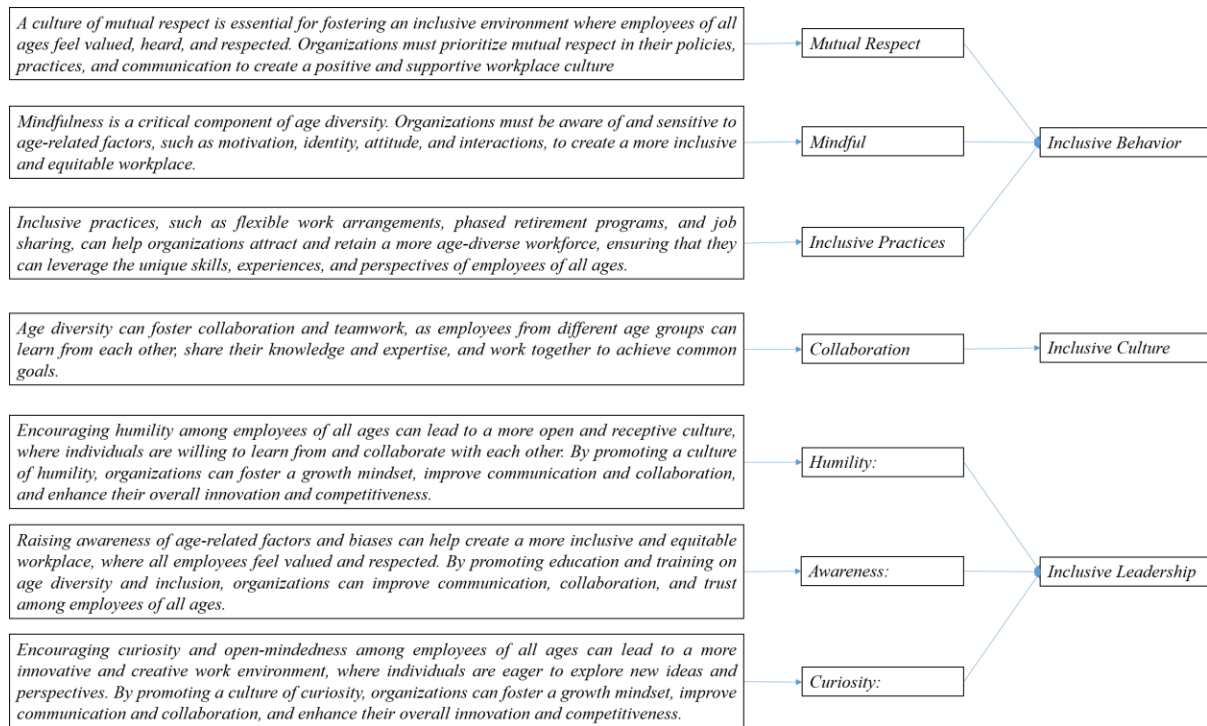


Figure 2 Mechanism involved in fostering Age diversity

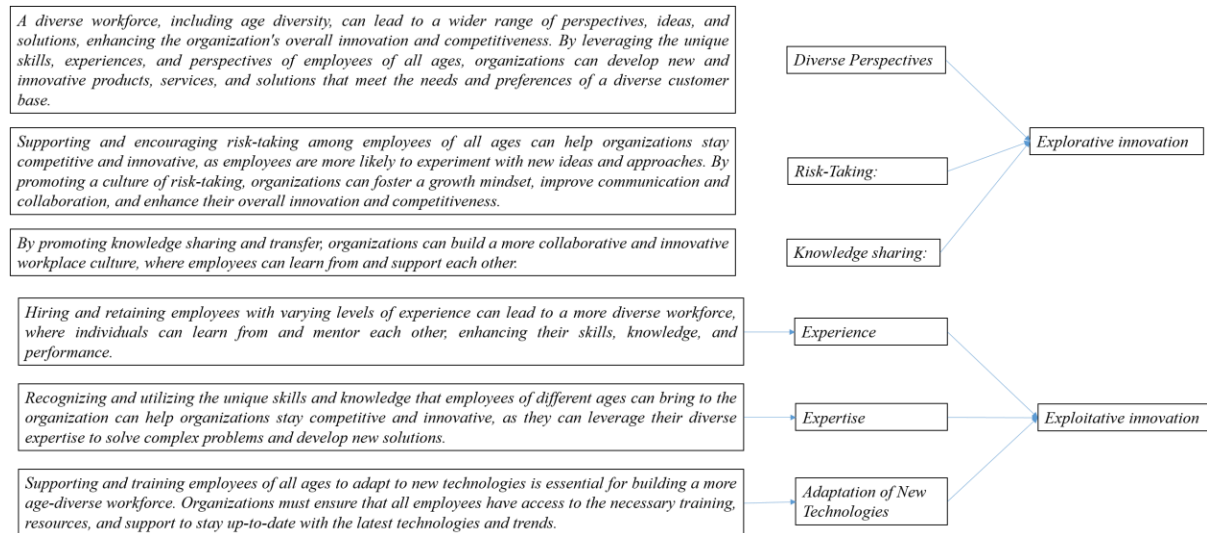


Figure 3 Outcomes of fostering age diversity

Furthermore, Organizations can foster the creation of risk tolerance to promote age diversity by encouraging a culture that values different perspectives and experiences in line with social exchange theory.

Similarly, organizations should enhance attitudes about age within the organization. For instance, one way to diminish prevailing negative age-related preconceptions is by providing diversity

training (Burnes et al., 2019) or promoting relationships between different age groups (Lytle & Levy, 2019). Moreover, organisations could enhance their age diversity atmosphere by ensuring equal treatment of all employees regardless of their age to foster a sense of fairness among different age groups (Rudolph & Zacher, 2020).

Moreover, establishing workplaces that balance culture and crowding among age-diverse colleagues can be a potential starting point for organizations to improve age-diverse contact quality. Research has shown that the type of organizational culture plays a significant role in managing generational diversity within a team (Ratajczak, 2020). For instance, organizations with a diverse perspective culture, which aligns with multigenerational management, may not always be the most effective at managing an age-diverse team. Furthermore, studies have highlighted the importance of workplace diversity in enhancing team dynamics and productivity. While diverse work environments can lead to benefits such as better productivity and higher profits, they also come with challenges like workplace discrimination and inter-functional coordination (Gomathy et al., 2023). Therefore, a framework for managing workplace diversity is crucial for organizations to leverage the advantages of a multicultural workforce effectively.

In addition, organisations should facilitate employees forming high-quality connections that align with their age-specific requirements for work relationships, as suggested by the SST. This can be accomplished casually by assigning shared work or formally by implementing age-diverse programs (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2012; Mao & Hsieh, 2012).

When individuals from diverse age groups converge, specific occurrences such as efficient implementation and holistic problem-solving can transpire. Efficient implementation refers to the ability to execute tasks and projects effectively by leveraging employees' diverse skills, experiences, and perspectives from different age groups. Holistic problem-solving involves approaching challenges from multiple angles and viewpoints, increasing the likelihood of finding innovative and comprehensive solutions.

We identify gaps in the existing literature and propose new lines of inquiry into diversity within the exploitative and exploratory innovation framework. We start with broad theoretical tendencies found in the literature and then narrow down to more targeted areas for further study. From the implications, we derived a set of research questions summarised in Table 2.

Table 2

List of research questions for future research implications

Research Gaps	Research Questions
Limited understanding of the impact of age diversity on team performance and innovation.	How does team age diversity impact team performance and innovation in different organizational contexts?
Lack of research on the role of organizational culture in promoting age diversity and inclusivity.	How does organizational culture influence the promotion and implementation of workplace age diversity and inclusion initiatives?
Insufficient research on the intersection of age with other diversity dimensions, such as gender, race, and ethnicity.	How does age diversity intersect with other diversity dimensions, such as gender, race, and ethnicity, to impact explorative and exploitative innovation?

Limited understanding of the role of leadership in promoting age diversity and inclusion.	How do leaders' attitudes, behaviors, and practices influence the promotion and implementation of age diversity and inclusivity initiatives in the workplace?
Insufficient research on the impact of age diversity on knowledge sharing and transfer.	How does age diversity impact knowledge sharing and transfer in the workplace? What strategies can organizations use to promote knowledge sharing and transfer across different age groups?
Limited understanding of the role of technology in promoting age diversity and inclusivity.	How can technology promote age diversity and inclusion in the workplace? What are the potential challenges and opportunities associated with using technology to promote age diversity and inclusion?
Insufficient research on the impact of age diversity on employee engagement, retention, and turnover.	How does age diversity impact employee engagement, retention, and turnover in the workplace? What strategies can organizations use to promote employee engagement, retention, and turnover across different age groups?
Limited understanding of the role of mentoring and coaching in promoting age diversity and inclusivity.	How can mentoring and coaching programs be designed and implemented to promote age diversity and inclusion in the workplace? What are the potential challenges and opportunities associated with mentoring and coaching to promote age diversity and inclusion?
Insufficient research on the impact of age diversity on organizational learning and development.	How does age diversity impact organizational learning and development? What strategies can organizations use to promote organizational learning and development across different age groups?

Limited understanding of the role of age diversity and inclusivity training in promoting exploratory and exploitative innovation.

How effective are age diversity and inclusivity in promoting exploratory and exploitative innovation in the workplace?

What are the potential challenges and opportunities associated with diversity and inclusion training to promote exploratory and exploitative innovation?

We define inclusivity in the organization as the environment of creating value through inclusive behavior, inclusive leadership, and inclusive culture. The author believes that Inclusiveness can be measured by inclusive culture, inclusive behavior, and inclusive leadership. Moreover, there is a need for further investigation and validation of the scale to prove this point, as there are no established items to measure and explain inclusivity. We end the argument with the possible framework for future research and with research gaps and research questions, inviting authors from different disciplines to contribute to the literature.

Table 3

Possibility of quantitative research for the future

Possible Independent Variables	Possible Mediators	Possible Moderators	Possible Dependent Variables
Age related motivation	Collaboration	Diverse Perspectives	Inclusivity
Age related identity	Commitment	Risk-Taking	Exploratory Innovation
Intergeneration interactions	Humility	Knowledge Transfer	Exploitative innovation
Age related attitude	Mutual respect	Experience	
Knowledge and experience	Recruitment	Expertise	
Risk tolerance	Awareness	Adaptation of New Technologies	
Communication and collaboration	Curiosity		
Adaptability and flexibility	Mindfulness		

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Chapter 2: Gendered Aging in Higher Education Institutions

Abstract

This study examines how age and gender intersect to shape academic professionals' experiences in higher education institutions (HEIs), emphasizing the challenges associated with gendered ageism. Drawing from Judith Butler's work, the study explores how institutional and cultural norms construct the 'ideal academic' at the intersection of gender, race, and age, typically envisioned as a middle-aged white man fully committed to work. Through a critical discourse analysis of interviews with academics at a public university in the United States, the study reveals that being an 'ideal academic' requires careful positioning. For women, this often means avoiding being perceived as students, as youth is associated with eroticism, while simultaneously resisting the perception of older women as 'soft' and lacking the intellectual authority expected in academia. The study concludes that these norms harm those who do not conform, resulting in 'impossible' academic lives.

Keywords: ageism, gender, Butler, higher education, discourse.

1. Introduction

Visitors to the University of Padua, one of the world's oldest universities, are typically guided by a local tour guide to see a statue of Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia in the university's hall. Elena Lucrezia belonged to one of the wealthiest Venetian families. While her name may not be widely known, she is considered the first woman in the world to graduate, achieving this milestone in 1678, several centuries after establishing the first universities.

A long time has passed since then, and in the past few decades, the demands of the post-industrial labor market and the student and feminist movements of '68 resulted in a transformation in both the size and composition of the academic environment. The expansion of higher education has led to shifts in the representation of gender, ethnicity, and social status. In particular, in education, the gender disparity has been reversed in most European and Anglo-Saxon nations.¹ However, universities largely remain a male-dominated workspace characterized by an ethos of machismo based on values such as assertiveness and competition. In such a context, women are still significantly less likely than men to attain full professorships or leadership positions (European Commission, 2019), more so if they belong to an ethnic minority group (Fox Tree & Vaid, 2022)

Prominent research on gender inequality in academia has revealed that gender inequalities exist in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across representation, pay (O'Connor & Irvine 2020), promotion, and workload (Probert, 2005). This literature has described gender inequality concerning the phenomena of “sex typing” (i.e., the employment of women in teaching and service positions that are rewarded and valued less; Baker, 2010), “leaky pipeline” (i.e. the decreasing presence of women in higher academic levels) and “glass ceiling” (i.e. the impossibility for women to reaching upper hierarchy levels) (see, e.g., Alfred 2011; Glazer-Raymo, 2001; Morley, 1994; Probert, 2005). It shows that women have to work harder and meet higher expectations, remain concentrated in the lower levels of the academic hierarchy, and frequently end up in unstable employment positions and lecturing and administrative posts, which decreases their opportunity for an academic career. This is even more the case for women of color who experience a more significant turnover and lower career achievement (Turner, González, and Wood 2008).

Structural impediments causing these phenomena are, amongst others, hiring, promotion, and assessment practices (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). These practices create a “chilly climate” (Nielsen, 2017), characterized by low levels of work satisfaction and unhappiness within their work environment. Women are dissatisfied with their short-term positions, lack standard support, feel isolated, and have difficulties balancing family and work (Benschop & Brouns, 2003).

The challenges experienced by women seem to evolve as they progress in their academic careers after graduation, suggesting that aging is also an important factor to consider when examining gender discrimination. Despite the growing attention on the phenomenon of ‘ageism’, defined as “the prejudice by one age group against another age group” (Butler, 1969, p. 243; Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018), how gender is implicated in this discriminatory process has mainly remained underexplored in organization studies.

¹ According to the European Commission (2019), women make up the majority of students in tertiary education, with 53% in the EU-28 and 59% in the United States.

The very little scholarly work that has examined the joint influence of gender and age indeed shows that women undergo the double jeopardy of age discrimination and gender bias (Riach et al., 2015; Fineman, 2011). Aging in academia for males and females has different connotations, with aging becoming a vulnerable process with more uncertainty for women. Moreover, as Duncan and Loretto (2004) observe, women are ‘never the right age’ at work, due to the impossibility of embodying the ageless, nubile subject. Considering the combined impact of gender and age on academic life, further investigation is needed on gender and aging in academia. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to this emerging debate by addressing the following research question: How is gendered aging experienced in higher education institutions (HEIs)? How do gender and age intersect to perpetuate discrimination? Do academic workers resist gendered ageism, and if so, how?

With this overarching aim, this study seeks to investigate the complex and diverse aspects of gendered aging, considering its difficulties, advantages, and tactics in the particular context of Higher Education Institutions. Considered as places of knowledge and forward-thinking, HEIs are filled with biases and stereotypes. In particular, institutional and cultural norms have traditionally envisioned and constructed the ‘ideal academic’ as a middle-aged white man fully committed to work. This study will examine how this normative ideal operates and its implications for those struggling to conform.

Empirically, this research will focus on interviews collected at an American public university with academic workers at different stages of their careers and lives. The result of the critical discourse analysis of their accounts will reveal how, for women, the dominant normative ideal of the academic worker often means envisioning strategies to avoid being perceived as students, as youth is associated with eroticism, while simultaneously resisting the perception of older women as ‘soft’ and lacking the intellectual authority expected in academia. Through these findings, the study contributes to the emerging body of literature on gendered aging (Goode & Bagilhole, 1998) by emphasizing how gendered ageism intersects with other dimensions of identity, such as race, and the ideal work identity associated with a given profession. This is particularly evident in the academic profession, which is historically linked to the association of intellectual work with masculinity and ageing.

The article is organized as follows. Section 2 offers a theorization of gendered ageism grounded in Butler’s work with a view to existing literature on this topic. Section 3 outlines our use of critical discourse analysis to uncover how dominant narratives, such as those surrounding the ideal academic worker, play out and are re-signified in the accounts of academics tasked with meeting such an ideal. The subsequent Section 4 presents the findings, exploring experiences of gendered ageism. The article concludes with contributions to existing knowledge on this topic.

2. On doing gendered aging

2.1 Bodies that matter

This study draws on Judith Butler’s work to explore gendered ageism in academia, focusing on how academic workers experience aging and how they respond to normative ideals about their profession at the intersection of age, race, and gender. In their earlier work, *Bodies That Matter*, Butler (1993) probes which bodies matter, which do not, and why. They invite us to consider the role of social norms in defining the value of bodies and their possibility to live livable lives. Bodies are indeed subject to norms of worth and visibility (Butler, 1993). An example of the operation of these norms is what Butler calls the “heterosexual matrix” (Butler,

2004b, p. 215). It is an organizational framework that supports a specific, accepted connection between sex, gender, and sexuality, that is, the idea that sexed bodies naturally result in a particular gendered identity and sexuality. To the contrary, Butler's idea of gender performativity (also discussed by Riach et al., 2016) suggests that gender is something we perform every day depending on society's expectations. The heterosexual matrix is thus what Butler means when they say that "the organization of gender comes to function as a presupposition about how the world is structured" (Tyler, 2019, p. 3). Everyone is constantly engaged in "doing" gender in line with the expected and assigned behaviors that are defined by society to gain social recognition.

Within this perspective, our bodies are permanently embedded and framed in broader power structures. As Butler explains: "Gender is constructed through relations of power, and specifically normative constraints that not only produce but also regulate various bodily beings" (Butler, 1993, p. 5). These constraints demand 'a daily mime' through repeated acts, constituting impossible ideals (Butler, 1995b, p. 142). Power dynamics of organizations, in turn, "manufacture and sustain" (Butler, 1995b, p. 142) these unachievable standards. Butler (1995a, p.42) underlines that the "organizing principles of material practices and institutional arrangements," inside institutions and practices, shape our sense of self, the "I," employing the structures and power dynamics.

Therefore, it is important to think critically about these social and organizational norms and the situations they come from because they shape how we act and our possibilities of living a livable life (Butler, 2005). Butler (1993) writes: "Sex is not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is; it is one of the norms by which the 'one' becomes viable at all" (p. 3). These norms are especially detrimental to those who fail to conform to them. The latter are considered 'object beings' whose bodies are 'unthinkable' and 'unlivable' because they lack intelligibility. In such cases, "their very humanness comes into question" (Butler, 1993, p. 8).

This study suggests that Butler's ideas help understand how aging, specifically gendered aging, is constituted and regulated in academic institutions. They can guide our exploration of how dominant discourses privilege certain bodies within the corridors of academia, with those that do not fit these normative ideals rendered invisible or unworthy (Butler, 1993). Aging bodies are indeed subject to the same regulatory gendering norms applied to all bodies, except that in the case of aging bodies, these norms are compounded by ageism. It is therefore important to explore whether and how a 'youth matrix' (the body is valued according to its closeness to youthfulness and vitality) is at play at universities and its implications for living a livable academic life.

2.2 Bodies that matter in academia: the ideal academic worker

Like other workplaces, the academic workplace is implicitly ageist and gendered. However, it presents some peculiarities that make gendered ageism particularly interesting to investigate in such a setting. This study suggests that HEIs are spaces where competing regulatory norms of gender and age operate.

As anticipated in the Introduction, universities have traditionally been masculine spaces due to the long-standing and deeply rooted binarist view that associate women with the body and physical labor (including reproductive work), while linking intellectual work – seen as the work of the mind, with masculinity and aging (Bourabain, 2021; Puwar, 2004). Within this framework, aging and knowledge were not seen as opposites but instead equated with wisdom, as studying and acquiring knowledge were practices requiring time.

This academic ideal has led to the scrutiny and marginalization of individuals, such as women and non-binary people, who have historically been valued for their association with youth and beauty rather than intellect. Women entering academia gradually had to navigate competing norms: on the one hand, the expectation to maintain their beauty and femininity indefinitely, and on the other, the ideal of the academic worker, whose worth was supposedly determined solely by intellectual ability.

As a result, women over the age of fifty, for instance, have often been expected to embody femininity in ways traditionally associated with youth, even when this becomes increasingly difficult (Probert, 2005). This creates tension in how individuals perceive their bodies and intellect, sometimes leading to marginalization. In the specific context of the United States, as elsewhere, these dynamics have been further exacerbated by the historical exclusion of racial minorities from intellectual work and the education system (Bell et al., 2019; Mirza, 2006). This reveals how it is not only about gender and age, but also about race, class, and several other social factors that intersect, creating even more complex layers of discrimination.

However, in recent decades, neoliberal norms' colonization of the education sector has reshaped academic ideals and behaviors (Rosa, 2022; Lund & Tienari, 2019), including age-related gender norms. The growing emphasis on productivity in academia has increasingly privileged youthful ideals. These regulatory norms dictate how bodies are valued, prioritizing conformity to ideals of productivity, vigor, and physical vitality, qualities often associated with youth. As a result, academia not only maintains a cultural preference for masculinity but also for youthful bodies that can keep pace with the ever-intensifying demands of 'corporate academia'. This has led to the erasure or sidelining of aging women, non-binary and trans individuals, as well as older men who are assumed to be less productive than their younger counterparts. Ageing bodies are increasingly viewed as 'less capable' or 'less competent' than their younger counterparts. Consequently, they are often cast to the periphery of academic discussion, writing, and presence.

In this evolving context, senior female and non-binary academics continue to be excluded from top levels in both the leadership and decision-making places within academia, creating a culture that is youth-centered. By privileging youthful, masculine bodies, the regulatory norms make the aging body invisible and undervalue the contributions that aging bodies make while strengthening broader male and age-based discrimination structures in society.

This study argues that Butler's ideas provide an opportunity to examine the norms contributing to gendered ageism and investigate whether and how these norms are resisted within universities, thus fostering a more inclusive and equitable academic environment. (Riach et al., 2014). We can envision significant change by understanding how dominant norms influence gendered ageism. It is a way to recognize and highlight the organization and resilience of individuals making their way through university life.

3. Methodology

This study focuses on an American public institution that has existed since 1908. This university has earned its reputation because of its vibrant campus life and extensive academic offerings. The university is home to more than 21,000 students, including undergraduates and graduates. It provides a well-rounded education in various disciplines, including business, education, the arts, and the sciences, to meet the needs of students with various interests and goals.

In the US education system, professional teachers serve 5-7 years, during which they are tested for their job productivity and research and evaluated for all their tasks, after which they are awarded tenure. This research took a closer look at the experiences of educators at this US university, focusing on how gender and age intersect in their work lives. The objective of the research was to know and understand the living experiences of educators going through the process of ageing, as well as to learn about whether and how they faced gender ageism in HEIs.

3.1 Data Collection

This analysis is part of a broader research project involving 40 participants of various ages, working in different academic fields and administrative roles. While the project included 40 interviews, this study focuses on a smaller sample of 25 academics (see Table 4), specifically to explore the issues of gendered ageism in relation to the normative ideals of academic workers.

After securing the ethical approval from the Institutional Review Boards (IRB), the participants were reached out to by email, and through a snowball method. The interviews were semi-structured, held both online and in person, according to each person's availability. This encouraged people to be candid about their experiences. Informed consent was also obtained from every interviewee. The conversations were recorded on a voice recorder or online on Zoom or Google Meet and then transcribed.

The structure of the comprehensive interviews can be categorized into three primary themes. At first, the participants were inquired about their academic status, including details about their recruitment process, type of contract, the hiring process, and the present stage of their academic or professional career. Second, the questions revolved around the nature of the work environment and respondents' interactions with significant colleagues and students as they aged. Respondents frequently used this as a starting point to share experiences of gendered ageism.

3.2 Empirical Material

The empirical material for this study is drawn from purposive sampling of 25 participants out of the broader pool of 40 interviews. This conscious selection was made because the focus was on academics specifically; therefore, the participants who were full-time administrators were excluded. The selected participants comprised a diverse population in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and ranks, ranging in age between 28 and 64 years. Among them were 5 Full Professors, 8 Assistant Professors, 3 Associate Professors, 1 professor who also served as a course coordinator, 3 Adjunct Professors, 1 Instructional Specialist, and 1 Instructor and Lab Stimulation Manager.

The interview process was designed to encourage participants to share their reflections and their professional experiences within HEI. The interview guide was developed following a comprehensive review of the literature on gendered ageism, career trajectories, and workplace dynamics. The structure of the interview revolved around three major thematic areas: Professional background, experiences of age and gender dynamics, and responses on discrimination. Participants were initially asked about their roles and responsibilities and the nature of their interaction, such as "how long have you been working in HEI?" The second part was more age-related stereotypes and discrimination questions, such as "In your experience, are there any age-related biases or stereotypes that affect how individuals are treated at your workplace? Finally, participants were asked about the intersection of age and gender through questions like, "Have you ever felt that age discrimination is also intertwined with gender?" The interviews were concluded with participants' recommendations and suggestions for improvement.

regarding institutional practices and policies.

3.3 Data Analysis

In the first stage, an inductive thematic analysis was conducted. The coding as well as the analysis was performed manually with no use of an analytical software. This allowed us to have in-depth engagement with the data an initial reading helped develop familiarity with the discursive patterns and word choices that emerged. A basic open coding process was applied, and descriptive labels were assigned, summarizing the primary issues discussed by the participants. The manual coding approach ensured the sensitivity to the subtle shifts in the language and the context of the participants while enabling a careful and detailed reading of the narratives. These initial codes were designed so that all the aspects of the communication were covered and no significant information should be missed. A second round of coding consisted of refining the codes and identifying clusters of similar codes. Through this process, the analysis focused on the codes that were primary elements of gendered ageing in HEIs, as communicated by the participants. Themes such as maternity, dress codes and teaching performances emerged as relevant topics for the participants (see table 5). These themes were extensively discussed to enhance the analytical rigor and then revisited in a subsequent phase. Although manual coding is more time-consuming, it has the flexibility that is needed to explore the data and read between the emerging themes.

In the early stages, the analysis was close to participants' descriptions and experiences however in the later stage it became evident that a thematic analysis is not sufficient to fully captivate the complexity of social constructs like power, identity or norms. Therefore, in the second stage the study moved to a Critical Discourse Analysis to better capture the performative mechanisms and discursive structures.

In the second stage, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was adopted to grasp the complexities of gendered ageism better. CDA is a qualitative approach that complements established social science methods in examining modern and social communication (Pešić 2022). Fairclough (2013) states that CDA examines explicitly the interplay between discourse and social factors, like power dynamics, ideologies, social and institutional identities, which in this case, turned out to be very useful. Instead of merely describing and dissecting the linguistic processes that are at play, CDA studies how language forms, sustains and transforms the social worlds and opinions that are in place. CDA involves analyses aimed at taking into consideration all of the specificities of language used in the text, including vocabulary, grammar and all other apparent rhetoric devices which reflect the authors' certain ideological position. CDA also looks at social factors in production of the text since language is used to produce social meanings.

Therefore, the analysis of the interviews focused on a) the choice of words, b) the assumptions in the text; and c) the macro narrative that the text reinforced or challenged. This analysis revealed that participants were positioning themselves in relation to the macro narratives and norms that define the characteristics of the ideal academic worker, which were also gendered and age-connotated.

Initially, the transcripts were examined with a focus on the research questions, without relying on specific theories. However, while applying CDA, Butler's ideas connected deeply with these emerging themes. Revisiting each participant's narrative, it became evident that their experiences with gendered ageing were tied to the materiality of their bodies. Moreover,

Butler's idea of performativity and that bodies are constantly shaped and constrained by societal norms became a guiding lens for understanding these experiences. Several participants described ways in which their bodies were scrutinized, that was whether through stereotypes about physical abilities or their being in their youth. This emphasis on the bodies existing within the power structures in HEIs formed a central theme in the interviews. Furthermore, not just their words, also their body language, their silences and hesitations during the interviews were revealing how the bodily expectations and perceptions play a powerful role in determining how individuals are valued and treated within the university, more specifically females. Hence, the participants' reflections on their bodies not only came out repeatedly but also are important for identity struggle, aligning with Butler's ideas. The following section 5 presents a selection of significant quotes from the interviews. Pseudonyms will be used throughout the analysis to protect the identity of all participants.

4. Embodying the 'ideal academic worker'

Through a critical discourse analysis of the interview transcripts, distinct types of positioning and experiences of academics have been identified in relation to the normative ideal of the academic worker. These positions involve differentiating themselves both from students—who are stereotypically perceived as young and inexperienced, and, in the case of female students, sometimes sexualized—while also avoiding being perceived as too old, a perception that, particularly for women, is often associated with a lack of authority.

The analysis also reveals how these norms are both partially internalized and partially resisted through bodywork. The sections critically examine how the normative ideal of the academic worker is simultaneously constructed, embodied, and resisted by the study's participants.

4.1 Not too young: Seen as a student

Several female educators expressed their ongoing struggle to be taken seriously as faculty members at the university. They said that despite being qualified and passionate about their area of research and teaching, they still encounter doubt from senior colleagues. During the interviews, they shared how, at times, their contributions were thought to be non-significant, they were judged on the basis of their age, assuming they lacked maturity and, in some cases, their authority was undermined. Hence, this theme highlights the disheartening barrier to these academics' full potential within HEIs showing how gendered ageism can deteriorate someone's career at an early stage. For instance, Alice, 52 years of age now, shared the following:

"I was small and young and I was always trying not to let people know how young I was so they would take me seriously. They were making me anxious."

Alice who is a seasoned faculty member with no less than two decades of experience and expertise in her field, talked about the challenges she faced being a young academic. These experiences are similar to the experiences of several young academics. Alice stated how she had to concentrate on ignoring the age-related biases and just focus on her work. This highlights the importance of age discrimination on young professionals, especially in academia, wherein establishing credibility is essential for career progression). Another conversation with Margret (34) highlights the efforts and time young professionals put in to be taken seriously:

“It took me a long, long time to be taken seriously...because I was just a student...people did not take me seriously. It took me a long, long time to be taken seriously...I absolutely would say All right, I call it discrimination...because people did not take me seriously.”

She also explained that transitioning from a student to an employee of the same university is not easy. When you are a student at the same place and then start working there, the mentors become colleagues, but they still look at you in the same way. This transition also comes with prejudices like young age and lack of expertise. A similar experience was shared by Meryl (36), who, reflecting on her career, shared:

“I think more of the issues happened when I first started working, especially because I was a student in the department that I was working in. So, some of my professors became my colleagues. And I was the youngest person by far. Working in my department, perhaps even in my college. So, I felt really insecure about my young age. And I think the first, you know, 3 or 4 years I was working here, I felt like I had to fight for people to take me seriously. Or to respect me, the full-time tenured faculty in particular. But I don't feel that way so much anymore. I think I've proven my work ability and they kinda trust me now.”

This quote explains how young academics feel that they have to constantly prove themselves and fight to be accepted or seen as equals. It also illustrates how multiple aspects of identity intersect, leading to discrimination. In this case, the participant specified that acceptance was especially challenging with reference to “tenured faculty,” highlighting how organizational position and contract type are also important aspects of these dynamics.

(Duncan and Loretto 2004) explain that young professionals, especially females under thirty years old, often get hit with negative vibes from colleagues who think they are not capable or trustworthy of doing a tough job. In the academic context, professionalism is often associated with age, leading to the perception that young people lack the seriousness required for professionalism.

The following quote by Julia (41) reflects a similar thought:

“Younger appearance led to a presumption of less seriousness about work.”

Despite their qualifications and professional status, individuals with youthful appearance often encounter a demeaning perception of their capabilities rooted in social biases. In the view of Scarlet (31), it is frustrating and unfair as looks should never overshadow experience, talent or skills. She explains:

“Being a younger faculty member, you are sometimes seen as a voice for the students. Because a lot of them are older, some see you as a challenge and sometimes you are not taken seriously. And people don't see you physically as a faculty member. It concerns the intersection of age and race, but I also think gender has a lot to do with that too. So being like a young black woman, I know

nobody on campus ever thinks I'm the professor."

This quote reveals how the "ideal" faculty member is associated with a certain age. The ideal faculty member should not be as young as the students but old enough to "pass" as a faculty member. Interestingly, students themselves are also considered an age-homogeneous group, defined as 'young,' thereby excluding the possibility of an "old" student. While talking to Scarlet, the intersectional perspective of ageism, racism and sexism was put in the forefront. This experience aligns with the concept that ageism rarely operates in isolation but intersects with other forms of prejudice like age and gender (Granleese and Sayer, 2006). A very interesting yet surprising point was raised by Diana (32) about how her youthful appearance often leads to assumptions about her work ethic.

"Repeated instances of usually like older folks asked how old are you...when did you get your PhD...I didn't like that...every single time...how could you be?...are you sure you're not a student?" & "Oh, you're just so young. Like, look at your face. You're so young."

She commented that people assume she is incapable of working simply because she is young. While recalling these experiences, she smiled, but her expression also revealed the pain she felt, highlighting how deeply these norms can affect young people. Not only do such assumptions undermine their self-esteem, but they also limit their opportunities for growth and advancement.

4.2 From sexualised objects to 'soft things'

This section discusses how female academics often feel their physical appearance is scrutinized, even in a context where 'intellectual work' is emphasized. These judgements on physical appearances were not only confined to younger women but they were expressed by older women as well. There were expectations for female academics about their attire and body language, and they felt the pressure to manage their physical appearance very carefully. Some participants also expressed that if they were dressed casually, they were considered unprofessional. This emphasis on visual presentation, intertwined with age and gender, reflected several circumstances in which women and their bodies become subject to scrutiny. For instance, Kathy (32) explained:

"I dress more conservatively... I always want to make sure they know I'm not their cool friend."

Kathy highlights a viewpoint related to the sexualizing of women's value in youth. She explained that there was a certain kind of tension/pressure on her to dress conservatively to be treated and respected as a teacher. By choosing to dress this certain way, she made sure there was a professional distance between the students and her and also a line of respect which should be there so that she doesn't seem to be available or approachable for the student at all times. This is a double standard and very frustrating for women. The participants shared that, just because they are young, they have to carefully manage how they are perceived and dressed, to meet society's expectations.

This is listed by them as one of the negative aspects of being ‘young, qualified and attractive.’ For them, being young is often equated to being sexually appealing (see also (Zulfiqar and Prasad, 2022)). This kind of myth is mostly perpetuated through broader social norms and reproduced through repetitive interpersonal interactions (Butler, 1993) that objectify women. Situations like these often have detrimental consequences like mental health issues and negative impact on self-esteem. For instance, Stella (31) shared the following:

[...] there are certain stereotypes of being black and a woman, there are certain stereotypes that exist for black women that don't exist for black men that don't exist for white women that don't exist for, please excuse me, other combinations of race. And not just your physical presence, but also your attitude and the way you speak and things are often scrutinized differently. Nobody on campus ever thinks I'm the professor, nobody, whether it's anybody in the staff or the students, and I've had other faculty members interact with me...in like the elevator or something and they just wonder like who I am or why I have a key to an office or things like people judging me and they watch me going to my own office.

As before, this quote illustrates how race, age, and gender intersect in specific ways, leading to additional discrimination. Stella experienced that her physical appearance and identity were much more scrutinized and that there were systemic biases that stopped her from being recognized and respected as a professor. Her accounts confirm that the ideal worker in academia is expected to have certain physical characteristics, and for individuals who do not meet such norms, it becomes difficult to gain recognition (Butler, 2001). Norms of recognition are often based on exclusion and the creation of others who are seen or perceived as unworthy or undervalued, meaning that some groups of people are constantly denied recognition, leading to discrimination and suffering (Butler, 2001).

Stella's experience illustrates how black women are often subjected to hypertextualization and objectification (see Crenshaw, 1995) also in academia. (Sen, 2002) mentions that there is this unspoken assumption that men have rights to sexual access to women who belong to lower classes or perceived as inferior. Here, the ‘unspoken assumption’ clearly points out the nature of this form of power.

During the interview, the way she was pausing and the hesitation revealed she was disturbed by the kind of behavior she receives from people around her. Her reflections made it clear that, contrary to the experience of black female academics, the societal expectations linked with respect and professionalism are on a higher scale for middle-aged white and males. In this respect, it is interesting to hear the reflection of a white male academic, Ryan (45) on how the experiences of his African American colleagues differ from his own:

“There was a colleague of mine who was African American and, when she started teaching, I was with her in the class, to show around the campus and then we went to the class. I could see that she was having a hard time with the students because she was new, her appearance was different and the students were making her feel uncomfortable. I was sorry but I could not do anything then. A few weeks later, we met again to discuss how and what to write in the student evaluation...I

was furious and felt very strange to see what my African American colleague had to mention in the evaluation versus what I had to write. Mine was different and nothing like hers because she had several examples of when she was not feeling okay. She was not happy with the students at all. So, I understand the politics of my physical appearance as a middle-aged white man. I don't have to go through these situations, not even when I started my journey."

Ryan highlighted his own experiences in academia and accepted the fact that he enjoyed his privileges being a middle-aged white man; he knew that his path was actually, if not easier than at least less difficult than his fellow academic, who was a woman of color. He shared stories about her and how she was new into academia and faced many more hurdles than himself. This finding aligns with (Fineman, 2011) where he mentions the triple jeopardy faced by women in academia, specifically when they age. He explains that gender and age is an intersecting disadvantage that erodes cultural capital, influencing perceptions. The disparity became even more clear when his colleague was having a hard time with the students and she stated everything in the annual student evaluation.

While young black female academics must navigate norms to prevent sexual objectification, older women experience a different but equally damaging form of subjugation. Embodying the 'ideal academic worker' requires careful positioning not only in terms of not being perceived as "too young" but also of not appearing as "too old". For instance, comparing her experience with that of other colleagues, Blake (40) explained:

"Yes, it is. I think older men are more...respected isn't the word. Tolerated...isn't the word. Somewhere in there between those...older women are seen as these soft things that you can push around. Whereas old men are usually treated...older men. treated more seriously than older women. And I think that's just true everywhere."

This quote highlights how aging affects men and women differently. While aging is often associated with respect for men, she feels that women are seen as "soft things that you can push around," suggesting that aging in women is associated with increased weakness and vulnerability. Rather than invoking care and love, this perception exposes them to further violence. In a similar manner, Suzy (53) explained:

"I just think it's different for men and women. You know, women go from being somebody to be patted on the head because they're too young to being set aside because they're too old, you know, when it means so I think stuff there, that's, there's some gender stuff there."

I was able to recognize the layers of biases while talking to Suzy, battling both gendered ageism. Her question was what is an ideal professional? Each individual works at their own pace, then why are women pushed around? (Bourabain, 2021) states that it is harder for women and minorities to be recognized for their contributions while (Puwar, 2004) mentions that it will always be the white man, considered as the "knowledge holder." These biases can significantly

impact career progression and professional recognition (Rahmani et al., 2024).

4.3 Bodywork to 'pass' as a faculty member

The study's participants explained how they constantly engage in bodywork to gain professional recognition. The pressure to look and dress appropriately is a bit heavy to carry for them. They explain that they 'dress professionally' to blend in with the older educators or administrators and distance themselves from students.

Adam (48) spoke about the unspoken fear of traditional and stereotypical ideas of dressing in a certain way, and if you don't dress or act that way, you are already starting on the wrong foot. This unnecessary focus on stereotypical judgments and "the beauty myth", who are already new to the place, creates hurdles and stress for younger people like her. In this respect, the analysis revealed how much this norm was widespread and internalized as the following quote shows:

"Sometimes I've had interactions with people in the building who are not from my department. My perception was not that they were a staff person, it was that they were students. Because of...they were younger. I often run into professors and stuff like that through the building and you just see that they're dressed. A lot of times we think when they're older they tend to be dressed more... There's like a button-front shirt or they're dressed in more of a professional scene. And then I ran into somebody who was sort of very, very casual and I took it to be a student. And they weren't and they were the professor and I was like: "Oh, I'm sorry". I didn't mean to do that, but I know in my head I was like, oh, this got to be a student because look how look how they're. Look how they're presenting... they presented themselves like a student. So it was just to sort of assume that they were the student... I dress very differently when I'm teaching than in the summer when I'm here. Like today I have on jeans and a T-shirt."

Adams's story actually shows how there is a certain stereotype of how professors should look like. Adam mistook a professor as a student simply because of how she was dressed, this seems like a small incident but reveals how both professors and students must conform to certain body norms to be recognized as such. This idea now is so internalized that if someone is not dressed as expected, they will never be taken seriously.

"During the school year, I don't wear jeans and t-shirts to work. I usually wear dresses. Certain colors make me feel good, and certain outfits I have make me feel powerful. You know, it's usually when I'm conducting a test. You know, I tend to pace when I teach. And I pace when I'm taking an exam. Not for any reason. I mean, I trust my students are not cheating. But they don't know that. So, you know, I just pace because that's what I do. And, if I'm dressed up confidently, my posture is confident. It gives the students confidence rather than walking around like this. You know, we say of musicians when somebody's auditioning for something, you can tell from the moment they walk out onto the stage. How they're gonna do just by how they carry themselves. And it's very true. Teaching is a performance and your appearance during the performance is crucial."

Recognizing that appearance influences students, Viola (40) dresses differently in the classroom. Teaching performance can be a stressful experience for some participants as they struggle to navigate the dominant norms defining the 'ideal academic worker' (Pineau 1994). A case in point is Gracie (46) experience who expressed her distress in the following terms:

“It's always my appearance that seems to be more of a plus with the younger generation and a negative with the slightly younger, more negative with the older ones though. Because I definitely know there's like fat phobia that I don't like, I don't have the best close-up of thing. Like, I definitely know that some people shop at a place where yes, they look more put together, but I cannot afford their outfit. And I'm very aware that I cannot afford their outfit. That they look more put together, that they're able to look more put together. I mean, I also have a steamer here at home, but I definitely know that some of those things are outside of my budget. And so, the socioeconomic thing comes in because I would dress nicer, if I could, right? I do dress for the students sometimes because I had some students tell me that it was intimidating to see me like in like my jacket so I stopped wearing a jacket. So, in cases like these, I look like a student when I'm on campus like intentionally.”

Gracie also mentioned that she receives negative looks in her surroundings. And what makes it even more complex is the socioeconomic status. She explains she can't afford certain types of clothes that are considered professional but economic barriers can limit ability to get to the appearance-based expectation. This quote also reveals how Gracie strategically works on her appearance depending on whether she wishes to connect more with students (assumed here to be young) or colleagues. Her experience reveals how some individuals who are perceived to have the “right look” are treated better, and the ones with the “wrong look” are penalized for being less attractive (see also Warhurst et al., 2009).

An intriguing aspect that emerged from the analysis was that participants who strongly internalized these norms tended to attribute the responsibility for discrimination to individuals rather than to the organization or structural conditions. Instead of questioning these norms, they accepted them without scrutiny. For instance, the following quote emphasizes how Jaqline (52) feels that it is an individual's responsibility to take care of their appearance and conduct so as not to be perceived as unprofessional:

“I think if you sort of have the appearance of knowing what you're doing, being professional, you start off on a higher scale. And then how you sort of conduct yourself going forward. You can sort of rise and fall in terms of how people are perceiving you. I think something you can set yourself up for failure by coming in and not presenting yourself well, looking disheveled, not being dressed appropriately, things like that. And then, you have that much more work to prove that you're capable or incapable.”

Similarly, another academic, Angela (28) emphasizes the difference between her physical appearance and their supposed true self, in the following terms:

“People have referred to me as a little girl... I know I look like 18 but I am 28 and

I am just as serious and I am a professional...It's like they think I'm a kina and I don't really deserve the role that I'm in right now.” (Emphasis added)

By emphasizing the difference between appearance and being, body and self, this participant does not challenge the prejudice that young people cannot be professional. Instead, she risks reinforcing it by implying that, despite her physical appearance seemingly justifying such a conclusion, her “true self”, a self without a body, possesses qualities like seriousness and professionalism that others might not associate with her based on her appearance.

5. **Conclusive remarks**

This study aimed to explore the experiences of gendered ageing among academics in higher education institutions (HEIs), focusing on how it shapes their daily experiences and academic careers. Drawing on Butler’s work, the analysis highlighted the intersection of gender, age and race, illustrating how women academics experience a constant tension between being perceived as either too young (and therefore lacking credibility) or too old (and therefore past their prime). This tension is rooted in deeply ingrained norms that shape how authority and expertise are recognized in higher education. For younger women in academia, the struggle to establish authority is particularly pronounced. Several participants in this study described being mistaken for students or feeling the need to overcompensate in their professional demeanor to be taken seriously. This reflects broader societal assumptions that youth in women is associated with inexperience, whereas for men, youth may be linked to potential and leadership capability (Ainsworth, 2002), thus demonstrating that academia privileges a middle-aged, male-coded ideal of scholar.

The experiences of mid-career and senior women faculty also reinforce Butler’s assertion that social norms dictate which identities are deemed viable within a given cultural and institutional context. Older women in academia often find themselves marginalized. Whereas men’s aging may be associated with wisdom and increased institutional status, women often experience it as a diminishing of value (Riach et al., 2014)). This phenomenon is evident in the accounts of senior women faculty in this study who reported feeling increasingly invisible in their institutions, despite their extensive experience and contributions. As a result of the operating of these norms, these identities become unlivable (Butler, 1993), as academia continues to operate under structures that assume an unencumbered, fully available scholar—a model historically aligned with male life trajectories.

Furthermore, a recurring theme in this study was the scrutiny of women’s physical appearance, particularly in relation to age. For instance, younger women frequently reported feeling pressure to dress in a way that conveyed professionalism while also avoiding sexualization. These dynamic supports Butler’s assertion that gendered bodies are continuously subjected to regulatory norms that shape their acceptability within professional and social spaces. The pressure to conform to specific age and gender expectations, whether by adopting authoritative behavior as young faculty or concealing signs of aging as senior faculty, illustrates how performative norms regulate academic legitimacy. These findings highlight that institutional change requires more than individual adaptations; it necessitates structural shifts that redefine the “ideal academic” to be more inclusive of diverse career trajectories and life circumstances (Zimmerman & West 1987). Addressing these structural inequities will not only improve the experiences of women academics but will also enrich the academic community by fostering an

environment where diverse perspectives and contributions are equally recognized.

6. Limitations

This study offers rich insights into the experiences of gendered ageing in HEI, but is not without limitations. Firstly, the sample size for this study is 25 participants, which is good for deep qualitative exploration, but relatively, it is a small sample size. Second, the data is collected from one public university only. Therefore, the findings may not be completely generalizable. Third, there may be selection bias because the participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling, as participants who volunteered to be interviewed have stronger experiences and emotions towards gendered ageing. Additionally, this study is based on self-reported data which is appropriate but may have recalled biases or the influence of (social) desirability. This could influence how the experiences were narrated during the interview. Lastly, even though this study acknowledged the interplay of age and gender, future research could take advantage of broader comparative studies that could be across institutional settings and a deeper intersectional approach that explores identity, its dimensions, and experiences of aging.

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Chapter 3: Intersecting generations: Exploring age diversity in Higher Education Institutions

Abstract

This study examines how generational identities and age diversity influence workplace dynamics, career progression, and institutional culture in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Using Judith Butler's theory of performativity alongside deconstruction analysis, the research explores how stereotypes around "young" and "old" faculty shape intergenerational relationships and professional experiences. Through qualitative analysis of interview data and institutional narratives, the study identifies three key themes: workplace norms, assumptions about younger workers, and assumptions about older workers. It reveals how implicit biases, such as viewing older staff as resistant or younger staff as inexperienced, undermine collaboration and hinder inclusive practice. These generational assumptions are deeply embedded in institutional structures, shaping access to leadership, mentorship, and professional development. The findings emphasize that aging is not just biological, but a socially performed identity governed by institutional expectations. Both older and younger faculty are pressured to conform to age-based norms to gain recognition, leading to systemic challenges in career advancement and belonging. The study contributes to critical aging studies and organizational research by highlighting the performative and intersectional nature of age in HEIs. It calls for institutions to move beyond symbolic diversity initiatives and adopt structural reforms that foster intergenerational cooperation, equity, and sustained engagement across age groups.

Keywords: Age, higher education, deconstruction, performativity, Butler

1. Introduction

Aging is a universal experience that cuts across nationality, race, occupation, and social class. Like other social identities such as race and class, the construction of aging is not merely biological but shaped by cultural, institutional, and relational forces (Acker, 1988; Spelman, 1990). In recent years, scholars have increasingly focused on how aging is constructed and practiced within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), where shifting demographics among students, faculty, and staff have created increasingly age-diverse environments (Morrow-Howell, Nancy et al, 2022). HEIs are inherently multi-generational spaces, bringing together individuals from different life stages in shared professional and educational contexts. This intergenerational dynamic introduces both challenges and opportunities, prompting a critical need to examine how aging is experienced, negotiated, and institutionalized within academia. Understanding aging as a constructed identity allows for a deeper analysis of how power, status, and inclusion are distributed across age groups in these settings.

In this society, age is a significant presumed difference, which has led to the creation of a dichotomy between the young and older age groups (Strauss, 1985). Such ambivalence resulted in simultaneous relations with both categories in manners that nullify their comparability, or is considered diametrically. However, a deeper and broader analysis of the aging in Higher Education Institutions implies that the problem is not as simple as this dual relationship and how generations deal with it in these arenas. Although aging has received attention in higher education (O'Rourke & Gray, 2025), there seems to be a dearth of studies substantiating how aging is done relationally in institutions of higher learning (Park et al., 2020).

To better understand aging within Higher Education Institutions, it is essential to view age not in isolation, but in relation to other social characteristics and intergenerational dynamics. This study aims to address key gaps in the literature by examining aging through a multi-generational lens, highlighting how different age groups coexist, interact, and shape institutional culture. By focusing on how generational categories are constructed and lived within universities, the research seeks to move beyond simplistic age-based binaries. It explores how these relationships can be harnessed to challenge exclusionary norms and promote a more inclusive, age-diverse academic environment.

Discussing aging in higher education is a complex and emerging research strand that points to both social, cultural, and educational change processes that are pertinent to the context of these institutions (Strauss, 1985). Given the ongoing changes in the demographic mix of the student population, faculty, and staff in universities, scholars have increasingly noted the imperative for more relational and diverse ways of thinking about aging. (Montepare & Brown 2022; Davis et al., 2020).

Contrary to how age is best understood as a categorization model that divides people and defines colleges and universities, there is renewed interest in the dynamics of intergenerational transactions and relationships in higher education (Whitbourne et al., 2024). It is suggested that by appreciating aging as a relational construction, scholars will be able to identify how age is connected to other social categorizations like race, gender, and class to determine power relations, identity, and education. Ageing as a relational construction aligns with the sociological conception of aging and stresses how people of different ages come together, cooperate, and develop at university. It makes the learning experience more valuable and becomes that much more meaningful when people from different walks of life get a chance to share their ideas and

views with each other. Not only does generation-to-generation interaction improve the quality of education by allowing fresh ideas, but it also creates a unity where people feel they are part of a family.

In addition, the consideration of aging within Higher Education Institutions can be understood as the call to support a proactive approach towards policy, practice, and teaching to embrace all ages. As research, dialogues, and partnerships continue apace, the dialogue on aging in higher education will continue to support the development and delivery of the environments that will engage and enable mature learners to flourish academically and to succeed on their chosen pathways.

The subsequent sections of this chapter aim to first try to explicate the phenomenon of aging in the context of Higher Education Institutions using the various dimensions of age, and the inter as well as intra generational phenomena in the Higher Education Institutions and how aging affects as well as is lived by the various individuals within the institutions. From this, the chapter hopes to contribute to understanding whether and how aging relates to the social relations within and around the sphere of Higher Education Institutions in order to create more age-wise environments. In the light of this, it can be assumed that, in general, there is not a very specific and rather limited analysis of aging in Higher Education Institutions, which means that research should not only pay much attention to age differences and criteria but also look for more or less relational approaches. By understanding how different generations in society relate to one another and how these interactions occur in these institutions, one is well placed to understand what aging entails as well as fashion an environment that will be most favorable for helping those people who are part of a university setting.

2. Managing intersecting generations

This paper recognizes age diversity within the context of Higher Educational Institutions as a significant emerging theme of the current and future study landscape since colleges and universities are increasingly involving diverse generations of students and professors. That being said, the interactions of generation intersections within academic contexts provide a unique background and a subject of discussion for understanding the impacts of generations agnostic to the academic framework within which the teaching and learning processes take place.

Higher education has become more diverse in terms of age, where more and more students, adults, and aged teachers are involved in academic programs. The demographic difference comes out with a variety of experiences, reasons, and expectations, which adds value and brings complexity to the learning process. Every generation: the baby boom generation, generation X, the millennials, and generation Z may also have their own personality, beliefs, and ways of communicating, which may affect dealings and relations in academic contexts. It is thus important to appreciate these generational differences so as to encourage good intergenerational relations characterized by mutual understanding and even knowledge sharing. Furthermore, generation-related aspects of higher education diversity deserve further examination to better understand various cross-cutting relationships that age diversity has with other forms of diversity, including race/ethnicity and social class (Park et al., 2020).

Various empirical analyses conducted by Riach (2009) and Rudman (2006) explore cultural factors, occupational stereotyping, and ageism ideologies as key contributors to age discrimination. These studies largely focus on how older workers are marginalized through assumptions of decline, rigidity, or diminished value. It is important to note, however, that both

young and older employees can be subject to bias and stereotyping, although this is often underexplored in existing research. In this context, McMullin & Marshall (2010) and Trethewey (2001) stand out as exceptions. Their work goes beyond the typical focus on older workers by critically engaging with how professional ageism operates in specific contexts, such as in discourses surrounding aging women, aging IT professionals, and the negotiation of older worker identities in the workplace. These studies challenge the simplistic view that ageism only affects the elderly and instead highlight how age-related bias is embedded in organizational narratives and professional expectations. However, there is still a need to extend this line of inquiry to better understand how younger employees are also affected by age-based assumptions, particularly those that question their competence, authority, or readiness for leadership roles.

Diversity by age brings certain organizational issues and opportunities to HEIs in aspects of employment, staff turnover, and development policies. Implementing age-sensible policies that support any multi-generational arrangements and practices, supporting intergenerational learning mentorship, and focusing more on upholding and respecting the worth of the multiple viewpoints existing can strengthen institutional capacity (Cohen et al., 2023).

Reasonable representation is essential when examining the complex and varied dimensions of age-related inequalities in the workplace. Liff (1999) highlighted a key limitation of the equal opportunities (EO) approach in the late 1990s: the tendency to conflate equal opportunity with equal representation. This critique remains relevant today, as both younger and older workers continue to face stereotypes and biases that affect their career trajectories. It's important to address these age-related preconceptions and acknowledge their impact across all stages of working life. Hoque and Noon (2004) further critique EO policies by introducing the concept of "empty shell" policies, which are formal declarations of equal rights that exist mainly for legal protection but are rarely implemented in practice. In such cases, compliance becomes the primary aim, reducing EO to a bureaucratic tool rather than a driver of meaningful cultural or commercial change. While legally sound, these policies often fail to address age diversity substantively or strategically. As such, it is worth questioning the effectiveness of EO initiatives that operate only at a legal or symbolic level, especially when they show little interest in engaging with age diversity from a deeper, more transformative perspective.

Building on the critique of equal opportunity policies as symbolic and often ineffective, Ely and Thomas (2001) offered a more nuanced view by identifying three distinct diversity approaches: the integration-and-learning approach, the access-and-legitimacy approach, and the discrimination-and-fairness model. These frameworks highlight how organizations engage with diversity in practice, often revealing gaps between intention and outcome. The emergence of the broader "diversity approach" in the late 1980s (Copeland, 1988a,b; Solomon, 1989) was intended to link equity goals with commercial interests, particularly by promoting women and ethnic minorities in the workplace. However, this shift was not without criticism. Prasad et al. (1995) referred to this trend as a form of "nouveau optimism," arguing that it overlooked the more profound structural inequalities embedded in organizations. Similarly, Webb (1997) illustrated how diversity initiatives are sometimes co-opted as business strategies, used more to enhance market appeal than to promote genuine inclusion. This market-driven interpretation of diversity, as Webb (1997) warned, risks sidelining equality on the organizational agenda. When diversity is framed primarily as a means to improve productivity or market share, it becomes a hollow gesture that weakens the transformative potential of equity initiatives.

Similarly, Nkomo et al 2019 argue that HR managers tend to reduce diversity to a narrow set of visible traits, often overlooking deeper, structural inequalities. Amis et al 2020 further highlight that diversity discourse is sometimes strategically used by stakeholders to delay or deflect action on fundamental issues of inequality. One of the persistent and often neglected dimensions of this inequality is age. As individuals age, they increasingly encounter structural barriers to upward mobility or re-employment within the labor market (Hirsch et al., 2000; Chan & Stevens, 2001). This marginalization is not limited to older workers. At the same time, young employees may get a negative attitude, and those who are just entering the job market can face difficulties in finding a job that provides the opportunity to grow, be meaningful, and have a good chance to be promoted (McDowell, 2011). Nevertheless, a critical moderator between these levels of inequality is ‘Organisation’ according to Hales and Riach (2017), and in this case, the Higher Education Institutions. Understanding how and why age diversity influences student outcomes, faculty job contentment, and institutional advancement can help identify strategies for enhancing intergenerational relations. In particular, universities should understand that the presence of representatives of different generations is a valuable resource for creating a learning organization, which is built on the principles of cooperation and respect for other people’s experiences at all ages.

Multi-dimensionality needs to be a significant component of aging policies as prejudice based on age overlaps with other prejudice factors, thus requiring integration of intersectionality in practice. In this way, the presented research has the goal of identifying the existing biases between elderly and young people in order to contribute to the development of effective policies and improve cooperation between different generations. It aligns with the broader objectives of diversification of staff age, diversity, intersectionality and inclusiveness for HEI’s settings. Central to this investigation is the question: How do generational stereotypes and biases impact intergenerational relationships, professional development, and career progression within Higher Education Institutions? Addressing this question can inform strategies that support age-diverse environments and advance equitable professional pathways across generations.

3. Age diversity in Higher Education Institutions

Age diversity in the context of Higher Education Institutions refers to the broad age range of individuals, including faculty and administrators. It encompasses the changing demographic composition of these institutions, reflecting the diverse ages of individuals involved in academic and administrative roles (Morrow-Howell et al., 2020). When referring to aging in HEIs, the current literature presents the issues explored through the lens of American culture and institutions. This body of work and this literature were chosen as the foundation for the study due to their depth, relevance, and the extensive focus they offer on age diversity and intergenerational relationships within higher education environments. The United States’ higher learning system is diverse; different institutions have unique policies and practices that significantly differ. It is essential to understand that we meet people of diverse age groups every day, and thus, the aging process raises both opportunities and problems (Beck, 2018). Previous research has explored federal and state policies affecting aging in HEIs in the US. Institutional policies for retirement and age discrimination are regulated through various laws, including the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA). Within this context, studies have also explored how aging is experienced by both younger and older faculty and professionals across different

types of institutions, ranging from community colleges to research universities². For instance, in the case of community colleges, the learners reflect a more diverse profile than in research university settings and are more likely to be older learners. These institutions likely have more substantial support structures for their older learners and better scheduling options. Research universities, in contrast, may have more financial and human capital for aging professors, using endowed chairs or research programs (Foucault, 1978; Peters, 1999).

The dynamics of age diversity in this context are evolving, and there is an increasing acknowledgement of the importance of understanding and managing different age groups that exist at universities. Universities have operated within distinct demographic and life course circumstances throughout their existence. Over this long history, the academy has responded to changing social environments. Now, universities are reacting to another social reality: population aging. For instance, the U.S. population's age composition has changed during the past century, characterized by decreased fertility rates and increased longevity (Roser, 2017, 2019). For these reasons, recent studies have emphasized the need to understand and manage age diversity within Higher Education Institutions, highlighting the challenges, opportunities, and strategies related to age diversity among faculty and administrators (Morrow-Howell et al, 2022).

The convergence of diverse generations in various educational environments presents distinctive challenges and opportunities that necessitate comprehensive examination and, in this respect, Morrow-Howell et al (2020) mention that age-diverse universities ensure the capacity of the labor force, educate people to succeed in age-diverse settings, produce innovation, support meaningful engagement, social connection, and cognitive health into later life and ensure the supply of students. They do it by creating an inclusive environment and value intergenerational collaboration because it enhances sustainability, promotes societal goals like reducing ageism and discrimination, and improves their well-being and mental health. These outcomes are realized by fostering institutional cultures where both younger and older individuals are valued, supported, and given equitable opportunities for professional growth. When individuals from different age groups collaborate, they bring varied experiences, approaches, and insights that can enhance institutional problem-solving and creativity. Moreover, continued engagement of older staff in meaningful work supports cognitive vitality and strengthens intergenerational knowledge transfer, while younger professionals benefit from mentorship and institutional memory. This contributes not only to more inclusive and innovative workplaces but also to long-term institutional resilience. Similarly, Galucia and Morrow-Howell 2023 explained that increased age diversity on campus can lead to positive outcomes for society, younger students, the institution, and older adults. However, a perspective from the educators and administrative staff is missing. For instance, several managers and senior academics may lack awareness regarding policies within their institutions that address age discrimination (Manfredi, S. 2008).

In summary, the literature highlights the growing recognition of age diversity as a critical dimension within Higher Education Institutions, emphasizing its potential to enhance institutional resilience, innovation, and inclusion. While existing research points to the benefits of multigenerational workforces and the role of supportive institutional cultures, much of this

² Community colleges usually provide a two-year associate degree and is smaller in campus size and student population whereas a university has a wide range of programs from bachelors, masters to doctorate degrees and is a larger Institution with a large student population and focus on research along with taught courses.

work focuses on structural or student-centered outcomes, often overlooking the lived experiences of faculty and administrators. Notably, there remains a gap in understanding how age is constructed and experienced within the professional identities of academics and administrators across generations. The following section addresses this gap by examining how “young” and “old” are constructed categories within HEIs, shaped by cultural assumptions, institutional discourse, and workplace practices. This analysis is essential for uncovering the subtle mechanisms through which age-based norms and expectations influence professional development, inclusion, and recognition in academic settings.

4. Older/Senior Educators and Administrators

Published studies on older faculty and staff in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) reveal important concerns such as age discrimination connected with professional advancement, and pensions. Different forms of ageism exist in the academic environment, ranging from implicit biases and stereotyping to the biases used to discriminate against users. These manifestations interfere with the selection and promotion procedures and impact employees' interpersonal communication at the workplace (Douglas, 2013). They may also have problems in grant acquisition, mentorship and training, and promotions or appointments to leadership roles. Such opportunities can be affected by ageist assumptions, like perceiving that the older the talent is, the less progressive or flexible the faculty member is. Opportunities for these experiences can influence their career contentment and effectiveness. Research has also found that ageism can have a detrimental impact on the retention and engagement of older members of the faculty in academic institutions, as they may experience low identity value (Bytheway, 1994).

In response to these concerns, several HEIs have developed policies to mitigate difficulties faced by older faculty members. Phased retirement schemes enable the faculty members to withdraw gradually, and this is good for them and the institution since they will still be available, though not as active as before retirement. Efforts to strengthen intergenerational mentoring are also necessary to transfer knowledge and develop innovation between different generations. Such measures can assist in capturing and preserving critical organizational knowledge and positively contribute to changing the culture of academic institutions (Sklar, 1980).

Younger Educators and Administrators

Studies on young employees in HEIs reveal the following essential emergent concerns: development in their initial state of employment, coping with work-life adjustment, and the pursuit of tenure. The primary challenge that younger faculty experience in their positions is the stereotype that they are not experienced enough to be eligible for grant funding, mentoring, and leadership positions (Kezar & Sam, 2010). As a result of this perceived lack of gravitas or authority, they remain stuck in their career progression and are dissatisfied, as inherent biases may mean they will not be given significant work responsibilities or told to head a department (Gardner & Veliz, 2014). New and young are often in charge of starting families, faculty beginnings, and professional development. This juggling act is incredibly demanding due to time constraints, boosting publishing profile, gaining grants, or setting up a good teaching portfolio as early as possible in their career. In the study, various responses indicated that young faculty members experience high stress because they have to compete for their tenure with tenure tracers while caring for dependents (Austin, 2002). Mentoring programs and opportunities for professional development become part of the support systems that younger members need to

have in place if institutions are to retain them in academia (Trower & Gallagher, 2010).

Additionally, freshman faculty have issues with the institution's ethos and *modus operandi*. Due to the academic culture that is slow to change with new ways of working and preferring to stick to norms and rules with proven track records, younger faculty members may find the organizational culture unwelcoming. This can lead to resentment and negate the opportunities young faculty need to get established and valued under the academic umbrella and for career advancements. These challenges are closely tied to the relationship between work and age-based norms and expectations, as explored in previous studies (Radl, 2012; Riach, 2007; Riach & Cutcher, 2014; Riach & Loretto, 2009; Roberts, 2006; Vickerstaff, 2003), which highlight how institutional assumptions around age influence access to legitimacy, authority, and professional progression in the workplace. In order to address these challenges, some HEIs have formulated policies regarding younger faculty members to support them better. Structured or organised peer-mentoring where young faculty are affiliated with more experienced colleagues offers several benefits such as being a source of support, networking, and professional development opportunities. The innovative junior faculty programs can assist these scholars in managing academic challenges, establishing their research thrusts, and assembling substantial professional connections (Bland et al., 2009).

It may also be helpful to promote efforts to achieve work-life balance for younger faculty, since it is a concern for them. Practical working arrangements, such as the availability of child-care centers, liberty to work from home, and parental leave policies, can help to reduce some of the problems that younger faculty members encounter, due to their responsibilities at home or with children (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). These measures also help attend to junior employees' personal needs and boost their workplace performance. The institutions that focus on promoting the environment and culture of support and acceptance of young faculty members can gain improved rates of retention, higher job satisfaction, and improved rates of overall efficiency (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007).

In addition, exceptional professional development activities like grant writing, teaching methods, and leadership experience workshops can empower the young faculty with direction and strategies that may be necessary throughout their professional practice. In this way, younger faculty get the opportunity to develop their skills, gain experience in teaching and research, and accumulate necessary achievements that may be useful when promoted to the level of leaders (O'Meara et al., 2008). Therefore, navigating through the career progression environment and ensuring that younger faculty are provided with the necessary support and encouragement that they need to succeed in HEIs requires that a variety of strategies be employed that entail the provisions of mentors, work-family balance policies and programs, and opportunities for professional development. Through such measures, it will be possible for institutions to develop a support structure that would enable young people to realize their potential and grow academically and socially.

4.1 Constructing the Subjects of “Old Worker” and “Young Worker”

The identities of “old workers” and “young workers” are a result of both society's expectations and policies, as well as the experiences that the individual goes through in the course of performing their educational roles. These identities are also discursively constructed based on binaries where different qualities are ascribed to different ages. It was also found that the traditional identity of the “old worker” within HEIs is strongly linked to aging, experience,

and organizational tenure. Experience, in this way, refers to the accumulation of know-how possessed by older workers and their representativeness of expertise to the younger generation at the workplace. Though this identity is positive, it can also be related to negative attributes like a negative attitude towards change, reduced performance levels, and being a retiree. These stereotypes can lead to ageism, which results in discrimination and exclusion of older persons in the workplace, which in turn hampers their career advancement as well as their job satisfaction (Dębski et al., 2020).

In contrast, the opposite identity of a ‘young worker’ can be linked with being young, innovative, energetic, and flexible. There is also consideration of the young workers as the ones who have new ideas and are bringing new ideas to the institution. However, they also have weaknesses, such as inexperience, lack of authority, and being often pressured to prove their worth. These dynamics raise the possibility of conflict and tension between the generations within HEIs between old and young staff and old and young students (Lord, 2022). Therefore, the patterns that underpin the construction of the discursive subject positions of the ‘old worker’ and the ‘young worker’ being produced for and within HEIs reflect multiple local and cultural policy formations, societal, and cultural discursive formations. These norms define how roles and behavioral patterns associated with age are perceived and practiced in educational settings (Butler, 2000).

Age identities in many HEIs are often regulated either directly, through institutional policies, or indirectly through other policies within the educational setting. For instance, tenure and promotion processes can discriminate against older faculty by assuming that the latter will not be in the workforce for much longer. In contrast, retirement policies can compel senior faculty to retire early (Macfarlane et al., 2014). Organizations may also provide access to development opportunities and workload based on their expectations and bias towards age (Kathryn A., 2017). It was found that cultural perceptions about aging significantly impact age constructs within the context of HEIs. These perceptions include perceptions towards older people and give and take between young and older employees. The media, discourses, and interactions within the institution's scope may support such attitudes. Other macro-level sociocultural factors, including demography and the labor market, also play a significant role in the construction of age identities in HEIs. For instance, the rising average age of employees and the focus on learning as a constant process disrupt the classical concept of careers and retirement (Riach, et al., 2015).

The previous discussion highlighted how younger and older academics and administrators are socially constructed within Higher Education Institutions through age-based expectations, stereotypes, and institutional norms. Building on this, the next section introduces Judith Butler's theory of performativity to explore further how age, like other social identities, is continuously produced and reinforced through repeated actions, discourse, and institutional practices.

5. Theoretical Lenses: Butler's perspective

Aging, like gender, can be understood as a socially constructed identity continuously performed through repeated actions, shaped by societal and institutional norms. Judith Butler's theory of performativity, developed initially to understand gender, provides a valuable framework for rethinking how aging operates within Higher Education Institutions. Butler argues that subjectivity is not a pre-social given, but is instead constituted through repeated social acts

that align with the norms governing recognition (Butler, 1993, p. 95). In this sense, aging is not simply a biological process, but a performative one, where individuals come to inhabit the identities of “young” or “old” through a series of repeated actions and behaviors. These performances are deeply embedded in institutional structures and cultural expectations, making age a category actively constructed and maintained within the workplace.

Butler’s performative ontology challenges the idea that identity is something fixed and stable. Instead, she argues that identity is produced through a stylized repetition of acts. This means that the “young” and “old” categories in higher education are not innate qualities, but constructed identities that are continually performed through social practices. For example, older faculty members may be expected to embody experience, stability, and wisdom (Maurer, 2001) while younger faculty members are associated with innovation, adaptability, and energy (Harnett et al., 1981). These expectations are not inherent to the individuals but are socially constructed through the norms that govern the workplace. The identities of “young” and “old” are thus performative accomplishments, enacted through the repetitive social acts that align with institutional expectations.

In *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005), Butler expands on the idea that subjectivity is formed through social recognition. This study emphasizes that individuals must account for themselves within the frameworks of normative recognition, meaning that their identities must conform to the social norms in order to be acknowledged as viable subjects. This is particularly relevant in the context of aging within higher education. Older faculty members, for instance, may need to justify their relevance and competence continuously, challenging stereotypes that associate aging with stagnation or resistance to change (Harada et al, 2013). Younger faculty, conversely, may feel the pressure to prove themselves in the face of assumptions that they lack experience or authority (Conroy-Beam & Buss, 2019). These forms of “accounting” are crucial for both groups to be recognized as legitimate and valuable members of the academic community (Butler, 2005, p. 30).

The process of subject formation in higher education, much like Butler’s understanding of gender identity, involves a continuous negotiation with the norms that define intelligibility. As Butler notes, “No individual becomes a subject without first becoming subjected” (Butler, 1997b, pp. 10–11), which means that individuals must conform to the expectations tied to their age in order to gain recognition. In higher education, this results in age-based norms that dictate how older and younger faculty members are perceived and treated. These norms are reinforced through the institutional structures that regulate career progression, teaching expectations, and technological proficiency, among other factors. For example, older faculty might be seen as technologically inept or resistant to new pedagogical practices, while younger faculty are often viewed as inexperienced or lacking in leadership capabilities. These stereotypes are performatively reinforced through everyday interactions and institutional practices.

Butler’s theory of performativity also emphasizes that identity is never fully stable or coherent; it is always in a process of becoming, shaped by the repeated enactment of norms (Tyler, 2019). Aging, like gender, is therefore not a static identity but a dynamic process that is continually being negotiated through social interactions and institutional expectations. The performance of age within Higher Education Institutions is governed by the need to conform to the normative timelines of career progression, technological adaptation, and innovation. For instance, younger faculty may feel the pressure to excel quickly in their careers to avoid being

seen as unmotivated (Christie, 2009), while older faculty might experience pressure to demonstrate their ongoing relevance in the face of retirement stereotypes Knapp (2014), in the chapter "Aging and Learning in the Future University" from the book *The Upside of Aging: How Long Life Is Changing the World of Health, Work, Innovation, Policy, and Purpose*, discusses the implications of aging within academic environments. These performative acts not only shape individual subjectivities but also reinforce the broader institutional structures that govern age-related expectations (Hurtado et al., 2012).

Moreover, Butler's work on recognition highlights the ethical dimension of these performative acts. In *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005), she argues that recognition is not simply about being seen, but about conforming to the normative conditions that make one's identity intelligible to others. In the context of aging, this means that both older and younger faculty members must conform to the age-based expectations of their institution in order to be recognized as competent and valuable (Parks et al., 2013). The process of recognition thus becomes an ethical struggle, as individuals must navigate the conflicting demands of institutional norms and their own sense of identity. This struggle is particularly pronounced in cases where the normative expectations of age conflict with an individual's sense of self, leading to experiences of ageism or discrimination (Zulfiqar & Prasad, 2022).

This performative understanding of aging offers a critical lens through which to examine the stereotypes and biases that exist within higher education (Fellabaum, 2011). Age identities, much like gender identities, are not fixed categories but are constructed through repeated social practices, states Christina Baroody Butler (2005). Butler's theory allows us to see how these identities are shaped by power relations and institutional norms, and how they can be disrupted through the subversion of these norms. By recognizing that age is a fluid and performative identity, Higher Education Institutions can begin to challenge the stereotypes that limit opportunities for both older and younger faculty members.

Butler's performative theory, combined with her insights into the processes of recognition, offers a powerful framework for understanding the complexities of aging within higher education. Aging is not merely a biological fact but a socially constructed identity that is continuously performed and negotiated through institutional norms. By rethinking aging as a performative accomplishment, Higher Education Institutions can foster more inclusive environments that value the diverse contributions of individuals across the age spectrum, challenging the rigid stereotypes that often govern academic life. As Butler (1988: 523) suggests, identity is not a predetermined or foreclosed structure, but a legacy of sedimented acts, which means that age, like gender, is always open to redefinition and transformation through the ongoing performance of social norms.

5. Methodology

This study focuses on an American public institution that has been around since 1908. This university has earned its reputation because of its vibrant campus life and extensive academic offerings. The university is home to more than 21,000 students, including a wide number of undergraduates and graduate students. It provides a well-rounded education in a variety of disciplines, including business, education, the arts, and the sciences, so it can meet the needs of students with various interests and goals.

This research took a closer look at the experiences of educators and administrators at this US university, focusing on how generations intersect in their work lives. The objective of the

research was to know and understand the living experiences of educators and administrators going through the process of ageing, as well as to learn about whether and how they faced biases and stereotypes in HEIs.

6.1 Data Collection

This analysis is part of a broader research project involving 40 participants of various ages, working in different academic fields and administrative roles. While the project included 40 interviews, this study focuses on a smaller sample of **20 academics and administrators** (see Table 6), specifically to explore the issues of biases, stereotypes, and societal expectations in relation to the normative ideals of academic workers.

After securing the ethical approval from the Institutional Review Boards (IRB), the participants were reached out by email, and through a snowball method. The interviews were semi-structured, held both online and in person, according to each person's availability. This encouraged people to be candid about their experiences. Informed consent was also obtained from every interviewee. The conversations were recorded on a voice recorder or online on Zoom or Google Meet and then transcribed.

The structure of the comprehensive interviews can be categorized into three primary themes. At first, the participants were inquired about their academic or administrative status, including details about their recruitment process, type of contract, the hiring process, and the present stage of their academic or professional career. Second, the questions revolved around the nature of the work environment and their interactions with significant colleagues and students. Respondents frequently used this as a beginning point to engage in discussions with coworkers or supervisors about a serious incident, which then naturally progressed to conversations about instances of inequity, racism, sexism, and/or discrimination.

6.2 Empirical Material

The empirical material for this study is drawn from purposive sampling of 20 participants out of the broader pool of 40 interviews. This conscious selection was made because the focus was of academics and administrators both. The selected participants comprised a diverse population in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, ranks and they ranged in age between 27 to 72 years. Among them were 2 Adjunct Professors, 5 Coordinators out of which 2 were instructors as well, 2 Directors, 2 Assistant directors, 1 Full Professor, 1 Lab Stimulation Manager, 2 Deans, 1 Associate Dean, 2 Administrators, 1 Instructional Specialist and 1 Professional Service Specialist.

The interview process was designed to encourage participants to share their personal reflections and their professional experiences within HEI. The interview guide was developed following a comprehensive review of the literature on different generations, ageism, career trajectories, and workplace dynamics. The structure of the interview revolved around three major thematic areas: Workplace norms, youthful presence, professional legitimacy, seniority, and the burden of stereotypes. Participants were initially asked about their roles and responsibilities and nature of their interaction such as "how long have you been working in HEI and what are your roles and responsibilities" The second part was more age-related stereotypes and discrimination questions such as "have you ever encountered age-related discrimination or unequal treatment in your academic environment? And how do you feel about working with colleagues from different age groups, and the benefits and limitations of the collaboration? Finally, participants were asked, "How relevant is age to career progression?" The interviews were concluded with

participants' recommendations and suggestions for improvement regarding institutional practices and policies.

6.3 Data Analysis

It is in this light that the current study will adopt deconstruction theory in the analysis of power relations, prejudice, and stereotype of the generational stereotype in the context of "Intersecting Generations." In this context, deconstruction is a method of analysis aiming at revealing what is beyond the manifest content of discursive and non-discursive practices (Martin, 1990). In this study, we will try to shed light on how generational biases act as a source of prejudice and create unjust social structures by exploring presumably impartial texts and narratives. Moreover, in this research, Judith Butler's theory of performativity proved useful when used alongside deconstruction. Hence, Butler maintains that the subject of gender is not biological, but rather a performance of gender. It is to such an understanding of performativity that it is possible to refer to other social categories, including generations (Butler, 2005). This research will seek to understand how generational stereotypes constitute and sustain power relations and inequity through an analysis of the discursive and other performativity mechanisms such as everyday interactions, policies and practices, professional norms, symbolic representations, institutional language, and embodied behavior.

By adopting the concept of deconstruction, one can study how power relations and various forms of biases condition the realities of different generations of people. Therefore, hidden prejudices could be found in any texts on generational clashes, which make such a power dynamic stand out. For instance, you could find out how the various ages depicted by the media continue to sustain stereotypical cultural values that support the dominant hierarchy. Younger persons, other minorities, and such representations are unaware that they can barely be heard or that their struggles are not valued (Lindqvist et al., 2020). By using deconstruction, this chapter was able to find these voices and make possible representations of the negative aspects of the discourses that promote inequality. For instance, it is possible to explain their perceptions about how a corporate policy and the working practices of a company impact a young worker, causing them to feel marginalized (Martin, 1990).

In this respect, the generational stereotypes remain the vehicles of some of the key ideological presuppositions. In conjunction with Deconstruction, these stereotypical discursive practices can be supplemented in order to expose and problematize the relations of power that underpin them. For instance, the perception of Millennials and Gen Z as 'entitled' or 'lazy' may be linked to initial impressions shaped by differing generational attitudes toward labor and culture. (Flores et al., 2020). Furthermore, deconstruction can reveal that language is used to encode social justice and gaze over other forms of addressing society. For example, the language that portrays competition might be applied to justify economic imbalance and social difference between generations (Martin, 1990). In essence, deconstruction enables a critical unpacking of these ideologies by revealing the underlying assumptions and power structures that sustain them, thereby challenging their legitimacy and opening space for alternative interpretations.

As a result, deconstruction helps to reveal the impact of language on our vision of

the world and to develop social discrimination. Thanks to the analysis of the latent presuppositions, paradoxes, and domination/submission strategies contained in language, deconstruction can assist one in eradicating prejudiced perceptions towards various generations in an effort to fashion an urban society that is much more liberal and egalitarian. People of different generations can have different perceptions towards the occurrence in history, social transformation, and culture (Thomas et al, 2014). Different readings support that deconstruction affords can subvert the idea that there's an unambiguous right way to tell the story. Using it, one can study how different generations perceive changes in technology as regards work and life (Zaidi et al., 2020).

The data analysis (See table 6) will specifically entail qualitative evaluation of text and narrative concerning generational stereotype and power relations. The paper will use Butler's theory of performativity to examine how people reproduce these stereotypes through practice. Assuming the key categorization for the analysis will be the power dynamics that play a role in defining the relations between different generations, the prejudices and biases that lay the foundations for certain generational stereotyping, the ways generational stereotyping works, and the impact on some groups' exclusion. In this way, the study will also strive to explain and unravel multi-level reasons for the formation and endurance of generational stereotypes and their effects on people and society (Flores et al., 2020). Therefore, in an attempt to provide more information on generation bias and its consequences, the concept of intersectionality can be applied to this study. Intersectionality is important because it recognizes that discrimination happens on the basis of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and or disability. In incorporating such complex intersecting identities, one gets to appreciate how generational stereotyping correlates to other social relations to produce marginalization privileges (Tyler, 2019). For example, the first kind of discrimination is registered as age discrimination, which affects older generations, while the second kind of discrimination is cumulative and registered as racial or ethnic discrimination for the aged with extra color, black, for instance (Flores et al., 2020). Likewise, unfamiliarity with youth may lead to stereotypes, such as perceived lack of genuineness/qualification or poor work ethic, which, though, could be amplified for the young marginalized.

This is significant for several reasons: First, it brings more clarity to the characteristics of generational prejudices and their influence on people and society. Second, it assists in providing a picture of how micro-level issues, including power relations, power, and culture, eradicate intergenerational relationships and processes. Third, it has a considerable bearing on policymakers, schools, and anyone interested in enhancing intergenerational respect and relationships. Answering these research questions and taking into consideration the ethical concerns, this research seeks to provide a meaningful contribution to the field of generational research and improve the understanding of ways to build fairer societies. Lastly, as you will discover in this paper, deconstruction becomes a suitable analytical tool for research on "Intersecting Generations" to enable the questioning and analysis of complex and paradoxical dimensions that underlie the various aspects of generations. It will also help in explaining why the differences are likely to exist and how the gaps can be closed. The analysis identified three themes from the interviews: workplace norms, youthful presence,

professional legitimacy and seniority, and the burden of stereotypes.

6. Analysis

This section explores how implicit and explicit norms shape intergenerational relationships and workplace dynamics within Higher Education Institutions. Drawing from participant narratives, it becomes clear that organizational structures, communication patterns, and institutional expectations are deeply entangled with assumptions about age, experience, and competence. Participants described both the challenges and benefits of navigating a multigenerational workforce, highlighting power dynamics, the role of professional hierarchy, and the tension between tradition and innovation. This analysis unpacks how these workplace norms can reinforce stereotypes or foster collaboration, ultimately influencing career progression, mentoring opportunities, and institutional culture.

7.1 Workplace norms

"It's the intersection of gender, race, and class. There's a racial component, and obviously, I'm Latina, so I know there's an ethnicity-racial component in there as well. My assumptions with older workers are to make sure I listen to where they're at because they're giving me valuable insights. Now that I'm also trying to make it easier for the younger generation, I'm trying to give them something I didn't have. I also ask myself how I'm going to communicate with them so that I'm not turning them off with my frustrations about things that have been happening for years. I don't want them to jump through hoops to understand what I'm trying to say. I want it to be helpful for them."

The extract from Katy (40) shows gender, race, and to a certain extent age, pointing to how these relations work in terms of communication and support at the workplace. Katy, as a Latina in the workplace, describes how she had to apply knowledge and intuitions she gained from more experienced workers, but at the same time help her young subordinates the way she wished she had been helped. This can be related to Rodriguez's (2014) work on attitudes of faculty members toward open access (OA) publishing, which also involves the analysis of the generational differences in the context of OA. In this study, Rodriguez also identified that the younger faculty members are more experienced in OA publishing compared to the older ones; thus, there are generational differences. Likewise, Katy is aware of the intergenerational issue at her workplace, hence struggles to close the communication gaps that exist between the young employees. While the extract deals with inter-generational and demographic differences in business communication, the study shows that these differences also exist in academic publishing and stresses the need for overcoming the gap and enhancing inter-group cooperation (Boehm & Kunze, 2014).

"So that depends on the job they have. Because if they're younger than me, but they have a higher title, higher pay, and a higher degree, then I know that, you know, it doesn't matter their age. We're exchanging knowledge, and we're colleagues, or they have way more experience in other areas. I always look up to them, even though traditionally,

as kids, you look up to someone solely by age. But in this case, it's very much a two-way street where we know we have complementary knowledge."

This extract highlights the shift from traditional age-based hierarchies to a more knowledge-based evaluation of colleagues. Jemma (40) recognizes the value of experience and expertise over age, indicating a more collaborative and egalitarian approach to professional relationships. This shift in discourse challenges traditional age-related power structures and promotes a more inclusive and meritocratic environment. Institutions should encourage this perspective for a culture of mutual respect and knowledge exchange, irrespective of age. In these ways, the seeds of a new management, multigenerational management, have been sown. It contains various prescriptions, according to practitioner/er partiality, such as tailored motivational and reward systems, communication technologies that appeal to a particular generation, coaching and mentoring across generational groups, reverse mentoring where technologically savvy Generation Ys tutor their less cognizant elders, flexible work/life balance policies, and training and career development geared to specific generational 'learning styles' (e.g. Feiertag and Berge, 2008; Baily, 2009).

"I also then ask myself, how am I going to communicate with them so that I'm not turning them off if I'm frustrated about something that's been happening for years? I don't want them to jump through hoops to understand what I'm trying to say. I want it to be helpful for them."

The extract from Philip (59) refers to the issues of intergenerational communication, referring to such obstacles as longstanding resentment and the attempt not to upset the young colleagues, making the communication as accessible as possible. This can be related to Jana's (2010) paper on intergenerational work in social work, where the author addresses how social work operates significantly through intergenerational interaction at multiple levels (micro, meso, and macro), particularly concerning care for elderly populations. The concern of the extract and the study is also on the objectives of intergenerational communication, necessary to achieve cooperation between the generations. As he has pointed out, there is a general problem of mixed generation communication, which connects his worry about how to share the message without irritation to the rest of the individuals involved. The role of intergenerational relationships in different spheres of social work is underlined in the study and correlates with those who try to establish purposive and positive interactions with the junior workforce (Scabini & Marta, 2006).

"There's definitely like it's getting better, but that doesn't take away from some age-related discrimination, whether it's overt or not. I don't know what it's like in other areas of the campus, but I know that in a number of institutions, there is that ceiling. And that could also be for norms, right? Like, they put a cap on how far you can go and that's it. I think that's happened to a few folks over the years. It

still happens, maybe less, but it really depends on the intersection. So, there's a better outlook depending on how much preparation they have and their degree and their job title. Those seem to be like the driving factors where it's like...it may be better for them because of those things like not protective factors, but in a sense, right? Like they're a little bit excluded from some of the other the muck, but then if you have like gender and race, you know, added in there. Like, even though their socioeconomic may match and so on and so forth."

Ciara's (55) comment highlights the persistent issue of age-related discrimination and the existence of a glass ceiling (Abbas, Abbas & Ashiq, 2021; Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009) that limits career advancement. This reflects the systemic nature of ageism in institutional practices and norms. The acknowledgment that improvement is happening, yet age-related discrimination persists, indicates the need for continuous efforts to address and dismantle these biases. Institutions must be vigilant in identifying and challenging ageist practices and norms that limit opportunities for older faculty and staff, ensuring that career advancement is based on merit and not constrained by age-related stereotypes. This can be related to age discrimination in the workplace by Davey (2014), where the author has described the importance of age bias, where stereotypes and institutionalization act as a barrier to the availability of job opportunities for older workers. Age discrimination still runs in societies without much concealment, most of the time, comparing the current situation with the past (Boehm & Kunze, 2014). Ciara briefs on how degree, job title and socioeconomic status offers a protective layer from discrimination but explicitly states that those with color, gender, getting the worst of it, in addition to the mentions of Davey that multiple factors (e. g., myths about older workers) join forces to exclude.

"Some of the norms I would say are that there's an unspoken thing where sometimes people will just stagnate your career. It's a norm where they just kind of, like, they may not even realize that they're doing that, like the implicit bias. And that's it. So, I kind of wonder at what point will I not be able to be promoted because someone will think, 'No, it's too expensive to keep me' or 'I'm not seen as someone who will have fresh ideas.' At what point do they feel that it's too expensive to keep me? If I get promoted enough, it's also a double-edged sword. It's too expensive to keep me, and I'm seen as someone who will not have fresh ideas. I've definitely heard that happening across industries. It's across industries, and that's more prevalent. I've definitely had people tell me that. At what point is it too expensive to keep you?"

Normeen (69) highlights the implicit biases and norms that can lead to career stagnation, particularly for older faculty. The concern about being seen as “too expensive” or “not having fresh ideas” reflects ageist assumptions that can impact promotion and

retention. This reveals how institutional discourses and practices can subtly perpetuate age discrimination. The double-edged sword of promotion, being both a mark of achievement and a potential liability, shows the complex dynamics of age-related biases in career advancement. Institutions need to actively address these implicit biases through transparent promotion criteria, anti-ageism training, and policies that value the ongoing contributions of faculty at all career stages.

Loretto et al (2000) explain that any long-term human capital losses can be offset against short-term cost savings. It is therefore right and rational to shed (such as through downsizing) those workers who cost the most, many of whom just happen to be older members of the organization (Loretto et al., 2000). Showing preference for younger employees over older ones leads to a decrease in pension expenses, as well as insurance and healthcare benefit payments. Businesses are ensuring the protection of their primary purpose to sustain and generate profit in the most efficient and economical way. The implicit biases stated by Normeen align with the findings of Loretto et al. (2000). The notion that older employees are "too expensive" to retain reflects a broader organizational trend aimed at cost reduction. This practice, while financially motivated, perpetuates ageism by systematically favoring younger employees over their older counterparts.

“I just think it's different for men and women. They don't always think that it's in the favor of men. I think men get discriminated against too. In certain fields. But I definitely think how it works is very tied to gender. So, for instance, and especially one of the areas of research that I'm probably gonna get into in is leadership...women leadership is a very interesting thing because women leadership is supposed to be at some level a genic, like getting things done, and then women are always been searching because women are stereotyped when they're not communal, women are thought to be...are supposed to be very communal and very, you know, interpersonal. Now leadership, actually the best parts of leadership are the communal parts. And I don't mean best in terms of Oh I can bypass, I mean best in terms of communal actually motivates people more than they can you know, and you have to find a balance and leadership. And they actually think women find that balance earlier than men. But it's kind of held. You know, women go from being somebody to be patted on the head because they're too young to being set aside because they're too old, you know, when it means so I think stuff there, that's, there's some gender stuff there.”

Alice (52) here shared a very interesting point of view regarding women and leadership. She mentioned that naturally, women have that inbuilt quality of being communal and that can make them good leaders, but for that, society probably needs to think beyond stereotypes and biases about women and leadership roles. A study by Chikwe et al. (2024) talks about “double bind” where they explore stereotypically masculine and feminine traits and strategies for women leaders to navigate the societal biases and challenge stereotypes to become successful.

Using Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, it is easy to understand that the employment criteria are formed based on the expectations of performance rather than genes. Stereotypes in the workplace are still rooted in the gender paradigm in which power and skill are associated with the male sex (Butler, 2000). Hence, the performative aspect of gender helps determine workplace standards and impacts perceptions of and treatment of people. For instance, character issues related to leadership, for instance, assertiveness, might be observed to be more desirable when expressed by the male gender in line with the gendered stereotype. Thus, the norms that are present at work, which reflect Butler's point of view, continue to establish gender roles, which influence the professional assessments and actions.

7.2 Youthful presence and professional legitimacy

This section delves into the prevailing assumptions and stereotypes directed at younger faculty and staff within Higher Education Institutions. Participants' accounts reveal that youth is frequently associated with inexperience, a lack of authority, and even entitlement, yet simultaneously linked to innovation, technological competence, and progressive values. These dualistic perceptions often force younger employees to prove their credibility and navigate preconceived notions about their capabilities. Through these narratives, the analysis reflects on how such assumptions shape younger employees' professional identities and impact their career development, sense of belonging, and perceived value within academic environments.

"I would say that there's always sort of they're young and inexperienced. They haven't figured it out yet. So, I think that and that. Then, well, they're old and out of touch. I think that those are sort of prevailing things that you have to then overcome. If you're brand new into it, you're going to have to prove yourself that you know what's going on. And if you're older, you have to prove that. No, I'm still up to date and current. I think people feel that way and then they kind of have to and they wind up having to prove that."

Haily (37) highlights the pervasive stereotypes that both younger and older faculty members must overcome. Younger individuals are seen as inexperienced, while older individuals are perceived as out of touch. This reveals how age-related stereotypes shape expectations and behaviors within academia. Both groups are subject to the pressure of proving their competence, which can perpetuate a cycle of validation seeking and bias reinforcement. Institutions need to address these stereotypes by fostering an environment that values experience and current knowledge equally.

Haily's experiences resonate with the observations made by Duncan and Loretto (2004; pg 97) in the article 'Never the right age' where they state "As everyone is of an age and therefore prone to age discrimination, it is difficult to distinguish oppressor from oppressed." The stereotypes that cast younger faculty as "inexperienced" and older faculty as "out of touch" illustrate the ubiquitous nature of age discrimination in academia. These prevailing notions create a dichotomy where both younger and older faculty members are trapped in a continuous cycle of having to prove their worth and competence. The

reference to Duncan and Loretto's (2004) work underscores the complexity of ageism, where individuals, regardless of their age, are subjected to biases that demand constant validation of their abilities. This environment not only hinders personal and professional growth but also perpetuates systemic inequalities.

"Right now, I have groups who are moving through nursing school that are graduating. And I'm having conversations with them, not about actual nursing and things like that, but they're going to a job that's going to pay them well. And you're getting retirement funds and all these other things and some of them are like, 'I have no idea what that is.'"

Ryan (45) here indicates a generational gap in knowledge about financial and retirement planning, suggesting that younger individuals might lack practical life skills and knowledge that older generations take for granted. This highlights the need for educational institutions to provide more comprehensive support and education that goes beyond academic knowledge, addressing practical life skills. By doing so, institutions can help bridge the gap between different generations and better prepare students for all aspects of their professional and personal lives. Ryan's observation aligns with the insights provided by Ann Fishman regarding generational differences in preferences and decision-making processes. The lack of practical financial knowledge among younger individuals reflects a broader trend where generational gaps in life skills and knowledge are evident. Fishman's analysis underscores that different generations have distinct needs and preferences, which require tailored communication and educational approaches.

"Oh, if I'm in a classroom, I always ask a student to plug up all the computer stuff for me. They are digital natives. I am not. I mean, I know how to dial a telephone with a real dial on it. We were doing an opera here once that involved having one of those. We had to teach the students how to use it. Holy God, okay...I think, and this again is a sweeping generalization. Writing is degenerated horribly among younger people. Because they don't read as much. When I give students big reading assignments, they usually don't finish them. And then, you know, I don't give students assignments that I wouldn't be willing to do myself. But I think, you know, the use of these things has got people down to reading just a screen full at a time rather than the longer arc of something."

This extract underscores the stereotype of younger individuals as "digital natives" who are presumed to excel at technology but lack traditional skills like reading and writing. Courtney (64) expresses a generational divide in educational practices and expectations. The concept of "digital natives," as coined by Prensky (2001), suggests that younger generations are innately proficient with technology due to their constant exposure to digital environments. Similarly, Tapscott (2008) describes them as "bathed in bits," while Eisner (2005) refers to them as "the

most technically literate." However, these positive attributes are often juxtaposed with criticisms from earlier generations, who may view younger individuals as "intellectually vacuous, narcissistic, and dumbed-down by their technologies" (Bauerlein & Walesh, 2009).

"I think because I'm younger, folks assume I know technology much better than older people. And that's generally true. It's not the case for everybody, but. that stereotype of, oh, you're young, you can do anything tech related. I'm not that way. Like I get really frustrated if my computer or my phone or something doesn't work. But I do have a proficiency in Excel and Docs and stuff like that because that is my work."

Keily's 27 experience corroborates the findings of Kennedy et al. (2008), who questioned the belief that younger people, commonly referred to as "digital natives," possess an innate aptitude for technology usage. While it is often assumed that younger generations possess superior technological skills, Kennedy et al. (2008) found that these differences are not as pronounced as commonly believed. The notion that younger folks possess innate proficiency in technology might create excessive expectations, resulting in frustration when they discover technological difficulties. The competency of Keily in certain tools is a result of their employment requirements, rather than their age. This emphasizes the significance of acknowledging unique experiences and skill sets.

"I assume they have much more progressive ideas about gender. And neurodiversity and different views around social justice. It also sends a deep apathy in terms of civic engagement. I, and not just civic engagement, but engagement in school. It feels, and this might be a product of the post COVID world, right? But I get a sense of entitlement, almost like participation...I show up, I paid for this, I deserve this kind of thing...And a little bit of lack of resourcefulness, which I attribute to like overprotective parents who don't, you know, teach them how to register for classes on their own or whatever, so some good, some bad, I guess. I think, yes, there are biases and stereotypes in society, unfortunately."

The extract from Eesha (60) focuses on the generational concerns, especially with regard to social justice, participation, entitlement, and proactivity. The participant perceives both pros and cons regarding young generations, some of which are due to life after COVID or overprotection from their parents. Referring to this, we can relate the given case to Van Rossem (2019), which focuses on generational identification and stereotyping in the workplace. Van Rossem's work underscores that generational identity influences the way individuals think about the generation to which he or she belong, as well as other generations, enhancing in-group and out-grouping. Hence, Raymer et al (2017)'s work also indicates that generational stereotyping defines interactions in multi-generational settings. Eesha's ideas that young people have progressive ideas but at the same time, are not a useful fit, the results of the study that showed cross tabulation of how generations perceive each other along social categories apart from age.

The expectancy and cynicism that she referred to may be considered in connection with what these studies identified as the ways that generational identity provokes expectations/engagement.

"But it depends. If they're student workers or if they have many degrees or less, or like less time, then my assumptions are that they're still developing their leadership. They're also still developing, even their brain structure. They don't have all the institutional knowledge or workplace and life knowledge. Sometimes it's like, oh, I realize that to do the thing we were collaborating on or that they were doing with me, you need to have a foundation of this, and they haven't had enough life experience to even have that. Because what I may not have in education, I have in years of being able to practice and feel comfortable with myself, and they're still developing as people."

The quote from Bradley (63) reveals the belief that employees, especially those who joined the organization at a younger age or lack experience in life or work, have not grown intellectually or emotionally to make managerial-level decisions. This is also in sync with the theory of emerging adulthood presented by Tanner and Arnett (2016), where the period of life from 18-25 years is characterized as an exploratory, unsettled, and self-absorbed phase. According to Reitan and Stenberg (2019), we can speak about the emergence of adulthood as a different stage in people's lives that is not closely related to adolescence or young adulthood, and people during this period build their identity and experience in life. His opinion that younger workers are still building blocks of knowledge accords with the idea of emerging adulthood suggested by the studies. In both the extract and the theory, there are concerns with highlighting the developments of this stage at the professional level.

"They're still developing as people, as who they are as adults. Emerging adulthood is a thing, right? They're still emerging in that kind of way. So, it just depends. When you say younger, I have anywhere from 18 years of age to people in their 30s that are younger than me. I'm 39, about to be 40 in July. So yes, it's a wide range. I've tried to meet people where they're at. So, my assumptions are that I can have no assumptions."

Katy's evaluation of some of the young employees underlines what is considered a person in the process of human growth for people between the ages of 18 and 30 years. This aligns with Tanner and Arnett's (2016) theory of emerging adulthood, where the person between the ages of 18 and 25 is considered to be in a unique life stage where he or she is constantly seeking identity, experiences instability, and self-centeredness. She understands this developmental period by stating that young people are 'still developing,' and stresses that they encounter varying degrees of maturity and development in people they meet, depending on people's age and experience. The participant's approach of 'meeting people where they are' operationalizes emerging adulthood as a contextual and developmental period in transition, which is in tune with Reitan and Stenberg's idea. In this context, their assertion that they "can have no assumptions" may

resonate with the fact that people in the transitional phase have not given themselves a clear identity, and a certain measure of uncertainty is inevitable, at least until the subject has found themselves (Reitan & Stenberg, 2019).

Younger workers are assumed to be less experienced or competent, which is linked to gender performativity and societal expectations. Thus, Butler's theory has shown how the social norms and norms of appropriateness create the perceptions of age and gender, resulting in stereotypical notions towards young people. In many cases, such assumptions are derived from the performative elements that 'govern' appropriate conduct for disparate age categories. As a result, young people experience pressure to adhere to a certain standard rather than being appreciated for who they are and what they have to offer, including in the professional world.

7.3 Seniority and the burden of stereotypes

This section critically examines how older faculty and staff are perceived within Higher Education Institutions, particularly in relation to their adaptability, leadership potential, and ongoing relevance. Participants shared mixed impressions, celebrated older workers as institutional memory and bearers of rich experience, while others questioned their technological proficiency or assumed resistance to change. These assumptions often reflect broader societal discourses on aging, which frame older professionals through either reverence or obsolescence. By analyzing these perspectives, this section highlights how such assumptions affect older individuals' opportunities for continued engagement, advancement, and recognition in academia.

"We discuss the generational thing all the time. Because there is. Such sometimes issues of the generations hitting. Just in terms of. Again, it kind of goes back to the same thing. It's the education versus the experience."

This extract highlights the ongoing discussion and tension between different generations, particularly focusing on the dichotomy of education versus experience. These conversations underscore how generational differences are often framed in terms of a trade-off between formal education and practical experience.

Bradley's (63) remark is consistent with the observations made by Cuddy and Fiske (2002), who discuss the reciprocal tendency to stereotype between younger and older generations. Younger persons frequently perceive older individuals as universally inept, whereas older individuals regard youth as undisciplined and inconsiderate. The conflict between generations inside the workplace, as stated by her, is based on mutual stereotyping. The conflict between formal education and practical experience is a common topic in discussions between different generations. Younger generations, who have recently completed their formal schooling, are occasionally seen as lacking practical experience. On the other hand, older generations, who have a vast amount of practical knowledge, might be seen as disconnected from the most recent educational breakthroughs and technological progress. This contrast can lead to conflict and misinterpretations in the professional environment, as each generation may underestimate the merits of the other.

"I will be retiring next year. People think old people are like dinosaurs because I have been here for the last 37 years. They call me the institutional memory of this campus."

Normeen (69) here reflects on the stereotype of older individuals being outdated, yet also acknowledges the value of being considered the "institutional memory." This duality showcases how older faculty are often undervalued for being perceived as out of touch while simultaneously being relied upon for their extensive knowledge and experience. Her reflection aligns with Lerner's (1957) observation about the cultural tendency to devalue older individuals, often treating them as the "fag end of what was once good material." This notion is deeply ingrained in societal attitudes, where the most flattering remarks are those that suggest an individual does not look or act their age, implicitly framing aging as a negative trait. The stereotype of senior faculty members as "dinosaurs" implies that they are perceived as outdated artefacts in a swiftly changing academic environment. Being referred to as the "institutional memory" of the campus signifies a profound recognition of the extensive knowledge and historical understanding that these persons hold. The presence of two contrasting perspectives highlights the intricate and frequently conflicting views held towards senior faculty members.

"I think some assumptions are made about how we look at things. When I was a student. You know, when you were looking at history, you were looking backwards at what happened, when it happened. What was the result of it? Now you're looking at it more in anthropological or sociological terms. You're looking at where, what you are looking at is situated in the society you're looking at. And a lot of people haven't kept up with that, but most people have. So, sometimes I think some of the newer scholars take it a little too far...the one direction but they probably think I take it too far in the other direction you know we need to find a balance. I think they are generalizations that people make and I think when people watch the other person, you know, the older person or the younger person teach, very often they are surprised at how much both sides of that equation are integrated into the presentation. Beautiful thing."

This comment by James (60), a dean as well as educator, illustrates the evolving perspectives in academic disciplines and the generational differences in approaching subjects like history. He understands that while newer scholars may adopt more contemporary, interdisciplinary approaches, there is value in traditional methods as well. Finding a balance between these perspectives can enrich the academic environment. The integration of both approaches in teaching highlights the potential for mutual learning and collaboration across generations. Also, his observation about the assumptions and evolving perspectives in academia aligns with Lockwood's (2009) discussion on the multigenerational workforce. Lockwood highlights that organizations today benefit from having multiple generations working side by side, each bringing unique perspectives, expectations, work styles, and strengths. This diversity, despite potential conflicts, presents an opportunity for organizations to leverage these assets for competitive advantage.

"So, my initial biases are that they may be out of touch, with what's

going on. Not just with the students, but also with the worker bees, the staff people that really, execute all of their policy on a day-to-day basis. Like if I thought of mine, for example, I don't think, you know, at all, but I do...and I've worked here for, you know, 8 years. So, I definitely have, you know, when I meet new people, I'm very focused on how they speak about their students, how they speak about their staff. I also do assume that there might be limitations in their technology use. So generally, if I'm asking someone to do or learn a new process in a new software, for example, I usually will create some guidelines that have screenshots for people so they have that visual reference. Especially because we're in our department, a lot of our people are visual learners."

Jonathan (35) shares a widely held conception about older people, but younger individuals can also face this issue, as not every individual is interested in advanced technology. It can be heard from business students, human resource managers, and line managers (Gibson et al., 1993; Lyon & Pollard, 1997; Loretto et al., 2000; Henkens, 2005). A common claim is that older people are resistant to new technology, unable or unwilling to take it on board or to update their skills. It is observed that 'older workers face hard times when dynamic technology changes are taking place' but as Fineman (2011) mentions in one of his chapters, "If older workers can learn as well, if somewhat differently, from their younger counterparts, some of the ageist stereotype is undermined. But maybe older workers do, simply prefer 'not to get into new stuff'."

"I think sometimes I conflate age and tenure a little bit because of those power dynamics there. You know, I think when I was really limited to working in my department, I would say that the younger faculty work significantly harder...older faculty, they're more physically present on campus. They're involved in much more, you know, they're just involved in a way that older faculty tend not to be."

Adam (48) explains how older workers typically perform as well as younger workers and outstrip them in many areas (Salthouse & Maurer, 1996; Wood et al., 2008; Griffiths, 2009). Older people may well experience decline in some sensory and motor areas, such as vision and reaction time, but they are often more safety conscious than younger workers and have higher levels of organizational commitment and loyalty. They are also likely to adopt different compensatory ways of problem solving, such as enhanced anticipation and more efficient search strategies (Griffiths, 2009). This quote reveals an assumption that younger faculty work harder while older faculty may be more involved in broader campus activities. This perception of differing work dynamics highlights how age and tenure can influence one's roles and responsibilities within the institution.

"Another one would be if they're a white older person, I assume that they don't have any language around racial equity or appropriate language or students with disabilities...and I get a lot of push back from older people as I try to institute, you know, racial equity and disability equity, procedures

in the department."

Katy assumes that older white co-workers would not understand or would find it difficult to express themselves racially, and that disability rights are a function of differences in eras of diversity and inclusion. She also expresses the challenge they encounter whenever they try to integrate equity procedures, pointing out generational differences in this regard. This insight is in line with Hammarström's (2005) argument on intergenerational relationships, especially in relation to family and social structures. Hammarström critically discusses the theoretical premises of intergenerational solidarity; the author concludes that the concept of 'mechanical solidarity,' which presupposes similarity, might not capture the essence of intergenerational relations in situations where the problem of value incommensurability is acute. As Flora suffers from colleagues who may not possess the same perception of equity as his/her own, contradictions or conflicts within the intergenerational frame can also be observed in Mangelson, Bengtson, and Landry Jr, 1988's work.

"There was so much lack of respect. For in particular women who had secretarial roles, you know? Like, so much of that, right? And so, I could see why. They had established certain communication patterns, certain mindsets with workplace attitudes and behaviors because it had been so toxic for so long. They had so many formative workplace experiences in that toxic environment. So, in my mindset, I was like, here's someone who appears to be bitter but for a good reason. They were so underutilized that it was really sad. This was someone who could have done so much, but gender, socio-economic factors, and a boatload of other things just cut their potential short. Their leadership potential, their earning potential, and so many contributions were cut short."

When looking at Jaya's (28) comment, her response demonstrates how gender, socioeconomic status, and toxic work culture restrict the possibilities for women, particularly for secretaries. This is in line with August and Quintero's (2001) analysis of the opportunity structures, in which the authors talk about opportunity structures, focusing on how characteristics of the broader environment, including organizational memberships and historical precedents, influence the career patterns of older women. Pointing out that it can act as a barrier and also as an enabler, the article also notes that it influences leadership and earnings in careers. In secretarial occupations, women faced a double-edged sword where systematic hindrances and prejudice restrained them from climbing the ladder and exercising more agency. Such a relationship shows how structural workplace inequalities may influence career advancement, retirement, and policy, hence the need for interventions to redress such constraints and create more career options (Heilman, 2012).

"So that was kind of my impression of them in the past, and of course, it's moved on because I've also gotten older. Now, I see there's so much possibility. And actually, the more professionalization we have, the better conversations I'm having. I

talked about the staff member who came in, and the fact that they have a new lease on life. Now, I'm happy that we have more professional development and more acceptance. My assumption is always to remember that people communicate from where they're at and what's been formed by their experiences. I try to look for a semantic interpretation versus a latent one because sometimes someone will lead with frustrations."

Pearl's (54) attitude shift towards the announced professional development programs reflects the overall notion that such procedures enhance communication and career growth. First, they thought they had some restrictive patterns as to how the people interacted and worked within the professional context due to their past experiences, and a lack of opportunity to develop. Despite this, she noted that with better professionalization and development opportunities, the worker gets to see more constructive discussions and revived interest among the staff. This shift supports Borg's (2018) discussion of the effects of professional development. However, Borg argues that structured Professional Development Interventions (PDIs) have significant importance in improving teacher competence and communication. Professional development may promote better conversations and dispositions since it enables individuals to manage their frustrations and communicate appropriately. Brody and Hadar (2011) underline that such impacts should be measured as they pinpoint that the positive effects of the PDIs are able to considerably improve the identification and quality of words and actions in professional interactions.

"From a UX perspective, frustrations are gold, and from pain points? Gold. Historically, people have tuned out when someone's like, quote-unquote, being negative, but it's not them being negative—they're giving you amazing data. They're giving you genuine insights, like 'Please don't make the same mistakes I did.' They may lead with negative experiences, but it's out of a place of love because it's the unspoken rules of work. When they tell you stuff, it's because they went through the school of hard knocks. That's the thing—the school of hard knocks is a thing. So, my assumption is that it's still a mixed bag because we still have some folks who had years of being treated poorly."

This is in coherence with Katy's (40) sentiment that frustrations and pain points are useful in generating useful data on work-related outcomes, as found out by Liu et al. (2010) in their study on emotion regulation. That is why they state that by applying reappraisal, the negative experiences can be regarded not only as complaints. The study done by Liu et al. reveals that the subjects who use reappraisal, which is the process of changing the meaning of a negative circumstance to an adaptive one, also report improvements in job satisfaction and performance. Thus, it provides evidence that overall, recognizing and solving frustrations may result in better emotional indices and, therefore, individual professional growth. This is a view highly compatible with the possibility that managing and, in particular, learning from negative experiences helps increase job satisfaction and performance.

Preconceptions of older workers as being rigid, less innovative, or flexible or adaptable

can be explained by the Butler gender performativity theory. Such assumptions stem from the prejudices ingrained in a society's age construct, in which people in their 'golden years' are stereotyped in accordance with the way they perform activities that are expected of them. Butler's framework also has a role to play in how such age-related stereotypes weave with gender stereotypes, especially for women of a certain age. In this way, Butler's theory explicates the manner in which aging and gender performativeness affect the way professionals approach older employees.

7. Discussion

When we think about age, the first thing that may come to our mind is that age is just a number. But when it comes to age in HEIs, it is not just numbers but a great deal of perspectives, experiences, and exposure. As much as age diversity can be a source of strength, unfortunately, it can lead to injustice, inequalities, and a lot of judgment, which is due to the stereotypes and myths in society. In Fineman's book *Organizing Age* (2011), he states that stereotypes make the simple and manageable the complex and varied: they chunk the social world into ready and undemanding categories, and the other group is invariably homogeneous in the perceiver's eyes. For youngsters, stereotyping, old people are pretty much alike in their 'incompetence' while, in the eyes of old people, teenagers are 'typically ill-disciplined and thoughtless' (Cuddy & Fiske, 2002). It is very sad to notice that there are occasions when the discriminator is not even aware of the prejudices, and they just act out for fun and speak words that are hurtful without thinking twice. The discrimination cannot be put down to the calculated actions of a single manager or a small number of bigoted individuals. The discrimination is deeply embedded in the organization's culture, and it 'just happens' (Feagin & Feagin, 1978; Murji, 2007). Our CVs and biographies are saturated with age signposts, embedded in our educational and work history. Even a candidate's first name can be age-indicative, given the generational fashions for particular names. (Bennington and Wein 2002).

During the interviews, I heard so many mean comments that were said to the participants, and they were extremely hurtful and brutal for someone's state of mind. It is not ethical to call anyone "too old" or "too young" or too new" or "he might have forgotten everything he learnt." It is a bit different when complex skills are involved, though. (Kubeck et al, 1996). Mowery and Kamlet (1993) explored a very interesting aspect regarding the older generation, where older workers matched their younger colleagues when learning new technological skills. The most difficult myths about dysfunctional aging are those that have been integrated into the organization's belief system and culture. Indeed, positive aging initiatives have been meant to prevent that stereotype through persuasive information programs and effective leadership. Positive aging counters the stereotypes with a message of 'positive' moral and economic obligation. Older people are not to be judged according to invalid and inappropriate stereotypes and be socially excluded: they are to be integrated as productive and economically valuable citizens (Biggs, 2004).

As a part of HEI, we need to make sure that these groups of generations work together instead of being competitors, otherwise the system will lose the game. There should not be anything such as moving someone aside just for someone else to succeed to the throne. If institutes put more worth on newer teachers, they run the danger of missing out on the valuable opinions and insights that come from having older lecturers. This may cause a lower standard for teaching, investigation, and advising services generally. In order to end these biases, it is

necessary for educational institutions to adopt equitable promotional practices that pay attention to excellence as well as seniority. At the same time, they must understand how much long-term value experienced tutors have in academia, such as their ability to attract or mentor junior scholars. On top of that, there should be supportive spaces where all lecturers will continue learning throughout their lives and develop professionally, whether or not they are elderly. Such support may involve providing access to workshops, conferences, and mentorship programs aimed at helping instructors keep up with innovations. By doing so, schools can help create an academic community that is more inclusive, just like nurturing old and young together, by recognizing teachers with varied expertise regardless of their age.

The analysis identified three themes from the interviews: workplace norms, youthful presence, professional legitimacy, seniority, and the burden of stereotypes. The participants had so many stories to discuss, which made me think that it seems like nothing to have an assumption in mind, but it is extremely limiting and full of misunderstandings as well. A young person could assume that the older faculty member shows resistance to change, but maybe his past experience or experience makes him think twice about it. Similarly, the younger worker could have innovative and refreshing ideas about research or work-life balance that could benefit his whole department, but nobody is willing to take him seriously just because he is young and new. If these generations could give each other some air, let go of the assumptions and biases, they would create an environment that every employee would actually want to go to for work.

To counteract such stereotypes, educational institutions need to embrace comprehensive approaches that acknowledge and appreciate the different input of faculty at every stage of their career. This entails developing policies that enhance continuous professional growth, creating mentorship programs to bridge generational gaps, learning and discussing anti-discriminatory policies, and fostering an inclusive culture that recognizes both innovative ideas and experience. And specifically for the older generation, institutions should have support for continuous professional development or be flexible about working hours by offering options such as teleworking. The aforementioned can be done by addressing such prejudices, hence making sure that faculties are evaluated on the grounds of merit instead of age. Intergenerational collaboration may involve having cross-generational teams, building up a culture based on respect and appreciation, as well as tackling stereotypes related to age. Therefore, these actions will lead to recognition and appreciation of the contributions of elderly teachers who promote inclusivity within academia, leading towards a fairer community among students (Park et al., 2020).

8. Limitations

One notable limitation of this research on intersecting generations in higher education is its reliance on a binary classification of age groups, which may oversimplify the complexities of aging and inadvertently reinforce stereotypical representations. As stated in the chapter, this approach may only perpetuate stereotypical representations rather than understanding aging as a relational concept. The study recognizes that age should be considered as a spectrum; however, the available literature and research approaches may not necessarily provide sufficient insights into how age intersects with gender, race, and class at institutions. In addition, the concentration on the institutional regulation and the formal settings may fail to capture the day-to-day interactions of faculty and staff, thus restricting the analysis of how individuals' experience influences intergenerational dynamics. Finally, it could be noted that the use of qualitative data collection methods could have been made even more beneficial by including a list of participants

that would provide a more extensive representation of individuals from different generations studying or working in higher education settings.

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1. Conclusion

1.1 Revisiting the Research Purpose

The research aimed to critically investigate how age shapes experiences, contributions, and expectations in work settings. While age is often treated as a neutral marker of seniority or capability, it carries complex social meanings that influence how individuals are valued, included, or marginalized across different organizational contexts. The study began by exploring how age diversity impacts innovation in the workplace, emphasizing its potential and tensions. It then turned to the Higher Education Institutions to investigate how age intersects with gender and institutional norms to shape academic identity and intergenerational dynamics.

An overview of how age diversity impacts both exploratory and exploitative innovation was given in Chapter One. The chapter mapped out the interpersonal and intrapersonal antecedents of age diversity through a thorough literature analysis, highlighting how multigenerational teams can be a source of creative synergy and conflict. It proved that although age-diverse workforces can stimulate creativity, achieving this potential depends heavily on organizational culture, leadership styles, and inclusiveness measures.

Chapter Two focused on gendered aging by examining how institutional norms produce the “ideal academic” as male, middle-aged, and unencumbered. Using qualitative interviews and critical discourse analysis, this chapter highlighted women's bodily and performative strategies, significantly younger and older women, to navigate, resist, and survive in environments shaped by masculinized and ageist expectations. This chapter illuminated how bodies that deviate from the normative academic image often face institutional marginalization, stereotyping, or invisibility.

Chapter Three deepened the investigation by concentrating on intergenerational dynamics within HEIs, particularly how age-based assumptions shape workplace interactions, hierarchies, and legitimacy. It explored how faculty and administrators construct and experience “young” and “old” identities, revealing how these categories are not neutral but are profoundly shaped by power, discourse, and cultural expectations. The analysis underscored how age norms are embedded in institutional structures and interpersonal relations, often reinforcing exclusionary narratives while offering moments of resistance and re-signification.

Together, these inquiries reflect a broader aim: to uncover how age operates as a powerful yet often invisible force within organizational cultures, and to challenge the assumptions that shape who is seen as credible, productive, or out of place at work.

2. Key Findings: A Spectrum of Experiences

2.1 Age diversity and Innovation

The research conducted as part of Chapter 1 found and concluded that age diversity is a gateway to innovation. The multiple age groups pave the way for providing a multidimensional thought process, which is the gateway to productivity and creativity. By limiting age diversity, organizations, whether educational or corporate, restrict the opportunities for growth and diversification on both personal and professional levels. (Ali, M., Ng, Y. L., & Kulik, C. T. (2014). Moreover, age diversity enhances problem-solving abilities by integrating new perspectives from the young generation and experienced judgment by the older generation through varied approaches and experiential insights. The literature highlights that diverse age teams contribute to broader problem-solving capabilities and improve organizational ambidexterity by supporting explorative and exploitative innovation (Cui et al., 2019; Wegge et

al., 2012). Research further suggests that age diversity fosters collaborative knowledge-sharing, mitigates groupthink, and encourages critical reflection, especially when supported by inclusive leadership and culture (Pitt-Catsouphes et al., 2013). Therefore, when different generations interact, that creates a cycle of continuous learning, mentorship for one another, and adaptive thinking. These findings underline that effective age diversity management is not just a demographic concern but a strategic lever for innovation and long-term organizational resilience.

2.2 Younger Women and the Battle for Credibility

Establishing authority and professional credibility is still a significant struggle for younger females from the corporate and academic sectors. Numerous participants claimed that it had been taken for students, a practice that reflects generalised societal prejudice that attaches inexperience to young women (Duncan & Loretto, 2004). These prejudices lead young women to assume performative habits, such as dressing formally, to meet professional standards (Granleese & Sayer, 2006). Scarlet's description of being regarded as a student demonstrates how such dynamics disproportionately impact women of colour, leading to the embodied intersectionality of age, gender, and race (Turner et al., 2008). These results reinforce the necessity of reframing academic credibility in terms of vision beyond assumptions.

2.3 Mid-Career Women: Coping with Marginalisation

As women academics continue to develop their careers, they face changing but similarly demanding manifestations of gendered ageism. While younger women are held to account for a perceived lack of experience, mid-career workers tend to be marginalised and made invisible. Gracie's and other stories illustrate how economic status further exacerbates these difficulties, since those who cannot achieve visual appearances of "professionalism" can expect further discrimination (Warhurst et al., 2009). This is an example of how academic performative norms continue to be exclusionary, favoring youth ideals of productivity over diverse input (Steffan & Loretto, 2025).

Older Women: The 'Softening' Effect

Senior women academics and corporate professionals confront the bitter reality of being judged as "soft" and inferior to men, as outlined by Blake and Suzy (refer to chapter 2). These results are consistent with Butler's (1993) contention that ageing bodies, especially females, are made unviable in normative professional spaces. While men of advancing age in academia might receive respect and authority, women of advancing age tend to see declining worth, and their exclusion from leadership and decision-making remains (Riach et al., 2015). This contrast illustrates how gender and age intersect to produce non-equitable ageing pathways.

Intersectionality and Exclusion

The participants in the study highlighted the intersectional effects compounded, especially for women and men of colour. Stella's experiences (refer to chapter 2) show how race compounds the difficulties of age and gender, building layers of exclusion and discrimination specifically in educational institutions (Bourabain, 2021). The scrutiny of her physical presence and professional legitimacy shows how deeply ingrained these biases are, supporting Sen's (2002) findings on ethnicity power dynamics. Tackling these intersecting modes of marginalisation is essential to creating a genuinely inclusive academic culture.

The Role of Appearance and Bodywork

A dominant theme in the findings is the pressure on women academics to perform "bodywork" to fit professional norms. Participants described changing their appearance, dress,

and behaviour to meet institutional expectations of the "ideal academic worker" (Butler, 1997). This performative requirement illustrates more general societal values that emphasize youthfulness, vitality, and masculinity, but at the cost of uniqueness and authenticity (Rosa, 2022). This encourages a cycle of exclusion that requires women to spend disproportionate energy merely to be seen and regarded.

2.4 Implications for Higher Education Institutions

Challenging Normative Ideals

The results require a critical rethinking of the ideals that have become the norm of the organizational structures that underpin Higher Education Institutions and corporate firms. By giving precedence to a middle-aged, male-coded paradigm, HEIs reinforce structural inequalities that marginalize not only women but also minority groups. To make the environment more inclusive, the institutions need to reorganise the qualities of the "ideal academic" to appreciate diverse trajectories, experiences, and identities (Riach & Loretto, 2014). When the institutions enhance their construct, it will automatically start producing the leaders who will transform the organizational approach in the corporate sector. If seen through a microscopic lens, the issue of having ageism and sexism in the workplace (whether academic or corporate) is due to a lack of proper education on the importance of equal opportunities for talent irrespective of age and gender.

2.5 Structural Reforms and Policy Recommendations

Mitigating the systemic discrimination due to this meticulous and astute study needs a multi-pronged strategy. Higher Education Institutes and corporate firms ought to adopt policies that:

1. Foster non-discriminatory hiring and advancement practices, dampening the effect of appearance-related biases (van den Brink & Benschop, 2014).
2. Design mentorship programmes that assist women, men, and minorities to overcome the stresses of academic and, especially, corporate environments.
3. Offer training to senior personnel on identifying and countering unconscious gender and age-related biases.
4. Encourage open discussions regarding the effects of gendered ageism, with a perspective of engaging all parties in a collective action plan designed to confront and uproot discriminatory practices.
5. Providing a room for growth and a platform to share the bias if faced by anyone irrespective of gender, age, and socio-economic factors.

2.6 Encouraging Positive Ageism

Leadership in Higher Education Institutes and corporate firms should make inclusivity a number one priority, so that women, men, and minority groups are all included equally at every level of decision-making. By proactively confronting the obstacles faced by people irrespective of age and gender, leaders can establish a precedent of tolerance and nurture a welcoming environment for all genders and ages (Jack et al., 2018). Inclusive leadership not only diversifies the academic and corporate community but also enhances its ability to innovate and reimburse the intellectual diversity offered by experience, of old age, and energy, of young age.

2.7 Theoretical Contributions and Future Directions

This study pushes academics to think critically about a subject that has received little attention despite being present in daily academic and professional life. This research explored

impact of gendered ageing by exploring the intersection of cultural norms forcefully associated with the individuals demeaning their professional strength and instead focusing on elements of nature such as age and gender, effects of ethnicity and how again age and gender bias is found again at the root of discrimination, and above all the institutional discrimination. Through the integration of Butlerian theories and evidence-based research, this research provides us with a critical examination of gendered ageism in HEIs (Butler, 2006). This future scholarship needs to build on these discoveries through comparative contexts of studies across different cultural and institutional settings and non-binary and trans faculty of colour experiences.

3. A Call for Collective Action

It is crucial that, in the ever-changing landscape of education and corporate employment, educated leaders come forward collectively and ensure that there is enough work done on policies, procedures, and systems to uproot discrimination based on age and gender entirely. The professional conduct and authenticity of an individual must be recognized as key identifiers of the potential rather than their age, gender, or physical appearance. No ethnic group should feel discriminated against based on their ethnic belonging, coupled with that of age and gender, and no force can stop the mighty structures of successful organizations from crumbling. To ensure long-term existence and sustainability, organizations, whether academic or corporate, need to eliminate every type of discrimination. As Butler (1993) highlights, building comfortable lives for everyone is not merely an ethical requirement but also a condition for social advancement. The results of this study confirm the overbearing need for academia and corporations to seize this vision of building a space where every voice can flourish.

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Appendix A

Table 4 List of participants (Chapter 2)

	Name	Age	Sex	Duration	Position
1	Alice	52	Female	55 mins	Full Professor and Principal Investigator
2	Margret	58	Female	70 mins	Assistant Professor and PI
3	Julia	41	Female	59 mins	Full Professor and PI
4	Scarlet	31	Female	55 mins	Assistant Professor
5	Diana	32	Female	45 mins	Assistant Professor
6	Kathy	32	Female	80 mins	Assistant Professor
7	Stella	31	Female	50 mins	Assistant Professor
8	Ryan	45	Male	45 mins	Lab Stimulation Manager and Mentor
9	Suzy	53	Female	65 mins	Full Professor and PI
10	Adam	48	Male	45 mins	Professor and Course Coordinator
11	Viola	40	Female	53 mins	Assistant Professor
12	Gracie	46	Female	60 mins	Full Professor and PI
13	Jaqline	52	Female	36 mins	Full Professor and PI
14	Angela	28	Female	45 mins	Assistant Professor

Table 5 Emerged themes (Chapter 2)

Dominant Discourse	Themes	Keywords	Quotes
Critical Discourse of Ageism/Age related discrimination	Not too young; Seen as a student	Youth, inexperience, credibility	"I've heard that there might be a preference for older candidates with more experience, which makes it difficult to enter the field at a younger age." "There's an expectation that young women professors should always look pleasant but not too friendly." "Being younger can be nice if you're really trying to connect with students, but it's harder to be taken seriously."

Sexualization and femininity	From sexualized objects to 'soft things'	Femininity, body image, sexualization	"There's an expectation that women professors should always look pleasant but not too friendly." "I find myself being judged by my appearance more than my work in some cases." "Being a woman, there's always this expectation to maintain certain 'feminine' standards of dress to be taken seriously."
Performativity and Authority	Bodywork to pass 'pass' as a faculty member	Dress, authority, professionalism	"Being younger can be nice if you're really trying to connect with students, but it's harder to be taken seriously." "I feel I have to dress in a particular way just to be seen as a professor." "If I don't dress formally, I'm immediately seen as less credible in my role."

Table 6 List of participants (Chapter 3)

	Name	Age	Sex	Duration	Position
1	Katy	40	Female	50 mins	Student Success Coordinator
2	Jemma	40	Female	55 mins	Graduate Student Coordinator
3	Philip	59	Male	80 mins	Dean
4	Ciara	55	Female	45 mins	Associate Dean
5	Normeen	69	Female	61 mins	Administrator
6	Alice	52	Female	55 mins	Full Professor & Researcher
7	Haily	37	Female	65 mins	Assistant Director
8	Ryan	45	Male	45 mins	Lab Stimulation Manager, Mentor and Instructor
9	Courtney	64	Female	65 mins	Adjunct Professor
10	Keily	27	Female	50 mins	Interim Graduate Program Coordinator
11	Eesha	60	Female	53 mins	Adjunct Professor
12	Bradley	63	Male	60 mins	Instructional Specialist
13	James	60	Male	75 mins	Dean and Professor
14	Jonathan	35	Male	55 mins	Assistant Director
15	Adam	48	Male	45 mins	Professor and Course Coordinator
16	Jaya	28	Female	59 mins	Administrator

17	Pearl	45	Female	49 mins	Director
18	Flora	60	Female	45 mins	Program Coordinator
19	Molly	72	Male	70 mins	Professional Service Specialist
20	Faith	55	Female	65 mins	Director

Table 7 Emerged themes (Chapter 3)

Discourse	Themes	Keywords	Quotes
Workplace norms and Institutional culture	Workplace norms	Implicit bias, role expectations, institutional stereotype, presumption	"There's an expectation that women professors are less committed if they take parental leave." "Some may think stereotypically the younger ones don't want to work hard, they just want flexibility." "Preconceived notions about younger staff members impact their ability to be heard in meetings." "Younger appearance led to presumption of less competence."
Assumptions about younger faculty and staff	Youthful presence and professional legitimacy	Digital natives label, perceived inexperience, professionally immature, underestimated	"Being a younger faculty member, you are sometimes not taken seriously in meetings." "No one ever thinks I'm the professor... treated like a student all the time." "Younger people overestimate their ability and tend to undervalue institutional processes." "They're young and inexperienced. They haven't figured it out yet." "Women are patted at the back and set aside because they are either too young for the society or too old."
Assumptions about older faculty and staff	Seniority and the burden of stereotypes	Declining relevance, resistance to change	"There can be a sense that older staff may not be as efficient or savvy with technologies, sometimes it can be a concern among faculty." "Just because someone's in their seventies doesn't mean they're a bad professor."

			"At what point do they feel that it's too expensive to keep me?" "Women are patted at the back and set aside because they are either too young for the society or too old."
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Appendix B

Journal	Articles	Year	Author	Title			Key Finding
Work, Aging and Retirement	3	2022	Dietz, Laura; Fasbender, Ulrike	Age-Diverse Workplace Friendship: A Systematic Literature Review and Recommendations for Future Research	Friendship in the workplace can bridge differences, especially among age-diverse employees, by fostering interpersonal connections and reducing tensions. Age-diverse workplace friendship involves coworkers of different ages engaging in a balanced social exchange, which can help overcome age-related difficulties and negative feelings between individuals. Despite the scarcity of literature on this topic, integrating research on workplace friendship and diversity can provide insights into the formation, maintenance, and outcomes of age-diverse workplace friendships, guided by theories like similarity-attraction, social identity, and socioemotional selectivity		
		2015	Ng, T. W. H.; Feldman, D. C.	The Moderating Effects of Age in the Relationships of Job Autonomy to Work Outcomes			It suggests that older workers may react more positively to job autonomy in terms of job self-efficacy and job performance, but less positively in relation to job satisfaction and affective commitment. The study, based on a meta-analysis of 415 empirical samples, found that job autonomy is significantly linked to various positive work outcomes, providing partial support for both hypotheses
		2020	Jungmann, Franziska; Wegge, Jürgen; Liebermann, Susanne C; Ries, Birgit C; Schmidt, Klaus-Helmut	Improving Team Functioning and Performance in Age- Diverse Teams: Evaluation of a Leadership Training			An article presents a model focusing on productivity in age-diverse teams, introducing a new training for leaders. This training targets improving attitudes towards older employees, fostering appreciation of team diversity, and enhancing performance in age-diverse teams. Evaluation of this training in a German public administration, involving 47 leaders and 221 employees with a training-waiting control group design, showed positive outcomes. The training resulted in increased appreciation of age diversity and reduced age stereotypes among leaders. Additionally, team members, especially younger ones who are more affected by age-diverse teams, reported positive changes in their perceptions of age stereotypes and conflicts. Overall, the newly developed training is recommended as an effective intervention for leaders of age-diverse teams.
Technology Analysis & Strategic Management	3	2022	Lu, Chen; Liu, Zhiying; Xu, Yi; Liao, Suqin; Fu, Lihua	How TMT diversity influences open innovation: an empirical study on biopharmaceutical firms in China			The study reveals that the effectiveness of open innovation strategies is closely linked to the diversity within the TMT. Moreover, the research identifies that different attributes of TMT members, such as surface-level characteristics (e.g., gender and age) and deep-level traits (e.g., functional background), have varying moderating effects on open innovation outcomes. These findings contribute significantly to the understanding of upper echelons theory and the development of open innovation strategies.
		2022	Ji, Jing; Yi, Yaqun	How do TMT conflicts affect exploratory innovation? The moderating effects of team task reflexivity			This research highlights the dual effects of TMT conflicts on exploratory innovation, where relationship conflicts hinder it while task conflicts promote it. Team task reflexivity moderates this relationship, showcasing an inverted U-shaped effect, emphasizing the importance of understanding and managing TMT conflicts for optimal innovation outcomes.
		2020	Tshetshema, Caspar T.; Chan, Kai-Ying	A systematic literature review of the relationship between demographic diversity and innovation performance at team-level			Demographic diversity is a crucial factor in shaping innovation teams, especially in contexts like South Africa where labor markets require transformation in terms of age, gender, and race. Research findings on the impact of demographic diversity on team innovation performance are varied, with a systematic review highlighting that high diversity in age, gender, and culture can enhance team innovation performance individually, although the overall impact of team demographic diversity yields mixed results. This study emphasizes the significance of moderators that can be utilized to create team formation policies influencing the direct effects of demographic diversity and its dimensions on team performance to promote desired innovation outcomes.

Journal of Managerial Psychology	3	2013	Maria Schulte, Eva; Lehmann-Willenbrock, Nale; Kauffeld, Simone	Age, forgiveness, and meeting behavior: a multilevel study	The purpose of the study is to investigate how age influences counteractive team meeting behaviors, such as complaining, and to explore forgiveness as a potential mitigating factor against these behaviors. The research develops a multilevel model to assess the impact of age at both the individual and team levels.
		2016	Schneid, Matthias; Isidor, Rodrigo; Steinmetz, Holger; Kabst, Rüdiger	Age diversity and team outcomes: a quantitative review	The paper aims to synthesize literature on the relationship between age diversity (AD) and team outcomes, revealing that age diversity is only significantly related to turnover among essential team outcomes. The authors conducted a meta-analysis of 74 studies, exploring contextual factors like task complexity, team size, and age cohort as moderators of this relationship. The findings indicate weak associations between AD and team outcomes, except for turnover. This study contributes by challenging the prevailing view on the impact of age diversity on team outcomes and highlights the influence of contextual factors on the observed discrepancies in existing research.
		2013	Hertel, Guido; I.J.M. Van Der Heijden, Béatrice; H. De Lange, Annet; Deller, Jürgen	Facilitating age diversity in organizations – part I: challenging popular misbeliefs	Age-related stereotypes in the workplace are being debunked, highlighting that work preferences are more similar than different across age groups. Despite generational stereotypes, employees of all ages are looking for similar things at work, with differences mainly observed in the factors that motivate different age groups to stay in their jobs. The research emphasizes the importance of focusing on factors like compensation, career development, caring leadership, flexibility, and meaningful work, rather than applying generic tactics based on generational labels. Organizations are encouraged to tailor their employee value proposition in a nuanced way to attract and retain workers of all ages, acknowledging individual preferences and life stages to create a more inclusive and productive work environment.
Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Finance	3	2023	Gurdgiev, Constantin; Ni, Qiuxin	Board diversity: Moderating effects of CEO overconfidence on firm financing decisions	The importance of CEO overconfidence in capital structure decision-making has been a focal point for scholars. However, existing literature lacks consensus on how CEO overconfidence biases interact with corporate governance in shaping capital investment strategies. This study addresses a gap by examining how board diversity moderates the impact of CEO overconfidence on corporate capital structure decisions. Analysing top US companies from 2011 to 2019, the study reveals that board diversity significantly influences CEO overconfidence, with gender diversity, board size, and independence playing

				key roles. Interestingly, age diversity and CEO-chairperson duality have minimal impact on moderating CEO overconfidence, providing new insights into this area of research.	
		2023	Chindasombatcharoen, Pongsapak; Chatjuthamard, Pattanaporn; Jiraporn, Pornsit	Corporate culture, cultural diversification, and independent directors: Evidence from earnings conference calls	Firm cultural diversification, influenced by risk-averse managers and governance structures, impacts shareholder value optimization.
		2023	Chindasombatcharoen, Pongsapak; Chatjuthamard, Pattanaporn; Jiraporn, Pornsit; Treepongkaruna, Sirimon	Director age and corporate innovation: Evidence from textual analysis	The study investigates how director age impacts a firm's innovation, revealing that older directors hinder innovation based on textual-based measures. The findings are consistent across various analyses, supporting agency theory by highlighting the role of information asymmetry in innovation investment and its associated agency costs.
Current Psychology	2	2023	Wu, Xinhui; Konrad, Alison M.	Does age diversity benefit team outcomes, if so, when and how? A moderated mediation model	Age diversity in teams positively impacts team outcomes through perceived team effectiveness and collective team identification, moderated by leader moral identity, with a curvilinear relationship between age diversity and team emergent states.
		2023	Cui, Guodong; Wang, Fuxi; Zhang, Ying	Buffer or boost? the role of openness to experience and knowledge sharing in the relationship between team cognitive diversity and members' innovative work behavior	Team cognitive diversity negatively impacts knowledge sharing, hindering innovative work behavior, with openness to experience moderating this relationship, showing a positive effect on knowledge sharing for individuals with high openness and a negative effect for those with low openness.
European Journal of Innovation Management	2	2023	Chen, Jiawen; Liu, Linlin	The affective side of innovation ambidexterity: the influence of TMT entrepreneurial passion diversity	The study focuses on the importance of TMT entrepreneurial passion diversity in fostering innovation ambidexterity within firms.
		2019	Bae, Sung Joo; Han, Sangyun	The impact of R&D workforce diversity on firm's performance in internal and external R&D	Managers can optimize their R&D workforce by leveraging diversity to enhance firms' performance through the utilization of internal R&D knowledge and external knowledge from R&D outsourcing.
European Management Journal	2	2021	Mothe, Caroline; Nguyen-Thi, Thuc Uyen	Does age diversity boost technological innovation? Exploring the moderating role of HR practices	The study sheds light on the relationship between age diversity and technological innovation, highlighting that the impact of age diversity on innovation varies based on the age distribution pattern of employees.
		2021	Van Den Oever, Koen; Beerens, Bart	Does task-related conflict mediate the board gender diversity–organizational performance relationship?	The study investigates if task-related conflict mediates the relationship between board gender diversity and organizational performance in the Dutch water authority sector, finding partial support for this mediating effect.
Frontiers in Psychology	2	2021	Ma, Changlong; Ge, Yuhui; Wang, Jingwei	Top Management Team Intrapersonal Functional Diversity and Adaptive Firm Performance: The Moderating Roles of the CEO–TMT Power Gap and Severity of Threat	The study explores the impact of top management team (TMT) functional diversity on firm performance, particularly in the context of a contingency model during threat situations. The research indicates that the relationship between intrapersonal functional diversity at the CEO and TMT levels and adaptive firm performance is influenced by the CEO-TMT power gap and the severity of the threat.
		2019	Sousa, Inês C.; Ramos, Sara; Carvalho, Helena	Age-Diversity Practices and Retirement Preferences Among Older Workers: A Moderated Mediation Model of Work Engagement and Work Ability	Organizations can support older workers and promote longer, healthier working lives by implementing age-diversity HR practices that enhance work engagement, ultimately influencing the preference for delaying retirement, especially for those with lower work ability.
Human Resource Management Journal	2	2018	Burmeister, Anne; Van Der Heijden, Beatrice; Yang, Jie; Deller, Jürgen	Knowledge transfer in age;diverse coworker dyads in China and Germany: How and when do age;inclusive human resource practices have an effect?	Knowledge transfer between age-diverse employees is crucial due to demographic changes. A study examined how human resource practices impact knowledge transfer through age-diversity climate in coworker dyads from China and Germany. The research found a positive association between perceived age-inclusive HR practices and knowledge sharing and receiving. However, differences in these effects between the two countries and based on dyadic age differences were not significant
		2018	Seong, Jee Young; Hong, Doo‐Seung	Age diversity, group organisational citizenship behaviour, and group performance: Exploring the moderating role of	This study explores the impact of age diversity on group organizational citizenship behavior (GOCB) and group performance in work-based teams of a Korean bank. It reveals that both high and low levels of group diversity limit GOCB and group

				charismatic leadership and participation in decision-making	performance, while intermediate diversity levels enhance them, following an inverted U-shaped curve. Participation in decision-making and charismatic leadership moderate the relationships between age diversity and group outcomes.
Journal of Organizational Behavior	2	2021	Kunze, Florian; Boehm, Stephan A.; Bruch, Heike	It matters how old we feel in organizations: Testing a multilevel model of organizational subjective-age diversity on employee outcomes	This study delves into age diversity effects in organizations, comparing chronological-age diversity with subjective-age diversity. It suggests that organizational-level subjective-age diversity negatively impacts bonding social capital, leading to increased employee engagement and reduced turnover intentions. Conducted in 96 German small- and medium-sized companies with 16,274 employees, the research emphasizes the importance of managing subjective-age diversity proactively to mitigate its adverse effects on workplace dynamics and outcomes.
		2016	Williams, Michele	Being trusted: How team generational age diversity promotes and undermines trust in cross-boundary relationships	The research explores how team generational age diversity impacts the trust experienced by boundary spanners in their dyadic relationships with clients. Specifically, the study focuses on how age diversity within teams affects trust between boundary spanners and clients, highlighting the influence of social categorization processes and theories of social capital. The findings indicate that generational diversity among client team members can both undermine and enhance the perception of being trusted within different types of boundary spanner-client dyads, which is crucial for coordination and associated costs in cross-boundary relationships.
Journal of Strategy and Management	2	2017	Roth, Angela; Dumbach, Martin; Schliffka, Barbara; Möslin, Kathrin M.	Successful management of diverse corporate innovation communities	Increasing demographic diversity poses challenges for companies' innovation performance, especially in managing diverse corporate innovation communities to determine success factors amidst demographic shifts.

		2020	Jukka, Tapio	Top management team demography and firm operating performance: a path analysis	These results offer insights into how age, firm tenure, and team tenure affect TMT and firm performance, highlighting the diverse impacts of these properties on firms pursuing different strategies. The study emphasizes that while diversity in TMT demographic properties can be linked to firm performance, its effects may vary and could lead to separation or conflict that hampers performance.
Personnel Review	2	2017	Gotsis, George; Grimani, Katerina	The role of spiritual leadership in fostering inclusive workplaces	The conceptual model suggests that inclusive practices rooted in spiritual values mediate the positive link between spiritual leadership and an inclusive climate, enhancing employees' perceptions of belongingness and uniqueness, thereby leading to positive outcomes at multiple levels.
		2023	Zhao, Lijing; Jolly, Phillip M.; Zhao, Shuming; Zeng, Hao	How and when inclusive leadership enhances team proactivity: the roles of collective thriving and team power distance	Team power distance negatively moderates the relationship between inclusive leadership and collective thriving, as well as the indirect influence of inclusive leadership on team proactivity through collective thriving. This study contributes by shedding light on the effects of inclusive leadership at the team level and addressing the need to understand the mechanisms connecting leadership-related factors to team-level proactivity, while also highlighting the significance of team power distance as a boundary condition for the impact of inclusive leadership.
Applied Psychology	1	2022	Hundschell, Andreas; Razinskas, Stefan; Backmann, Julia; Hoegl, Martin	The effects of diversity on creativity: A literature review and synthesis	In today's complex business world, diversity within organizations, teams, and individual employees is recognized as a competitive advantage that enhances creativity across various levels of analysis. The relationship between diversity and creativity at individual, team, and organizational levels is a debated topic despite scholarly interest. A comprehensive multilevel review of 119 empirical studies explores the effects of diversity on creativity, highlighting the need for more cross-level and dynamic research designs to understand the intricate role of diversity in fostering creativity across different organizational levels.
Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	1	2022	Teo, Stephen Tt; Bentley, Tim A; Nguyen, Diep; Blackwood, Kate; Catley, Bevan	Inclusive leadership, matured age HRM practices and older worker wellbeing	The study focused on the influence of the work environment on the psychological wellbeing of older workers in Australia. It explored how inclusive leadership and mature-age human resource practices can enhance the psychological wellbeing of older workers. Results indicated that mature-age HR practices partially mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological wellbeing, with inclusive leadership acting as an antecedent and moderator to enhance the positive impact of HR practices on older workers' psychological wellbeing. This research highlights the importance of organizational factors in promoting the mental health and wellbeing of older employees, emphasizing the significance of inclusive leadership and tailored HR practices in supporting older workers in the workforce.
Asia Pacific Journal of Management	1	2015	Park, Jisung; Kim, Seongsu	The differentiating effects of workforce aging on exploitative and exploratory innovation: The moderating role of workforce diversity	Workforce aging has a nuanced impact on organizational innovation, with a positive effect on exploitative innovation performance and a negative influence on exploratory innovation performance. Age diversity moderates this relationship, enhancing exploitative innovation but not exploratory innovation. Research findings suggest an inverted U-shaped relationship between workforce aging and exploratory innovation, highlighting the complexity of age-related dynamics in innovation processes.
Baltic Journal of Management	1	2022	Ren, Ge; Zeng, Ping	Board gender diversity and firms' internationalization speed: the role of female directors' characteristics	The study examines how board gender diversity impacts firms' internationalization speed, finding that board gender diversity reduces this speed. The effect is more pronounced when female directors are older but weaker when they have international experience or financial backgrounds. Chinese firms are advised to adjust board gender diversity based on their internationalization strategy, emphasizing the need to consider female directors' characteristics beyond gender when expanding internationally. This research sheds light on the economic implications of increasing female directors in Chinese manufacturing firms and contributes to the understanding of firms' internationalization speed, particularly in the context of China.
Career Development International	1	2021	Oliveira, Eduardo	Age-inclusive HR practices and the thriving of older workers: the mediating role of occupational future time perspective	The study explores the significance of Occupational Future Time Perspective (OFTP) in the context of age-inclusive HR practices (AIHRP) and the well-being of older workers. Through a two-wave cross-sectional design involving 310 older workers in Portugal, the research reveals that AIHRP directly impact OFTP dimensions and indirectly influence thriving aspects like learning and vitality through a focus on opportunities. Notably, the positive relationship between AIHRP and learning is mediated by remaining time. The study emphasizes the importance of personal resources like OFTP in enhancing the thriving of older workers and highlights the distinct roles of focus on opportunities and remaining time

in this relationship

Competitiveness Review	1	2014	Agnihotri, Arpita	The role of the upper echelon in the value chain management	The purpose of the study was to analyze the impact of top management teams on firms' value chain action intensity and value chain activity heterogeneity. The study was conducted from an emerging market perspective, focusing on three fast-growing industries in India over a three-year period from 2009 to 2012. The findings revealed that a top management team's educational level, functional heterogeneity, and total organizational tenure significantly influence value chain action intensity and value chain activity heterogeneity. The author introduced the concepts of value chain action intensity and value chain action heterogeneity, shedding light on the role of the upper echelon in influencing these aspects
Creativity and Innovation Management	1	2015	Coradi, Annina; Heinzen, Mareike; Boutellier, Roman	A Longitudinal Study of Workspace Design for Knowledge Exploration and Exploitation in the Research and Development Process	The research emphasizes the importance of a balanced approach to learning activities, especially in later stages of the research and development process, which can be facilitated by a 'multi-space' workspace design incorporating shared meeting areas, quiet zones, central staircases, and integrated laboratories and desk areas.
Employee Relations	1	2022	Nachmias, Stefanos; Mitsakis, Fotios; Aravopoulou, Eleni; Rees, Christopher J.; Kouki, Amairisa	Line managers' perceptions of diversity management: insights from a social exchange theory perspective	Findings indicate that line managers show high determination and commitment towards diversity but face challenges related to organizational support, leadership values, and style, affecting their ability to deliver results and build effective workplace relationships

European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology	1	2022	Fasbender, Ulrike; Drury, Lisbeth	One plus one equals one: age-diverse friendship and its complex relation to employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions	This research delves into age-diverse friendships in the workplace, exploring their impact on job satisfaction and turnover intentions. It suggests that age-diverse friendships can lead to a sense of merged identity between younger and older employees, influencing cooperation, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The study found that perceived oneness resulting from these friendships affects motivation to cooperate positively but can also lead to interrole conflict, impacting job satisfaction and turnover intentions.
Global Strategy Journal	1	2018	Pesch, Robin; Bouncken, Ricarda B.	How to achieve benefits from diversity in international alliances: Mechanisms and cultural intelligence	The Research Summary delves into the management of diversity-related conflicts in international alliances, highlighting the importance of task discourse as a key mechanism for conflict resolution. It introduces socializing practices like social events and joint workshops, emphasizing the role of cultural intelligence in enhancing performance in intercultural settings. The study reveals that managerial cultural intelligence improves task discourse, leading to enhanced performance in international alliances, especially in young alliances. However, socializing practices can decrease performance in alliances with increasing cultural distance and insufficient levels of managerial cultural intelligence.
International Journal of Bank Marketing	1	2016	Harris, Michael; Cox, K. Chris; Musgrove, Carolyn Findley; Ernstberger, Kathryn W	Consumer preferences for banking technologies by age groups	The study suggests that age-related differences in technology usage are not solely due to cognitive declines but can also be influenced by cohort differences in experience and resources. This research has implications for practitioners looking to introduce new technologies to the elderly, emphasizing the importance of aligning innovations with existing technologies to enhance compatibility and adoption rates.
International Journal of Conflict Management	1	2021	Ho, Henry C.Y.; Yeung, Dannii Y.	Conflict between younger and older workers: an identity- based approach	The purpose of the study on age diversity in the workplace is to examine the causes, underlying mechanisms, and specific strategies used to manage conflicts between younger and older workers. The research focuses on the interaction effect between age-group identification and organizational identification on conflict strategies, emphasizing the mediating role of motivational goal orientation. By exploring social identity, the study aims to provide insights for employers and managers to enhance organizational identification and create a fair work environment that fosters positive interactions between different age groups
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	1	2016	Hertzman, Jean; Zhong, Yunying	A model of hospitality students' attitude toward and willingness to work with older adults	The purpose of the study is to develop a model of hospitality students' willingness to work with older adults by incorporating aspects of existing research, including the multi-age perspective (MAP) concept, and evaluating the predictive power of separating attitudes into favorable and unfavorable constructs compared to previous models.
International Journal of Hospitality Management	1	2020	Song, Hyoung Ju; Yoon, Yu Na; Kang, Kyung Ho	The relationship between board diversity and firm performance in the lodging industry: The moderating role of internationalization	This study explores the impact of board diversity, specifically gender and age diversity, on firm performance in the lodging industry, highlighting a positive correlation between gender diversity and firm performance, while age diversity shows an insignificant effect. Additionally, the study investigates how internationalization influences this relationship, revealing that internationalization significantly enhances the positive effect of gender diversity on firm performance but does not significantly impact age diversity's effect. The research aims to offer valuable insights for stakeholders in the lodging sector when selecting board members.
International Journal of Innovation and Technology Management	1	2015	Pesch, Robin; Bouncken, Ricarda B.; Kraus, Sascha	Effects of Communication Style and Age Diversity in Innovation Teams	Results from a survey study of 232 German SMEs show that a diversity of communication styles in teams enhances a creative team environment, aiding product innovativeness and speed to market. However, it also leads to increased relationship conflicts. In contrast, age diversity is positively associated with relationship conflicts but does not directly impact innovation performance. Overall, the positive effects of communication style diversity surpass the negative effects on innovation performance in teams.
International Journal of Organizational Analysis	1	2016	Tanikawa, Tomohiko; Jung, Yuhee	Top management team (TMT) tenure diversity and firm performance: Examining the moderating effect of TMT average age	The purpose of the paper is to investigate the effect of top management team (TMT) tenure diversity on firm financial performance (return on equity [ROE], return on assets [ROA]), and to examine the moderating effect of TMT average age between TMT tenure diversity and firm performance

International Review of Economics & Finance	1	2021	Nguyen, Tuan; Nguyen, An; Nguyen, Mau; Truong, Thuyen	Is national governance quality a key moderator of the boardroom gender diversity–firm performance relationship? International evidence from a multi- hierarchical analysis	The research discussed the moderating effect of national governance quality on the relationship between board gender diversity and firm performance. It analyzed 15,051 firm-year observations from 2931 companies in 46 countries, finding that board gender diversity positively impacts company performance in nations with above-average governance quality. Conversely, in countries with lower governance quality, the effect diminishes and becomes negative. These findings were consistent across various measures of governance quality and firm performance, different estimation methods, sample structures, and tokenism
Journal of Applied Psychology	1	2021	Li, Yixuan; Gong, Yaping; Burmeister, Anne; Wang, Mo; Alterman, Valeria; Alonso, Alexander; Robinson, Samuel	Leveraging age diversity for organizational performance: An intellectual capital perspective.	The global trend of increasing workplace age diversity has sparked significant research interest in the organizational implications of age-diverse workforces. Previous studies have mainly focused on the statistical correlation between age diversity and organizational performance without delving into the underlying mechanisms. By adopting an intellectual capital perspective, it is suggested that age diversity influences organizational performance through human and social capital. Additionally, the study explores how workplace functional diversity and age-inclusive management can enhance the impact of age diversity on human and social capital. Findings from a manager-report workplace survey involving 3,888 participants reveal a positive link between age diversity and organizational performance mediated by increased human and social capital. Moreover, functional diversity and age-inclusive management further bolster the beneficial effects of age diversity on human and social capital, shedding light on how diverse age groups in the workforce can contribute to organizational success by nurturing knowledge-based resources.

Journal of Business Ethics	1	2014	Ali, Muhammad; Ng, Yin Lu; Kulik, Carol T.	Board Age and Gender Diversity: A Test of Competing Linear and Curvilinear Predictions	The results show a positive linear relationship between gender diversity and employee productivity, a negative linear relationship between age diversity and return on assets, and an inverted U-shaped curvilinear relationship between age diversity and return on assets. These findings contribute additional evidence supporting the business case for board gender diversity and refine the business case for board age diversity.
Journal of Knowledge Management	1	2023	Scheuer, Cara-Lynn; Loughlin, Catherine; Ford, Dianne; Edwards, Dennis	Is competence without humility wasted in building the trust necessary for knowledge transfer in younger/older worker dyads?	Successful knowledge transfer between younger and older workers is crucial for organizational success, especially amidst recent workforce volatility. Understanding how this transfer occurs in YW/OW dyads is essential. The study reveals that humility is vital for knowledge transfer success, while competence alone is insufficient in facilitating these exchanges.
Journal of Management Development	1	2023	Tajeddini, Kayhan; Budur, Taylan; Gamage, Thilini Chathurika; Demir, Ahmet; Zaim, Halil; Topal, Ramazan	Impact of diversity management on innovative work behavior: mediating role of human resource management and affective commitment	The findings indicate that diversity management directly and significantly affected HRM and AC. Additionally, HRM significantly influenced both employees' IWB and AC, while AC had a positive influence on IWB. Furthermore, affective commitment and HRM played a mediating role in the relationship between diversity management and employees' innovative work behavior. The research is grounded in social exchange and institutional theories, aiming to address how diversity management influences IWB while exploring the mediating role of AC and firm HRM policies
Journal of Product Innovation Management	1	2022	Steinberg, Philip J.; Asad, Sarosh; Lijzenga, George	Narcissistic CEOs ' dilemma: The trade-off between exploration and exploitation and the moderating role of performance feedback	A study delves into the connection between CEO narcissism and firms' relative exploration orientation, considering how narcissistic CEOs may prioritize exploration or exploitation to enhance visibility. The research also explores the moderating effects of performance feedback on narcissistic CEOs' focus on exploration or exploitation, impacting the relationship with firms' exploration orientation. The study tests these hypotheses using panel data from 120 firms in the Standard & Poor's 100 index from 2008 to 2018.
Kybernetes	1	2023	Dongrey, Ritika; Rokade, Varsha	Linkage between hiring and retention of diverse workforce, affective commitment and counterproductive work behavior	This research sheds light on the importance of fostering diversity in the workplace for increased affective commitment while emphasizing the need for management to address potential negative outcomes like CWB to ensure a psychologically safe work environment for all employees.
Leadership & Organization Development Journal	1	2021	Scheuer, Cara-Lynn; Loughlin, Catherine	Seizing the benefits of age diversity: could empowering leadership be the answer?	The authors explore integrating van Knippenberg et al.'s (2004) categorization–elaboration model (CEM) of workgroup diversity as a linchpin in the relationship between empowering leadership and performance in age-diverse work groups. They investigate whether empowering leadership may be a better approach in age-diverse contexts due to its emphasis on accommodating and participative behaviors. Empowering leadership positively moderated the direct relationship between age diversity and work group performance, with coaching and showing concern/interacting with the team driving these positive effects. In contrast, transformational leadership had a negative effect on this relationship. This research provides insights for managers on leading age-diverse work groups effectively by utilizing an empowering leadership approach, particularly focusing on coaching and showing concern/interacting with the team behaviors
Long Range Planning	1	2018	García-Granero, Ana; Fernández-Mesa, Anabel; Jansen, Justin J.P.; Vega- Jurado, Jaider	Top management team diversity and ambidexterity: The contingent role of shared responsibility and CEO cognitive trust	Earlier research has shown that diversity in top management teams can be a double-edged sword for achieving organizational ambidexterity. While it can foster innovation by combining exploration and exploitation, it may also lead to conflicts. A new study explores how functional and age diversity, along with shared responsibility and CEO cognitive trust, influence organizational ambidexterity within diverse teams, highlighting the importance of these factors in managing conflicts and enhancing performance.
Management and Organization Review	1	2016	Li, Ci-Rong	The Role of Top-team Diversity and Perspective Taking in Mastering Organizational Ambidexterity	Diverse top teams engaging in perspective taking, supported by transformational leadership, play a crucial role in addressing the cognitive challenges of ambidexterity within organizations.
Management Research Review	1	2015	Parsons, Richard A	The impact of age on innovation	The purpose of the paper is to develop a model of individual innovation based on an employee's innate propensity to innovate and the specific costs and benefits expected from the innovation, with a focus on how an employee's age influences innovation outcomes.

Military Psychology	1	2021	Odoardi, Carlo; Battistelli, Adalgisa; Velilla Guardela, Jorge Luis; Antino, Mirko; Di Napoli, Gennaro; Piccione, Luciano	Perceived organizational values and innovation: The role of transactive memory and age diversity in military teams	This study investigates the mediating role of transactive memory systems (TMS) in the relationship between perception of innovation value (VIN) and team innovation, with a focus on the moderating effect of age diversity. Results confirm a positive relationship between VIN and TMS, where TMS positively influences team innovation, except at high levels of age diversity where the effect diminishes. The study emphasizes the significance of managing age differences, sharing expertise, and fostering innovation in military teams, particularly in Italy's Air Force.
Organizations and Markets in Emerging Economies	1	2022	Da Silva, Mayara Andresa Pires; Helal, Diogo Henrique	Age Management in the Brazilian Context: A Theoretical Discussion	The aging of the population and workforce has had a significant impact on living conditions globally, posing challenges for policymakers and the labor market. Maintaining the work capacity of older workers and their continued participation in the labor market is crucial for the future. Age management policies are increasingly vital in enhancing and sustaining the involvement of older workers in the workforce. This theoretical essay focuses on discussing age management in the Brazilian context, emphasizing the strategic approach to address the effects of population aging on the labor market. The study highlights the specific characteristics of aging in Brazil, a country with a collectivist nature where intergenerational responsibilities are a key concern
Personnel Psychology	1	2014	Boehm, Stephan A.; Kunze, Florian; Bruch, Heike	Spotlight on Age-Diversity Climate: The Impact of Age- Inclusive HR Practices on Firm-Level Outcomes	This study explores the impact of age-inclusive HR practices on organizational age-diversity climate, linking it to social exchange perceptions, firm performance, and turnover intentions in German small and medium-sized companies, confirming positive relationships through structural equation modeling and bootstrapping procedures.
Research Policy	1	2019	Cui, Victor; Ding, Waverly W.; Yanadori, Yoshio	Exploration versus exploitation in technology firms: The role of compensation structure for R&D workforce	The relationship between a firm's compensation structure and its innovation focus is explored, revealing that firms with strong vertical tournament incentives tend to emphasize exploration in innovation, while horizontal pay dispersion shows a negative

					relationship with exploration in firms with low age variance among R&D employees, albeit this negative relationship is less pronounced in firms with high age variance among R&D employees.
Review of Managerial Science	1	2023	Richards, Melanie B.; Becker, Karin L.; Stollings- Holder, Jessica	Escaping generational conflict: using gamification to examine intergenerational communication & problem- solving	In a global, interconnected, multi-generational, and multi-cultural workforce, understanding conditions that foster success on diverse teams is crucial. This study explores how generational diversity influences team performance, highlighting challenges and opportunities of five generations working together. An experiment in a utility company showed that same generation teams outperformed intergenerational teams in problem-solving, with diversity training not significantly impacting intergenerational team outcomes. The research emphasizes the importance of communication styles, engagement levels, and suggests strategies like diversity training, reverse mentoring, and gamification to enhance collaboration in generationally diverse teams.
Small Business Economics	1	2022	Moog, Petra; Soost, Christian	Does team diversity really matter? The connection between networks, access to financial resources, and performance in the context of university spin-offs	University spin-offs (USOs) play a vital role in driving innovation, economic growth, and social development. Understanding the key factors that contribute to their success is crucial, particularly in the scientific realm. This study delves into the significance of team composition and diversity within USOs in the biotech sector, focusing on 64 founding teams in Switzerland and Germany. By exploring team dynamics beyond traditional characteristics and considering network and financing impacts, the research provides empirical insights into how team diversity influences the performance of these newly established firms. Using the partial least squares method, the study demonstrates the relationship between team diversity, networks, financial resources, and performance, shedding light on both direct and indirect effects of diversity on USO success, thus enriching the discourse on performance factors in this specific context.
Technology in Society	1	2021	Kanchanabha, Bhawini; Badir, Yuosre F.	Top management Team's cognitive diversity and the Firm's ambidextrous innovation capability: The mediating role of ambivalent interpretation	The top management team's cognitive diversity plays a crucial role in influencing an organization's ambidextrous innovation capability, impacting both radical and incremental innovation. Research on 50 top management teams in the electronics industry supports the idea that cognitive diversity positively affects ambivalent interpretation, which in turn enhances both types of innovation within the firm
Technovation	1	2023	Roth, Linus; Corsi, Simone	Ambidexterity in a geographic context: A systematic literature review on international exploration and exploitation of knowledge	Research on organizational ambidexterity's geographic dimension, especially international, is limited and fragmented, with a systematic literature review highlighting key gaps and proposing a framework for future academic discourse.
The International Journal of Human Resource Management	1	2021	Gerpott, Fabiola H.; Lehmann-Willenbrock, Nale; Wenzel, Ramon; Voelpel, Sven C.	Age diversity and learning outcomes in organizational training groups: the role of knowledge sharing and psychological safety	This study explores how age diversity within a training group can impact participants' learning outcomes in organizational training courses, suggesting that high age diversity may hinder learning due to reduced knowledge sharing. Additionally, it highlights the role of psychological safety in mitigating the negative effects of age diversity on learning outcomes, emphasizing the importance of creating a safe environment for knowledge sharing
The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science	1	2023	Chen, Hui; Liang, Qiaozhuan; Feng, Chao; Zhang, Yue	Leadership and Follower Voice: The Role of Inclusive Leadership and Group Faultlines in Promoting Collective Voice Behavior	We developed and tested a theoretical model to examine how and when inclusive leadership affected collective voice behavior. The study identified group psychological safety and information elaboration as mediators between inclusive leadership and collective voice behavior, with group fault lines enhancing the effects of inclusive leadership on collective voice behavior, particularly in high fault lines situations.
Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy	1	2022	Hysa, Xhimi; Themeli, Artemisa	Interorganizational coworking: attenuating complexity, enhancing resilience and fostering open innovation and knowledge cocreation	The purpose of the study on inter organizational co-working is to explore how inte rorganizational co working spaces (CWS) influence complexity, resilience, open innovation, and knowledge co-creation.