



A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON AGE NORMS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Área temática: Organizational Behaviour

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Abstract

In an organizational context, age norms can bring about stereotypes especially when it comes to the beliefs regarding the age of certain individuals. This could then become normalized or taken for granted especially how individuals are managed or self-managed. As a result, leading to these individuals understanding the implications their age has in the work context or environment (Vickerstaff & Van der Horst, 2021). The main aim of this paper is to map out literature on age norms in organizations and point out theoretical gaps through a thorough systematic review on the subject matter. This review intends answer the question of 'what are age norms in organizations' through literature on age norms in organizations or organizational age norms. Some of the major gaps in literature are a clear definition of what they how and their influence in organization and management practices. It is the intention of this paper to highlight these gaps through this review to create room for future and various research.

Keywords: Age Norms; Age Beliefs; Behavior; Organizational Behavior.

Resumo

Em um contexto organizacional, as normas de idade podem trazer estereótipos, especialmente quando se trata das crenças sobre a idade de determinados indivíduos. Isso poderia então se tornar normalizado ou dado como certo, especialmente como os indivíduos são gerenciados ou autogerenciados. Como resultado, levando esses indivíduos a compreender as implicações que sua idade tem no contexto ou ambiente de trabalho (Vickerstaff & Van der Horst, 2021). O principal objetivo deste artigo é mapear a literatura sobre normas de idade nas organizações e apontar lacunas teóricas por meio de uma revisão sistemática completa sobre o assunto. Esta revisão pretende responder à questão 'o que são normas de idade nas organizações' através da



literatura sobre normas de idade nas organizações ou normas de idade organizacional. Algumas das principais lacunas na literatura são uma definição clara do que eles fazem e sua influência nas práticas de organização e gestão. É a intenção deste artigo destacar essas lacunas por meio desta revisão para criar espaço para pesquisas futuras e diversas.

Palavras-chave: Normas de idade; Crenças de Idade; Comportamento; Comportamento Organizacional.

1. Introduction

For a very long time now, age has been a subject of discussions and even research in social and organizational studies. This is because age holds lots of meanings and influence different aspects of our lives and the organization. According to Lawrence (1996) if age had no meanings or consequences, organizations may be distorted. Even though roles, power and status may not change in an organization, the ages of people that hold these positions would definitely change which could influence their interactions and what we perceive as norms relating to the certain ages of individuals. For example, how would we react if the hiring manager for a certain position was a 14 year old? What would be the expectations we have of people in a certain age especially when it comes to organizational role or what sort of norms do we have of roles that may be a subject to age? Thinking about this show that age has a huge part to play in the human organizational interaction or even behaviour. As a result of these elements, this review chooses to look at age norms in the organization. Although, the study of age in different forms and categories within organizations is something that has been extensively researched, it is important to highlight that age norms in organizations are somewhat different from the other age research variations. From a search in literature, there are many works ageism, age stereotypes, age discrimination, age diversity, aging workforce and many more. Most of these terms came up in many of the literature that was found. Although these terms have their importance in literature gaps and information, they cannot be equally interchanged with age norms in organizations.

Thus, the main aim of this paper is to map out literature on age norms in organizations and point out theoretical gaps through a thorough systematic review on the subject matter. It is



however important to make the distinction that this review is intended answer the question of 'what are age norms in organizations' through literature on age norms in organizations or organizational age norms. Some of the major gaps in literature are a clear definition of what they how and their influence in organization and management practices. It is the intention of this paper to highlight these gaps through this review in order to create room for future and various research in the area.

2. Age Norms in Organizations

In an organizational context, age norms can bring about stereotypes especially when it comes to the beliefs regarding the age of certain individuals. This could then become normalized or taken for granted especially how individuals are managed or self-managed. As a result, leading to these individuals understanding the implications their age has in the work context or environment (Vickerstaff & Van der Horst, 2021).

According to Gibbs (1965), although there are many conceptions relating to norms, a lot of them including age norms will most likely comprise of expectation, sanction, and group. When it comes to expectation, age norms can be seen as what people ought to do or what seems to be appropriate or ideal for individuals in a particular age range (Neugarten, Moore & Lowe, 1965). With the component of sanction, individuals that violate their age-related norm could be punished one way or the other which could include mocking remarks within the organization (Lawrence, 1996a). Although, sanctions could either be positive or negative. For example, in an organization, a manager that is perceived as way ahead in their career schedule may receive higher performance evaluations than others and those 'behind' their schedules could be punished with low performance rating which could potentially affect their employment life cycle (Lawrence, 1996a). Even outside of an organization, a younger individual achieving things 'really' fast is awarded with high status within the community unlike older people that 'take their time' to achieve things. Although it is vital to note that these outcomes may also differ in culture, the issue here is the fact that age norms violation will generate either negative or positive sanctions. (Lawrence, 1996a). The group component,



which is the third, also signifies that there are certain members that are aware of the norm that believe in the expectation attached to the norm and also carry out the sanctions.

A major issue of age norms based on the expectations component is that there is the assumption that individuals are aware of these expectations and if they are summoned, they can tell the certain behaviors that are expected of them at a given age however, Lawrence (1996a) posits that many individuals are relatively unaware of the expectations surrounding their age and carry some level of subconsciousness on them. If this should be the case, it is easily argued that these expectations are not shared as per initially claimed. When relating to organizations some studies have shown that some employers are unaware of the age aspect when evaluating applications and sometimes, they claim that age is quite an unimportant aspect of application screening (see Rosen & Jerdee 1976, 1977).

The thing about age norm is the fact that there could be different age norms in interdependent social spheres or system. For example, a work environment could hold a certain age norm, while an ethnic group is holding another while the community holds one, then the country or nation as a whole hold another. An issue here could be the fact that these norms may have a collusion when bringing them together or trying to compare them to know which to comply with in the organization (Lawrence, 1996a). For example, a scientist mentioned that to his community he was seen as slightly behind when it came to some certain criteria and as such, while very successful at work, his friends and family were not so impressed with some other accomplishments. This gave room to conflicting ideas. Although there are some age norm expectations that go with an individual's biological advancement, some do not have anything to do with physical attributes or chronological ages but instead more on behavior (Lawrence, 1987).

To study age norms in organizations, we need to understand that there are theoretical and empirical approaches due to the variables present in the phenomena. For example, if age norms are defined as the view on standards for a given age in terms of role and status (Lawrence, 1996a); this means that we need to put into consideration that people will have judgements on what these behaviors should be in the organization. Thus, studies will be looking on a social aspect with the aim of capturing the manner in which a social system is



viewed by members (Lawrence, 1996a). The idea to studying age norms will thus follow majorly on the definition that is chosen and the core elements in this definition. Furthermore, when looking at organizations and the roles, power and status related to the structure, it is important to note that the ages of people within this structure will change even though the role, power and status of that organization does not. An idea for research will be to understand how these changes could potentially violate the expectations relating to the role, power, and status (Lawrence, 1996b). A good example will be reactions when being interviewed by a 12-year-old to an organization or an 80-year-old coming up with startup ideas. When we think of this, we can figure out that scenarios like this dealing with age play a huge part in the human interaction and that the role that age plays is most times predetermined when it comes to outcomes.

3. Methodology

According to Dempster (2011), a systematic review is the comprehensive review of all literature (traditional and non-traditional) in order to reconcile them as evidence. This systematic review carried out on age norms in organizations aims to review the current literature in the subject area and report on what the potential gaps in literature which could lead to further research in the subject area. This research has a defined period of “1996” to “2021”. The reason for this is due to the existing review on age norms or age in general from “1970” to “1994”. To review the literature on the subject matter, different searches have to be done within a large number of databases or journals. In this case, Scopus (Elsevier), Web of Science (Clarivate), EbscoHost, ProQuest and unconventionally google scholar were used. The reason for the varying database is due to the fact that there were limited number of literatures in the subject matter found in these bases. Although, initial search on google scholar brought about lots of literature in the area, there had to be a deeper dive into finding what journals or databases these literatures were in.



Data Collection

In collecting the data for this study, keywords were easy and pre-defined as “Age Norms” AND “organi*ation”. The use of “*” is because organization can also be spelt as organization especially among British scholars. The “*” covers every word that would be in the place it has been placed. This way, we were sure of not losing out on any works that would have had a different spelling. Additionally, the use of “AND” was to make sure that we captured everything that had to do with organizations. Although, we noticed some of the research had organizations in them and were not necessarily related. One thing we tried initially had these key words searched within the titles. This did not yield any results from WoS, Scopus and ProQuest. We then had to initiate a new search with the keywords to be searched in the entire document which brought about many results that needed filtering. From this stage, age norms can be found in any field or subject, such as sociology, psychology, medicine. Using these keywords and search criteria, data was collected and compiled from these databases. At the end of the search, a funnel of relevant articles was created using an excel sheet showing author names, article title, abstract, document type, journal, and year of publication. It is important to note that most of these documents were duplicated in different databases hence the idea to form a funnel. At the end of the search, 37 articles were deemed relevant to this

study.

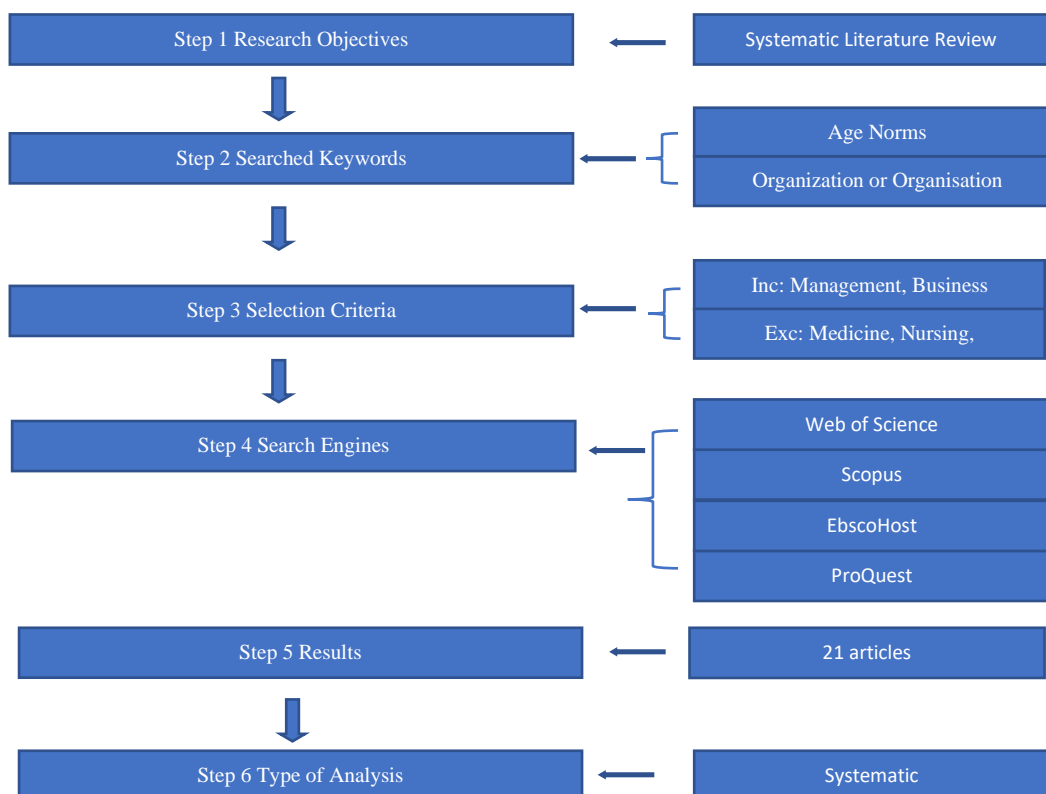




Fig 1: Seven-step methodology (SSM) adopted from (Sharma et al., 2020)

Data Analysis

In this part, we present the results from the systematic review carried out on age norms in organizations. The literature around age norms was categorized under concept and definition, relationship to recruitment and retirement, and age norm elements within organizations.

Category 1: The Concept of Age Norms in Organizations

The General Concept

The role age plays in the corporate environment, is one that depends more on the beliefs people have concerning them than the idea of age itself (Lawrence, 1988). Most times, when we compare people's ages and its significance to some aspects in their lives, it is done with an insignificant intention. In organizations, workers try to compare, assess, and observe the age of others to see where they are in their own careers or potentially make forecast for their career advancement or future within the organization (Kidder, 1981). These sort of reactions and responses gotten from this assessment plays a huge role in organizations such as hiring decisions, opportunities of internal growth and even hiring and firing decisions (Dalton & Thompson, 1971). Age means differently to various people and in occupations, organizations, and industries. It is how people view ages in various occupations and age distributions within these industries (Lawrence, 1988; Lawrence, 2004). For example, middle aged people can be seen in different ways in different career paths. A middle-aged Hollywood scriptwriter will be



termed as ‘over the hill’ while on the other hand, the same middle-aged person as a proposal writer in the aerospace industry will be seen as having experience. This means that for some industries, a lot of people may not retire early as they are just arriving at the peak of their career. Apart from the fact that this is deterring others from getting jobs, this could also increase the frustration and turnover when it comes to career progression within that organization, which is an effect of age norm.

Age being a relevant aspect of social and cultural dimensions gives proper room for it to be reproduced in an informal form which brings about the expectations that will govern the behaviors associated (Settersten & Mayer, 1997). Thus, age norms are defined as the “prescriptions or proscriptions about behavior in the form of "should" and "should not"; they are supported by consensus; and they are enforced through various mechanisms of social control, particularly social sanctions-positive, to keep people "on track," and negative, to bring straying individuals "back into line"” (Settersten & Mayer, 1997, p.242). Additionally, Lawrence (2004, p.991) define age norms as the "widely shared judgments of the standard or typical ages of individuals holding a role or status". Moreover, age norms in organizations have also been defined by Krueger et al., (1995) as the shared assumptions regarding the milestones to be achieved relating to age especially regarding the individual’s career progress. Although there is much research to support this definition, Lawrence (2004) mentions that age norms have huge influence in organizations and their workers in various ways. Age norms can also create stereotypical images about what age is more suitable for certain roles in different organizational settings (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2011). Although they vary as mentioned previously, they may be likely to occur as a result of training (some roles require more training), appeal to a certain generation (e.g., programming jobs appeal more to the younger generation), stability (finance is an area that requires stability) (Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2011). Although, it is not to say that companies in the same industry will have the same age distributions. Lawrence (2004) additionally posits that any event can be linked some someone’s age whether directly or indirectly. This could also happen within organizations where the company’s age distribution could influence some strategic human resource planning and potentially the success of this business. As organizations require having the right people in the right places and at the right time, could this have to do with the age of these



people in the right places and at the right time? Although one can say that organizational success is related to the business planning and the resources out in place, Lawrence (2004) and many others argue that the diversity of people in terms of their age can be seen distinctively in their commitments, expectations, needs and even values.

Thus, age norms being the prescription and beliefs of behavior relating to age can be seen to have influences of other major age-related organizational phenomena such as ageism, discrimination, stereotypes and so on.

Elements of Age Norms in Organizations: Policies

Every organization has different policy implementation that directs them towards achieving organizational goals. Apart from this, organizations and employees are usually motivated by the idea of having a principle to go by for example, the behavior that is seemed appropriate and so on. As a result of this, most employees would want to live up to these principles outlined by the organization and in most cases, the age norms created through these policies or principles (Lössbroek et al., 2019). Although, if there are no sanctions existing in the organization, norms are still able to guide behavior which also includes the decisions made in the workplace (Radl, 2012).

Lössbroek et al., (2019) carried out research on the policies associated with whether younger workers should be prioritized over older workers and also the age that older workers should retire. This research showed that external or social pressures on organizational managers can contribute to the implementation of policies around old age adaptation within the organization. Furthermore, in another research carried out by Skuciene and Moskvina (2019) employer practices are based on stereotypes (either positive or negative) associated with the notion of older workers. These stereotypes also depend on previous experiences, size of the company and the sector the company belongs to. For example, the labor market in Lithuania is still heavily characterized by older workers, these workers however face obstacles when trying to enter the market once they have reached the limit or span for employment. The obstacles unfortunately are created by both the legal and socioeconomic norms in the country. Although, employers claim to have a positive attitude towards older workers, these norms



seem to have a stronger influence on the practical aspect of this (Skuciene & Moskvina, 2019).

Elements of Age Norms in Organizations: Violation and Sanctions

From the literature, we can see that an individual can violate the expectation on them when it comes to age norms within the organization. Chaudhuri and Ghosh (2011) looked into how organizations create mentorship programs to support the junior employees regarding what the expectations of them are in the organization. The reverse mentoring is one that shows more of age norms violation especially within older workers. This is when a senior worker is been placed in the role of a protégé as opposed to the junior workers.

The sanctions and communications of age norms have however not been thoroughly studied although from what research has shown, age norms sanctions are not necessarily applied to those that do not follow in the plan. For example, Settersten (1998) show that there are no sanctions for those that do not retire at the ‘appropriate’ age. There is also no evidence of sanction for those that have ‘off schedule’ careers although there is evidence of dissatisfaction especially when it comes to the behavioral aspect of individuals (Lashbrook, 1996). Therefore, it could be said that these shared beliefs of age norms are potentially just observations of what otherwise will usually do or attain when they reach some certain ages. Age norms could be just a common behavior and not necessarily norms however there are changes or experience an individual undergoes when they violate the age norms expectations in the organization (Greller & Richtermeyer, 2006). Hanashiro and Pereira (2020) also posit that there is the existence of age norms in the organizations that denote the certain appreciation of younger workers including those in managerial positions. The older workers are thus forced into being a part of a minority group and as a result of these, there tends to be stereotypes when it comes to the older workers in general. Furthermore, these older workers as constrained by age norms are considered as a resource to be managed by the organization. This means that there is an assumption that the organization’s finances will also go into managing and sustaining these workers which at the end of the day, puts the older workers at a higher risk of dismissal (Hanashiro & Pereira, 2020).



Category 2: Beliefs around the expectations of age norms, judgements, and behavior.

Expectations, Judgements and Behavior Surrounding Age Norms

Age norms are socially accepted assessment of someone's age in a given position and, in most cases, this assessment causes resilience or even frustration in individuals (Ferraro et al., 2018). In research on Career youth norms (CYN); Ferraro et al., (2019) found that workers aged 35 and above felt frustration and uncertainty which was caused by the discriminatory attitudes relating to their age. For example, the technology industry is somewhat known for favoring applicants that are less than 30 years of age. Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook clearly states that 'Young people are just starter'. With this belief or perception, older workers or those older than the young people bracket will feel hindered and even daunted when it comes to applying or moving to a technology environment. On the other hand, when it comes to starting a business from the scratch, research shows that older individuals are more likely to be on top of this than younger ones (Singh & DeNoble 2003) although Lévesque and Minniti (2006) argue that when it comes to entrepreneurship and the time and cost it takes, older individuals are less likely to invest in actives that they presume will not yield instant results or profits like starting a new business. However, in a Finnish research, individuals aged 50-60 made up 16% of new business owners (Kautonen, 2008). For age norms in the context of entrepreneurship, there is a shared understanding of the kinds of behavior that will be appropriate for those taking on this role (starting a business). Kautonen et al., (2011) research was carried out to show how these age norms are perceived when it comes to starting up a business and how their perception influences their interest in proceeding within the entrepreneurship intention. The research thus found that if individuals perceive starting a business as socially acceptable at any given age, there is a positive influence on the intention to start a business. This and many other perceptions regarding age is partially arbitrated by precursors of intentions according to the theory of planned behavior which is attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control (Kautonen et al., 2011). So, in this case, one can argue that perceived age norms not just directly influence the formation of entrepreneurial intentions but can also indirectly influence them through how entrepreneurial-interested the individual's attitude towards work are.



Apart from behavior, age norms have implications on image (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006). This is impacted by how people assess whether their occupation can be seen as appropriate to their ages. Physical attraction characteristics such as age; in certain occupations and organizations reveal occupational and organizational stereotypes and these stereotypes can be linked to image norms (Giannantonio & Hurley-Hanson, 2006). Image norms are defined as the belief that people must possess certain physical attractiveness in order for them to work in some certain industries, occupations or even companies (Hansel et al., 2013). For example, Steve Job's image while he was in his twenties is said not to have fit the image of those that started their companies or even worked in the tech industry. According to others, he did not look like a 'serious businessperson' that started a company and became a billionaire before reaching the age of thirty. Although Steve Jobs ultimately created his own unique image, he was an excellent example of someone that violated these norms (Issacson, 2011). Now linking this image norm to age norms in organizations and even entrepreneurial intentions as seen above; such age norms can unfortunately reflect on how the organization operates (Hansel et al., 2013). Although others following in the steps of Steve Jobs will claim that this norm is radically changing in the entrepreneurial world (Hansel et al., 2013).

On the other hand, in the service industry, workers treat age as a 'problem' due to its relevance for the consumption of goods and services. For example, the police, employees of nightclubs, security institutions, bus drivers, supermarket and other related goods and services areas will view the disparities of age when customers order for things. For example, staff will hear orders such as 'one adult and a child please' and also mention things related to physical appearance (Llewellyn, 2014). Research in an art gallery where customers paid for themed exhibition showed how workers apply and link age norms to physical appearance. As there are different types of tickets (concessionary for over 60s and unwaged students; child price or free entry and the adult tickets which was full priced). With this, when a customer asks for 2 tickets, the worker would have to determine what category they fell according to their physical appearance (Llewellyn, 2014). Deciphering this is called 'professional vision' according to Goodwin (1994); which means their ability to draw out conclusions on qualities and course of actions from how people and certain things look. Although Llewellyn's (2014)



research is not necessarily focused on internal workers but the customers; it was important to see how employees draw out conclusion on the type of tickets to sell to individuals based on how they looked or even behave. Strauss (1985) argues that age norms are not just important for conversations around work; but also important for how individuals perform their work in itself. For example, some jobs like seen above involve workers having to classify customers into age categories to enable them act in professional and bureaucratic manners (see Packard, 2009 on health sector classification of older people). Additionally, according to Skuciene and Moskvina (2019) survey on 216 managers and middle managers; it was found that there was a general positive attitude towards older workers however with little encouragement from the workplace to ensure that these older workers had prolonging working careers.

Category 3: Retirement

Age Norms and Retirement

In many cases and countries, we have seen that discrimination based on age is highly prohibited; however, there are still evidences of ageist practices in many organizations (Gordon and Arvey, 2004; Mulders et al., 2018). According to Marcus and Fritzsche (2016) could be based on the norms on retirement and stereotypes that are deeply associated with organizational culture. Therefore, one of the most common elements of studying age norms in organization is the relationship between these norms and retirement. For example, in Lithuania, there is an upper age limit for employment and a maximum age limit for those applying to some certain positions in Lithuania. There is also a maximum age limit for some certain positions as we have perceived in age norm theories. In Lithuania, the age 50 (years) is the lower age limit although under some certain circumstances for those applying for a position in the intelligence service. When looking at a position for Notary or for Special Investigation Services or the Internal Service, it is 60years. While the retirement age for men is 62 years and 6 months. Although it is said that this has been gradually increasing and will probably reach 65 years for both women and men in the year 2026. It is safe to say that applicants within the public service have not been more than 65 years of age (Skuciene & Moskvina 2019). According to Skuciene and Moskvina (2019), the retirement age has deprived older individuals of still being involved in the labor market. Although the demand



for labor in the Lithuanian market is constantly increasing and on the other hand, older workers still as interested and active in the market; the national document still opposes the employment of these older workers because of the age limits. From an internal employer perspective, stopping older workers careers were most as a result of the following reasons: “exclusion from training, pension/tax system, absence of gradual retirement schemes as well as the view of employers” (Skuciene & Moskvina 2019; Pg: 480). The view of employers in this case is mostly due to the fact that employers mostly refer to retirement as a reason for older workers to leave the labor market (Skuciene & Moskvina, 2019 elaborated from 2014 survey in Lithuania). Additional reasons included health problems or problems with the work being ‘too hard’. According to the authors, these employer responses confirmed the spread of age norms because of the official retirement age as stipulated by the government. Although this means that even though an individual does not have any of these health problems, the norm attached to their age already signifies that it is time for them to retire. According to the research it is because of the employers not willing to take on the responsibility of the supposed health problems or workload issues attached to these older workers.

However, on the other hand, the survey in 2014 also showed 26% of employers claiming to encourage their older staff of about 55 years + to pursue their professional career paths longer. Although the question remains on how the age norms within the organizations will be affected. On the contrary, 55% of employers do not actually motivate their older workers to extend their career journey while 17% of employers do this partially. When asked to elaborate on the sort of encouragement given to older workers to continue in their professional paths, there were no indicated measures of integration of older workers to the labor market. Measures could be how they combine work and retirement, flexible working, and lifelong learning opportunities which according to (Skuciene & Moskvina, 2019) have been initiatives picked up by foreign enterprises. Even in Canada, although the law changes because of the abolishment of mandatory retirement, the context of retiring has also changed with it (Warren & Kelloway, 2010). Although looking back in 2004, most of the retirees had retired voluntary with only 26.9% forced into it. Older workers in most cases have been seen to desire to still be in the labor market due to proper incentives like flexible work etc. (Warren & Kelloway, 2010). Thus, it is argued that, to some extent the perceived control of retirement is not only made up of the decision to retire but also because of other external circumstances like



finances, social/policy influences according to a study by Warren and Kelloway (2010). On the other hand, in a Dutch context, there is the preference for younger workers especially when it comes to hiring new employees although the ageing population has created the necessity for longer working lives because of the increasing life expectancy and declining fertility rates (Mulders, 2020), which can be seen by the need for older employees to relax or postpone their retirement from the labor market. Although as seen as above, other countries have also implemented changes in the labor market and retirement ages or decision, however, most literature on social norms and stereotypes will show that this still has a negative impact on employment opportunities and behavior towards older employees (Warren & Kelloway, 2010; Karpinska et al., 2013; Mulders et al., 2017; Skuciene & Moskwina, 2019; Mulders, 2020). On the other hand, there are many negative stereotypes associated with older workers that have been seen to affect their job opportunities negatively. For example, older workers are most times perceived to have some physical and mental capacities that can be termed as diminishing. Additionally, there is the assumption that they have a minimized willingness and even capacity to learn new things and are less productive in their work than younger workers (Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Van Dalen et al., 2010; Harris et al., 2018). However, there are also the positive stereotypes associated with older workers such as their reliability and commitment; and often possessing better social skills than the younger ones (Kite et al., 2005; Harris et al., 2018). The thing about these stereotypes is the fact that they may be true in only some certain cases however, one can see that they do have a strong influence on real life behavior and attitudes towards those involved (Ng & Feldman, 2012). As a result of these behaviors and attitudes, there will be preferences and potentially norms associated with hiring and keeping older workers which in turn influences the outcome and opportunities for these older workers to remain active in the labor market (Henkens, 2005; Mulders, 2020).

Category 4: Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment

As previously mentioned, most organizations have shared beliefs about what the appropriate age for some given positions are (Lawrence, 1988). These shared beliefs about age and



specific positions within organizations have shown to have negative influence on the decision during recruitment (Mulders et al., 2017) and retention (Karpinska et al., 2013). With this in mind, it is easy to argue that older workers have fewer opportunities when it comes to recruitment and retention (Russo et al., 2020). For most employees in certain ages of the lives, there is the perception of being less employable and can be proven through ageist practices during hiring (Russo et al., 2020). Apart from these perceptions, there is the chance of having lower beliefs when it comes to certain employers which can bring about negative judgements concerning the employers this Russo et al. (2020) argue that age will negatively relate to individual external employability. From an empirical research, Russo et al. (2020) found that their respondents had less faith in being employable due to the assumption of certain age norms perceived by them. Furthermore, in a vignette study by Mulders et al. (2014), Dutch managers were most likely to decline or rehire workers that have reached their retirement age. Although, they are likely to rethink this decision for the workers willingness to take on a lower wage. Although organizations will differ in their preferences or attitudes towards the ages of workers. Mulders et al. (2014) argue that these differences will be because of personal or organizational values and the extent to which these job seekers or workers are able to fit into the spheres.

Retention

When it comes to retention, the decision is always based on the organization in question and what systems or goals they have (Karpinska et al., 2013). As an influence to the attainment of the goals, the organization will try to maintain qualified employees that will contribute positively to the organizational goals (Karpinska et al., 2013). From research, management is most likely to retain older workers than recruit them if the cost is lower and if these older workers have a strong impact on the attainment of the organizational goals (Daniel & Heywood, 2007 apud Karpinska et al., 2013). They argue that working with internal employees lowers the uncertainty that comes with hiring older workers. Although this also is dependent on how significant the older workers are within their roles. On the other hand, when it comes to retention, Karpinska et al. (2013) found that managers are more likely to recommend the retention of workers that are willing to participate in training and re training initiatives. Furthermore, employees are classified into being easy to manage or difficult to



manage based on their perceived age norms. There is a lower chance of retention for those that are classified as difficult to manage based on their ages or norms surround their ages (Karpinska et al., 2013).

4. Final Considerations

This systematic review was carried out with the intention of exploring literature on age norms in organizations, while also highlighting the gaps in the current literature. From the research, one can see that age norms exist in organizations and can be defined as the behaviors or even practices individuals are expected to have at certain ages within an organizational context. However, there is the general confusion around the evidence of the elements of age norms in organizations. Some of the elements found from the research include sanctions, violations and organizational policies that are linked to age norms, however it is not really clear and not enough evidence is seen from the influence of these elements within organizations. Additionally, there are certain gaps of how age norms are formed within organizations. The gap on the formation could also help in understanding how a certain group can have a shared belief concerning age norms within the organization. Finally, there is also the lack of evidence showing the element of age norm violation and the sanctions carried out within organizations.

The article provides several unique contributions to the literature. It is the first systematic review of age norms in organizations up to the date of the database search. The findings show that the major themes discussed since the first studies published on age norms can be categorized into the following categories: 1) the understanding of the concept and meaning of age norms in the organizational context, the organizational policies resulting from these norms, and the possible violations and sanctions practiced in the organizational context. 2) Expectations, judgments, beliefs, and behavior about appropriate age are influenced by stereotypes and contribute to age norms operating in organizational settings. These norms generate implications for employees, customers, and organizations. 3) Retirement age is deeply rooted in norms and stereotypes toward older workers. Beyond individual factors, the



age norms are influenced by culture, type of sector, and other organizational contexts. 4) Recruitment and retention are conditioned by the beliefs and stereotypes about employee age, the typical age to stay working managers have in mind. So, to researchers of age norms, the article can offer an overview and possible avenues for future research.

Managers can understand better the fundamental meaning of age norms and how they operate. Based on this knowledge, they may apply the study's findings by reviewing organizational practices that engender age norms. By doing so, older workers can be recruited or stay longer in organizations based on their qualifications. On the other hand, organizations also benefit from retaining experienced employees.

By understanding the essence of age norms, a possible social implication of the study's findings could be the reduction of older workers (age 45 or more) unemployment and thus improve the economic and social conditions of elders and their families. It is an important and necessary action considering the growing aging population of the society.

For future research, it is suggested that empirical research is done on the formation of age norms especially within different organizational contexts. Additionally, the influence of age norms can be researched especially when looking at those elements such as the sanctions and violations of age norms in organizations.

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