Age Related Stereotypes At Workplace

Posted on August 31, 2019

View this essay online:
https://academic-master.com/age-related-stereotypes-at-workplace/

Introduction

If one looks at the general trend across the world, it can be seen that the overall age at the workplace is decreasing. As organizations are keener these days to induce young blood into their ranks, the average age that one gets to see at the workplace is going down (Kunze et al. 2015). At the same time, there is also a stereotype emerging that, with age, there are certain habits and traits that develop among employees (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). What it does is that it starts to affect a large group of individuals (Sun et al. 2018). If, due to the stereotype or some pre-conceived notion, the productivity of the employee is being evaluated, then it is something that needs to be looked at (Kunze et al. 2015). In this paper, it will be seen how age-related stereotypes work at the workplace and how these affect older employees at any given workplace (Appannah & Biggs, 2015).

Statistics About The Old Age Employees And Reasons Older Employees Are Retiring Early

Before one can proceed with the stereotypes, it would be interesting to see some of the stereotypes that are witnessed in the workplace (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). In 2010, as per research, about 30 % of the employees across the world were aged about 40 %, which is a decline of about 10 % if compared with the same number about a decade ago (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). There are many reasons for this. As organizations are more eager to bring in the younger group of people, people these days are also not very eager to push their retirement age (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). With better retirement planning and fund management policies available these days, the older employees are much more certain about what they would be doing after they have retired (Kunze et al. 2015). So, increased certainty about the future has also prompted the employees to be much more sure about the way they plan their future (Schloegel et al. 2018). That does not mean that there are no negative stereotypes in place that prompt them into early retirement, as well as shifts in organizational culture these days (Kunze et al. 2015).

Negative Stereotypes Against The Employees With

Respect To Their Age

It is quite natural that the negative stereotypes are going to affect the long-term performance of the organization (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). The research that was carried out previously has shown that managers these days are more than eager to prefer youth over experience (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). The situation becomes all the more problematic when there is a case where the employee is more than 40 years old (Kunze et al. 2015). The bias that is on display here not only affects the overall quality of the work that is displayed by the older worker, but it has long-term implications for the health and determination of the retirement age of these people (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). That does not mean that the organizations do not have issues; what happens is that even organizations start to face age-related discrimination lawsuits, and even worse, they have a hard time making sure that they are able to retain employees in the proper manner, to say the least (Appannah & Biggs, 2015).

Some Of The Common Age-Related Stereotypes

During the course of this paper, some of the common age-related stereotypes at the workplace are going to be looked at (Goštautaitė & Bučiūnienė, 2015). These are going to include a lack of motivation as well as less willingness to opt for training and other things (Goštautaitė & Bučiūnienė, 2015). The other perception about these employees is that they are more reluctant to sign up for career development programs as well as always showing some sort of resistance to change (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). The other major stereotype about the employees is that they are not trusting of each other at the workplace and have this habit of bringing the energy down to a certain level all the time (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). The other absurd stereotype that is being faced by these employees is that they are more likely to have health-related issues as compared to people who are younger (Oude Mulders et al. 2016). The problem is that there is no empirical evidence to support these claims, and just on the basis of this prejudice, employees are being treated in an unfair manner (Appannah & Biggs, 2015).

Less Motivation

One of the most common stereotypes that are being faced by these employees is that they are less motivated as compared to younger people (Goštautaitė & Bučiūnienė, 2015). This is due to the fact that it is perceived that the younger employees are more driven and have a greater sense of purpose as compared to the older employees (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). The perception is that as they have spent considerable time in the system, they have lost this urge to improve themselves, and instead, they are more interested in making sure that the status quo that is being witnessed at the workplace can be maintained all the time (Goštautaitė & Bučiūnienė, 2015). At the same time, another major problem that is being faced by these employees is that as they have not previously contributed to the

growth of the business, they do not have the motivation either to improve the organizational outlook or to work on themselves (Appannah & Biggs, 2015).

Lack Of Willingness To Train And Opt For Career Development

When one talks about career development, it is about making sure that a conscious effort is being made towards ensuring that career development is carried out. So, if one talks about the way career development is carried out, it means making sure that people are willing to invest in their skill set as well as make sure that they are constantly trying to improve their overall outlook (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). The perception about older employees is that not only are they extremely reluctant when it comes to opting for career management and career development programs, but they are also quite hard to train (Lyons et al. 2015). The reason that this stereotype is augmented is due to the fact that if one looks at the statistics of university and training course enrolment, the age-related issues are there for everyone to see (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). The actual estimate is that about 55 % of the people who are signing up for the training and development program are between the ages of 35 and 40 years, which goes to show how effort is needed to make sure that age-related issues and career development are interlinked with each other at a given workplace. Again, the empirical evidence is not given much importance (Appannah & Biggs, 2015).

Resistance To The Change

The other perception that is being developed about the employees is that the older the age of the employee, the greater the resistance to change that the employee would show with the passage of time (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). Again, the main issue that needs to be taken into consideration is how this whole concept is developed (Lyons et al. 2015). There are two ways through which any change is implemented in the organization (Lyons et al., 2015). Either it is a change in the working processes, such as the integration of technology, or it might be the case that some sort of cultural shift is witnessed in the organization (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). When there is a case of technological change, the rationale that is being seen is that as the older employees are more accustomed to working with obsolete systems, as well as their lack of aptitude when learning new systems, they are always going to be showing some sort of resistance to the way change is being carried out (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). This is true to an extent due to the fact that there is significant evidence to suggest the fact that when newer technologies are being implemented, the older employees are the ones who have the hardest time adopting these technologies (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). The other major problem is that when there is a cultural shift in the organization, these employees are not going to welcome the whole process (Lyons et al. 2015). For instance, these days, the concept of flexible working hours is increasingly evident (Lyons et al. 2015). Research has shown that employees who are aged about 40 are more comfortable when they are working in the physical environment of an

office (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). On the other hand, younger employees are always devising methods to make sure that they can be more flexible when it comes to their approach (Appannah & Biggs, 2015).

Lack Of Trust

Coming to workplace dynamics, it is an interesting debate regarding the way whole trust issues are going to be worked out at any given age-related group (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). The common perception in organizations where there is a vast gap among the ages of the people is that there is an apparent lack of trust among people with regard to the way they carry out their duties (Oude Mulders et al. 2016). Looking closely at the way it works, one can see what really happens when there is a vast age difference in the organization (Goštautaitė & Bučiūnienė, 2015). As is the case in any group, the younger people are more likely to gel together and spend more time with each other (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015). The same is true the other way around: the older employees are going to be hanging out with people who are the same age as they are (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). When that happens, there is always a sense of disharmony among the team, and as is the case, people are going to be more trusting of the person who is of the same age group or part of their circle (Oude Mulders et al. 2016). Again, the key thing that the management has to determine is how this dynamic is going to play out (Appannah & Biggs, 2015). If there is a case that the workplace dynamic is going to be affected by this whole ordeal, then an effort has to be made to ensure these notions are done away with at a certain level to make sure that the broader organizational goals are being achieved (Oude Mulders et al. 2016). The long-term goals and the success of the organization must go a long way toward ensuring all these things are being done in the appropriate manner (Appannah & Biggs, 2015).

More Likely To Be Experiencing Health Related Problems

These days, organizations have to be pretty shrewd about how healthcare problems are supposed to be managed (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015). The key thing that needs to be looked at here is how this relationship is going to work out regarding the cost of healthcare and insurance and other health-related coverage that the organization has to pay for and the overall health of the employees (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015). Again, there is not much empirical evidence to suggest that just because the organization has a large number of young workers, it is always going to have employees whose health is going to be ideal (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015). The key thing that needs to be understood is that the overall health of the employees is something that is going to vary from one person to another, and it is something that is highly individualistic in nature. The employees have to make sure that they look after their healthcare themselves, and if they opt for a healthy lifestyle, then age does not matter much as far as their broader healthcare issues are concerned, to say the least (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015).

Positive Stereotypes Regarding Age In Organization

That does not mean that all the stereotypes that exist in the organization about the age of the employee are going to be true (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015). For instance, most of the time, the common word that is associated with employees whose age is on the higher side is that they bring experience to the table (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015). Especially if one talks about different cultures like Japan and India, the trait of being experienced is considered something that is going to replace the experience of the person (Goštautaitė & Bučiūnienė, 2015). At the same time, the other major issue that needs to be looked at is how the younger employees are perceived. It is always assumed that they would bring an X-Factor into the organization with new ideas, but the problem is the likelihood that, given the way the educational system is these days, they would contribute anything positive to the organization (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015).

Conclusion

It can be seen that in the organization, there are both negative and positive stereotypes (Finkelstein et al. 2015). The key thing that needs to be looked at is how, in the long run, the organization can make sure that it can achieve the right sort of balance with regard to the way this change is going to be implemented at the level of the organization (Oude Mulders et al. 2016). The most common age-related stereotype is that, with age, there is going to be a change in the level of motivation of the employees (Finkelstein et al. 2015). The other major stereotype that is witnessed is how employees might become less motivated and might lose the drive and urge to do well to ensure that they work towards their career development in the appropriate manner (Finkelstein et al. 2015). It has to be noted that there is not considerable empirical evidence when it comes to these stereotypes, and they exist just for the sake of it (Dordoni & Argentero, 2015).

References

Appannah, A., & Biggs, S. (2015). Age-friendly organisations: The role of organisational culture and the participation of older workers. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, *29*(1), 37-51.

Dordoni, P., & Argentero, P. (2015). When age stereotypes are employment barriers: a conceptual analysis and a literature review on older workers stereotypes. *Ageing International*, *40*(4), 393-412.

Finkelstein, L. M., King, E. B., & Voyles, E. C. (2015). Age metastereotyping and cross-age workplace interactions: A meta view of age stereotypes at work. *Work, Aging and Retirement*, *1*(1), 26-40.

Goštautaitė, B., & Bučiūnienė, I. (2015). Work engagement during life-span: The role of interaction outside the organization and task significance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *89*, 109-119.

Kunze, F., Raes, A. M., & Bruch, H. (2015). It matters how old you feel: Antecedents and performance consequences of average relative subjective age in organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *100*(5), 1511.

Lyons, S., Urick, M., Kuron, L., & Schweitzer, L. (2015). Generational differences in the workplace: There is complexity beyond the stereotypes. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, *8*(3), 346-356.

Oude Mulders, J., Henkens, K., & Schippers, J. (2016). European top managers' age-related workplace norms and their organizations' recruitment and retention practices regarding older workers. *The Gerontologist*, *57*(5), 857-866.

Schloegel, U., Stegmann, S., van Dick, R., & Maedche, A. (2018). Age stereotypes in distributed software development: The impact of culture on age-related performance expectations. Information and Software Technology, 97, 146-162.

Sun, Q., Lou, V. W., Dai, A., To, C., & Wong, S. Y. (2018). The Effectiveness of the Young–Old Link and Growth Intergenerational Program in Reducing Age Stereotypes. Research on Social Work Practice, 1049731518767319.

Swift, H. J., Abrams, D., Lamont, R. A., & Drury, L. (2017). The risks of ageism model: How ageism and negative attitudes toward age can be a barrier to active aging. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, *11*(1), 195-231.