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Considering Age Diversity in Recruitment and Selection: An Expanded Work Lifespan View of Age Management

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Understanding and promoting age diversity in the workplace are both particularly important considerations for the design and implementation of organisation entry processes, such as recruitment and personnel selection (e.g., Loretto and White 2006; Brooke 2003). For the most part, recruitment and selection represent the primary means of gaining entry into an organisation, and both processes serve multiple roles in structuring applicant and new-hire experiences (e.g., Smither et al. 1993). For example, recruitment and selection serve important socialisation functions to the extent that participation in these processes convey norms, expectations, values, and company culture and climate to job applicants (Cooper-Thomas and Anderson 2006; Rousseau 1990). As core personnel and human resources management (HRM) practices, recruitment and selection can be characterised and defined in numerous ways (e.g., from strategic or organisation perspectives). One way of understanding recruitment and selection that is particularly germane to a discussion of promoting age diversity is to consider various judgement and decision points that characterise each process.

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Among other things, recruitment decisions involve choices around recruiting sources, including whether to recruit from internal or external labour markets. More generally, recruiting involves decisions around the presence and image that companies project to potential applicants (Rynes and Barber 1990; Rynes et al. 1991). For example, expectations regarding the organisation and the job can be influenced by the way in which information is conveyed to applicants in the form of realistic job previews (RJP; Phillips 1998). Collectively, recruitment decisions have the potential to affect the age diversity of an applicant pool. For example, if recruiting is done narrowly, age diversity may be undermined to the extent that recruiting messages fail to target older or more experienced job applicants. On the other hand, if recruitment places undue emphasis on accrued work experience, younger—yet qualified—applicants may be turned away. Furthermore, aspects of the recruiting and selection process have the possibility of affecting self-selection (e.g., voluntary withdrawal from the recruiting, vetting, or selection process; Bretz and Judge 1998). To this end, understanding the factors that contribute to the attraction to, selection into, and attrition from an organisation (ASA; Schneider 1987) is potentially valuable for understanding the totality of this process.

Decisions surrounding personnel selection are a bit more conceptually abstract. Ultimately, hiring decisions (i.e., hire/don't hire) are the goal of any selection process, and such decisions are potentially subject to the complex influence of age bias (e.g., Perry and Finkelstein 1999). However, several intermediate decisions tend to cumulate and affect this ultimate outcome. Most obviously, relatively subjective judgements of an applicant's perceived person–job or person–organisation fit (P–O fit; Kristof-Brown et al. 2005) and in particular age–job fit (Cleveland and Landy 1987; Perry et al. 2012) may occur. For example, research by Rynes and Gerhart (1990) suggests that subjective P–O fit judgements are more related to job applicants' personal characteristics (e.g., interpersonal skills, physical attractiveness) than objective job qualifications, such as work experience. Additionally, decisions that are made in the design and implementation of selection systems can also serve as potential age barriers (e.g., the design of interviews, the value, or weight placed on job experience, etc.).

Goals of the Present Chapter

Presently, we make the argument that various decisions that characterise recruitment and selection can serve to mitigate or exacerbate age-related processes that might lead to ageism, which may ultimately limit the age diversity of an applicant pool. To accomplish this, we have attempted to provide an expanded view

of age management (Naegele and Walker 2010; Walker 1999) that considers personnel selection along with recruitment as HRM processes that are constructed from a series of underlying decisions that can be actively age-managed.

Age management is typically characterised by a set of strategic "best practice" decisions that actively attempt to integrate ageing-focused policies in the design and implementation of workplace policy (Naegele and Walker 2003, 2010; Walker 1999). Herein, we specifically address two points of departure from the extant literature on age management. First, most research and scholarship on age management have focused on developing best-practice recommendations for increasing age diversity by focusing on policies focused exclusively on older workers. Here, we take broader work–lifespan view on age management and suggest that such policies and procedures are important at all stages of one's career—from the initial entry into the workforce to exit in the form of final retirement.

To this end, we suggest that efforts to increase age diversity must focus on the broad spectrum of age and not solely focus on increased participation and inclusion for "older workers." Second, while the age management literature has outlined best practices for the design and implementation of recruitment systems (among others, see Böhm et al. 2013; Fyock 2005), selection systems and processes have been largely ignored in this literature. To this point, we address the as-of-yet overlooked role of the design and implementation of selections systems to maximise positive age management. In doing so, we will attempt to build the case that a powerful means of promoting good age management practices is through designing systems that both properly value the role of experience and reduce the deleterious impact of ageing stereotypes. Finally, we provide recommendations for the use of an active intervention strategy (i.e., the structured free recall intervention; SFRI) that may be integrated into age management practices that involve personnel judgements and decisions. The goal of introducing such an intervention is to ensure that age-based stereotypes do not unduly affect this process. Before addressing these particular issues, however, it makes sense to first turn our attention to a discussion of ageism and age stereotypes in work contexts in general, the nature of age bias in job recruitment and selection specifically, and the proposed theoretical mechanisms that explain why and how age bias affects such processes.

Ageism and Age Stereotypes in Work Contexts

Most generally, ageism refers to prejudice and discrimination directed towards an individual on the basis of their age. A recent study from AARP suggests that 64 per cent of individuals surveyed reported that they have experienced or

witnessed age discrimination at work (AARP 2012). In the United States, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 strictly prohibits discrimination against applicants and employees 40 years of age and older on the basis of age, in terms of hiring, promotion, compensation, and other functions of employment under federal law. In 2014, over 20,000 charges were filed on the bases of age discrimination in the United States, which amounted to 23 per cent of the total discrimination charges filed (United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 2014). Of the 20,000 charges, $77 million was paid in settlements (United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 2014). The European Union has had a similar directive that established a general framework for equal treatment in employment settings since 2000. The United Kingdom also enacted the Equality Act in 2010, which protects all workers from age discrimination in the workplace and abolished the use of age limits in recruitment and selection (AgeUK 2015). Despite the enactment of this law, cases brought on the basis of age discrimination rose 31 per cent from 2010 to 2011 (AgeDiscrimination.info 2011). As such, it is arguably necessary for organisations to consider new aging perspectives on organisation entry to ensure the fair and equal treatment of applicants of all ages.

While traditional views of ageism have focused on mistreatment of older individuals (e.g., Butler 1969), more contemporary views position ageism as mistreatment on the basis of age, for an individual of any age. Therefore, ageism can manifest for individuals, regardless of their age. Amassed evidence suggests that ageism occurs in a variety of work contexts, and various lines of evidence for the presence and occurrence of ageism at work can be drawn from laboratory and field research, and from the outcomes of litigation concerning age-based discrimination. Cumulatively, this evidence suggests that workplace ageism typically occurs when individuals are systematically overlooked for opportunities on the basis of their age. However, the effects of ageist attitudes and behaviours may exist more covertly and cumulate in far more complex ways. For example, recent scholarship points to the roles of shared attitudes regarding ageing to the development of organisation cultures and climates that support ageing (Zacher and Gielnik 2014; Kunze et al. 2011). To the extent that positive attitudes regarding ageing prevail within organisations, culture and climate dimensions that support positive ageing should follow. This idea further underscores the importance of understanding the valence and scope of attitudes towards ageing within work contexts.

Social-cognitive perspectives suggest that stereotypes are a noted driver of discriminatory behaviour in evaluative scenarios that involve judgements. Stereotypes are overgeneralised expectations and beliefs about the characteristics and behaviours of outgroup members (Fiske 1998). More specifically, ageing stereotypes represent cognitive schema that associate characteristics

and behaviours with various age groups. To the extent that such stereotypes are endorsed, information processing (e.g., observation, interpretation, storage, and retrieval) can be biased towards these stereotypes (e.g., Dobbins et al. 1988; Feldman 1981; DeNisi and Williams 1988). Considering age, if prototypical characterisations of age groups differ, then differential evaluations and judgements are likely. Indeed, research has linked the endorsement of overt ageing stereotypes to discriminatory attitudes and behaviours in the workplace (Avolio and Barret 1987; Rupp et al. 2006).

With respect to workplace ageing stereotypes and ageism, most research has focused on the content and implications of other-referenced (i.e., focusing on perceptions of others) age stereotypes that characterise older workers (e.g., Hassel and Perrewe 1995; see Posthuma and Campion 2008, for a review). There is, however, no shortage of evidence for the presence of stereotypes against *younger* workers (e.g., Gilbert 2011; Graves 2012; Smith 2013). With some notable exceptions (e.g., Bertolino et al. 2013; Truxillo et al. 2012c), research has yet to adequately address stereotypical characterisations of other age groups besides older workers (e.g., younger workers or middle-aged workers). Workplace ageing stereotypes tend to pit the capabilities and characteristics of older workers against those of younger workers. However, it is important to note that evidence suggests that younger worker stereotypes are not simply the opposite of older-worker stereotypes (e.g., Myers and Sadaghiani 2010; Perry et al. 2013; Strauss and Howe 2000; Zacher and Gielnik 2014).

Furthermore, older-worker stereotypes often reflect both negative and positive generalisations. For example, older workers are often characterised as more reliable than younger workers, which is a positive assumption (see Bal et al. 2011). Despite this, evidence suggests that employers value the positive characterisations of older workers (e.g., high levels of experience, better judgement, commitment to quality, low turnover, attendance, and punctuality) less than other traits (e.g., flexibility, acceptance and knowledge of new technology, ability to learn new skills, and physical abilities to perform in strenuous environments) that are often used to negatively characterise older workers (AARP 1995).

Regarding the content and validity of older-worker stereotypes, Posthuma and Campion (2008) qualitatively review various lines of evidence that contradict many of the most common older-worker stereotypes (e.g., older workers are poor performers, resistant to change, possess a lower ability to learn, have a shorter tenure, are more costly). Moreover, Ng and Feldman (2012) meta-analysed evidence for six of the most commonly cited older-worker stereotypes (i.e., older workers are less motivated, less willing to participate in training and career development, more resistant to/less willing to change, less trusting, less healthy, and more vulnerable to work–family imbalance). While evidence supported the stereotype-consistent idea that older workers

are generally less motivated to participate in training and career development, the magnitude of this effect was small, and there was no relationship between age and actual participation in training.

Why Ageing Stereotypes Affect Work Processes

We often assume that age-related stereotypes are a mechanism underlying ageism. Social-cognitive perspectives view stereotypes as a form of cognitive schema, and suggest that overgeneralisations and mischaracterisations lead to incorrect judgements that potentially drive prejudice and discrimination based upon age. Recent scholarship by North and Fiske (2012, 2013) suggests a more relational perspective on stereotype effects by making a distinction between *descriptive* and *prescriptive* age stereotypes. Descriptive age stereotypes involve expectations about what older people typically "do," whereas prescriptive age stereotypes entail what older people "should do," particularly with respect to resource use (e.g., sharing, divestment thereof; North and Fiske 2012, 2013). North and Fiske (2012, 2013) outline three prescriptive and age-graded stereotype dimensions: (1) active *succession* of enviable positions and influence, (2) minimising passive shared-resource *consumption*, and (3) age-appropriate, symbolic *identity* maintenance.

Prescriptive stereotypes define normative expectations for the behaviour of others, and inattention to or violation of these expectations can drive negative age perceptions. Considering a work-relevant example, postponing retirement (e.g., working longer) might be perceived as violations of succession (e.g., "holding on" to a desirable position), consumption (i.e., taking more than one's "fair share" or company resources), and/or identity-based prescriptive norms (i.e., violating organisation exit norms with respect to age). Likewise, because prescriptive stereotypes are age-graded in nature, quick advancements through the ranks of an organisation for a relatively younger employee could be likewise perceived this way (e.g., the perception that relatively younger workers are "skipping ahead" in line, not "putting in their time," or not "acting their age," cf. Lawrence 1984, 1988).

Age Bias in Recruitment and Selection

Empirical evidence suggests that biased judgements are more likely in situations where relatively little information is available to decision makers. One explanation for this is that decision-makers tend to default to cognitive schema when forming judgements under uncertainty. As such, individuating

information is a powerful mechanism for mitigating the impact of stereotypes. Unfortunately, organisation entry processes are particularly susceptible to the occurrence of biased decisions because levels of individuating information are relatively low. Moreover, many have posited that the existence of ageism in work contexts results from a widespread and vastly overstated belief that job performance declines with age (e.g., Finkelstein et al. 1995; Perry et al. 1996). Age has been studied in the context of personnel research for some time, and amassed evidence overwhelmingly suggests that age is a poor predictor of job performance (Schmidt and Hunter 1998, ρ= −.01). Notably, however, job experience has been linked positively to job performance (ρ= .18). Considering meta-analytic evidence further, Waldman and Avolio (1986) found that there was no appreciable relationship between age and objective work-performance criteria—however, older workers received lower performance ratings when more subjective supervisory performance assessments were considered.

Taken collectively, this body of research underscores the *bad news*, in that there is an accumulation of evidence suggesting that ageism can creep into personnel decisions (Finkelstein et al. 1995; Bal et al. 2011), including those that surround recruitment (e.g., McGoldrick and Arrowsmith 1993) and selection (e.g., Singer and Sewell 1989). The *good news*, however, is that given the ubiquity of organisation entry processes, there are myriad opportunities to structure organisation entry systems in a way that mitigate the impact of ageing stereotypes and promote age diversity (Böhm et al. 2013).

An Expanded View of Age Management

Age management generally refers to "the organisation HRM dimensions employed to manage human resources with an explicit focus on the demands of an ageing workforce" (Böhm et al. 2013: 216). One way to think about age management is in terms of age-conscious processes for accomplishing core HRM practices. For example, age management has typically been organised around sets of guidelines that specify best practices for actively managing age across a number of organisation processes (e.g., recruiting, training and lifelong learning, career management and redeployment, flexible work time and work arrangements, health management and workplace accommodations, performance measurement and remuneration, transitions to retirement, see Böhm et al. 2013: 226, Table 12.1).

To the extent that the design and implementation of organisation entry systems are grounded in the principles outlined by age management, one might expect a commensurate decrease in the prevalence of ageism and age

bias in the application of such processes. This line of reasoning can be viewed as an extension of recent scholarship that has incorporated the notion of diversity and equality management into the well-established literature on high-performance work systems (e.g., Armstrong et al. 2010). For example, research has suggested that relational coordination (e.g., shared goals and knowledge, and mutual respect) may result from high-performance work systems designed to be *relational* in focus (i.e., work practices that are focused on building employee–employee relationships by reaching across multiple functional roles to engage employees in coordinated effort—e.g., selection systems that are designed to address cross-functional work activities, see Gittell et al. 2010).

It is important to note that we are not recommending that an organisation matches job characteristics with age or life stage. This would suggest more of a top-down *age crafting* perspective, such that job characteristics are adapted to fit the developmental needs of workers on the basis of age to increase their satisfaction, productivity, and engagement (see Truxillo et al. 2012c). Instead, we focus here on the conscious consideration of age management principles as a bottom-up practice that informs the design of organisation entry systems. Age management suggests a proactive approach to considering the impact of an aging workforce on HR systems surrounding recruitment and selection. From this perspective, it is recommended that an organisation design such HR systems so as to mitigate discrimination on the basis of age, and we argue that well-designed entry systems can diminish the effects of age stereotypes and ageism to a great extent.

With respect to organisation entry processes, age-conscious recruitment is well represented by the age management literature. For example, Böhm et al. (2013) outline age-conscious recruiting in terms of systems that afford equal or special access to jobs for older employees/applicants. Several age-related HR practices can support this, including ensuring that job advertisements and job descriptions are age-neutral (i.e., empirical evidence suggests that subtle ageism may creep into the design of job advertisements, e.g., McGoldrick and Arrowsmith 1993). Age-conscious recruiting can include efforts to specifically target recruiting towards older workers, including the possibility of considering re-recruiting retired employees for bridge employment roles. Again, this is not to say that organisation should necessarily change the nature of the job or position to fit the needs of an aging workforce. However, if during the job analysis process, it comes to light that the position can be adequately and appropriately filled by various non-traditional workers (e.g., bridge employees), then targeting such individuals should benefit the recruitment and selection system. These ideas are explored further below.

Best practices surrounding age-conscious design and implementation of personnel selection systems are noticeably absent from the age-management literature. Perhaps this is because well-designed, comprehensive, and best-practice conforming selection systems are generally set up to minimise the possibility of discriminatory outcomes in general. However, we would suggest that some facets of selection system design and administration should be considered through the age-management lens. To begin, and in line with recent scholarship, we define age-managed selection in terms of equal access to jobs for older employees/employees of all ages, such that there is no direct age-based discrimination in hiring and placement decisions. Age-conscious selection has the advantage of leveraging previous job experience, which supports the diversity of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and expertise (e.g., Homan et al. 2008). Consistent with the past literature, age-conscious selection can be considered in terms of a variety of examples of age-related HR "best practices" in the design and implementation of selection systems. With this idea in mind, we next consider facets of age-tailored recruitment and selection, in turn.

Age-Conscious Approaches to Recruiting

Organisations can mitigate age bias in the recruitment process by using an age-tailored and age-conscious approach to recruiting job applicants. Here, we focus primarily on organisation-level strategic recruiting decisions (i.e., the strategies and methods put in place by the organisation during the design and implementation of a recruitment effort) that may best incorporate age-management practices. For example, specifically targeting older workers from external labour markets is a recruitment strategy that allows organisation to pursue applicants with a wide range of accumulated experiences, who may be more willing to consider positions that involve non-traditional staffing options that are particularly attractive to older workers (e.g., part-time work or job sharing).

Older workers represent a subset of the current workforce possessing a wealth of potentially untapped resources, including work experience and accumulated job-relevant knowledge and skills (Posthuma and Campion 2008; Tillsley and Taylor 2001). As older workers retire from the workforce in increasing numbers, they retire with them this accumulated knowledge and experience, creating a potential "knowledge gap" that the emerging workforce may not be qualified to fill (see DeLong 2004). At a more macro-level, the employment of older workers helps to reduce financial strain on retirement

systems (Walker 2007). Indeed, when considering the design of recruitment systems, there are several similar organisation-level decisions that can influence the success of attracting older job applicants.

Recruiting Presence and Image

Many recruitment decisions involve "how" to attract potential candidates. This issue is complicated when the goal of recruitment is to attract a specific subset of the workforce. To this end, recruiting messages that emphasise that an organisation is an "ageing friendly workplace" can be a powerful recruitment strategy. Ageing friendly organisations support the successful development of individuals across the work lifespan (Böhm et al. 2013). A key strategy for cultivating this image in the recruiting process is the use of advertising materials. In developing such advertisements, organisations should consider the actual content of the advertisement (including, e.g., photographs to be used), and the placement and type of advertisement medium used (Doverspike et al. 2000). Indeed, the content of the recruiting advertisement can be used in subtle ways to project to older applicants that their contributions will be valued and supported. In addition to giving descriptions of the job role, recruitment advertisements can include phrases or statements that explain they are seeking experienced or skilled workers in job postings to emphasise the value of past work experience (Doverspike et al. 2000; Naegele and Walker 2010).

Recruitment advertisements can also highlight other employment benefits valued by older workers to reinforce the "ageing friendly workplace" image. From a signalling theory perspective, highlighting the aspects of employment that are most important to older workers represents a powerful signal (Doverspike et al. 2000; Naegele and Walker 2010). For example, retirement planning and defined benefit contribution policies may be particularly attractive to older workers (Smyer and Pitt-Catsouphes 2007). Older workers also perceive opportunities for mentoring, social relationships, and fulfilling work as attractive in the job search process (Fandray 2000; Fyock 2005; Smyer and Pitt-Catsouphes 2007). Doverspike et al. (2000) recommend incorporating photographs of older individuals into job postings and organisation advertisements to signal to applicants that the organisation supports and values the development of its incumbents across the lifespan. Lastly, the location and modality of recruitment advertisements can be strategically leveraged in order to target large sources of older applicants as well as bridge employees. For example, Doverspike et al. (2000) suggest targeting temporary agencies,

senior centres, volunteer groups, adult education centres, and neighbourhoods in which large populations of older adults reside.

It is important to note that age-conscious recruitment efforts could backfire if the organisation falsely portrays itself as ageing friendly. Avery (2003) emphasises the issue with increasing false applicant P–O fit perceptions in minority candidates during the recruitment process. From an applicant perspective, P–O fit refers to the fit between the organisational values and their own values (Kristof 1996; Kristof-Brown et al. 2002). If an organisation tries to induce the perception that they value successful ageing, and these expectations are not met upon entering the organisation, negative outcomes may result (e.g., turnover). Failing to meet asserted expectations can thus result in a mismatch between impressions of the P–O fit from pre-hire to post-hire (McKay and Avery 2005).

One way to address this potential mismatch is to conduct an age diversity audit (McKay and Avery 2005). In order to portray a genuine image, it is necessary to gather information about the current climate for ageing within an organisation. This can be done through the use of survey instruments designed to measure how an organisation and its constituents view and support individuals across the work lifespan (Böhm et al. 2013). Additionally, organisations can conduct interviews with their older incumbents to understand their work experiences (McKay and Avery 2005). These steps can help organisations understand their current age diversity efforts and help shape their recruitment strategy. As such, if an organisation finds that they have a less than favourable climate for ageing, they should not include messages in their recruitment material that would falsely inspire perceptions of "age friendliness" per se in candidates. McKay and Avery (2005) suggest that these companies should advertise the benefits of the job role or other attractive aspects of the company instead. On the other hand, if an organisation finds that it has a positive climate for ageing, it should use that to their advantage. Not only is such an organisation able to advertise its support for its employees across the lifespan, but it also will be able to follow through on those expectations when older employees join their organisation (McKay and Avery 2005). Future research would benefit from examining the effect of incorporating "age-friendly" workplace images and messages into recruitment and entry systems. Specifically, researchers could examine the extent to which these efforts help to increase the age diversity of applicant pools, and the perception that an organisation's entry system is open to applicants of all ages. Additionally, future research would benefit from examining the extent to which age audits can be optimally applied to help shape age-conscious recruitment strategies.

Another way to provide a genuine impression of the job role and organisation is to present the candidates with a RJP during the recruitment process. RJPs provide the applicant with positive and negative information about the aspects of the job role and the organisation itself (Buckley et al. 2002). When well applied, RJPs can lead to decreases in turnover (Ilgen and Seely 1974; McEvoy and Cascio 1985). Moreover, RJPs may help to mitigate any inflated positive expectations provoked during the recruitment process by providing candidates with more accurate information about their potential future at an organisation (Phillips 1998; Buckley et al. 2002). As such, if an organisation's climate for ageing is less than desirable, other aspects of the job may be attractive to applicants that may compel them to pursue entry regardless (McKay and Avery 2005). Future research should examine the extent to which ageing-focused RJPs are effective for managing the expectation that an organisation supports an individual across the lifespan, and this broader literature would generally benefit from more research examining the use of RJPs from an age-management perspective.

Targeting Non-traditional Workers

Similarly, organisations can target non-traditional workers by establishing flexible staffing options for candidates. Again, this is not to say that jobs should be necessarily redesigned to meet these goals. However, if the results of job analysis uncover the potential for flexible staffing options (e.g., flextime, job sharing or a compressed workweek) that are attractive to older workers, then the organisation's recruitment and selection systems would arguably benefit from considering all possible staffing options to fill the position. For example, bridge employment is a term that is often invoked to describe jobs that bridge the gap between an individual's career role and full labour force withdrawal (Shultz 2003; Cahill et al. 2006). Retirement patterns have largely shifted from abrupt, and full labour force withdrawal to a more gradual process with workers either engaging in phased retirement (i.e., gradually reducing the number of hours in which they work per week) or partial retirement (i.e., choosing to work part-time instead of full-time in their current organisation). Bridge employment represents a different experience in the retirement process as it typically involves working in a new job role, new occupation, or within a new organisation (Cahill et al. 2006). Bridge employment benefits older workers in that it promotes the maintenance of health, previously held life patterns through the retirement process, and successful retirement adjustment (Zhan et al. 2009). As such, bridge employment represents a flexible staffing

opportunity available to organisations that could help attract individuals wishing to remain in the workforce. Bridge employees are especially useful to organisations as they can help to address the knowledge gap that organisations experience as their large pool of experienced and skilled employees begin to exit the workforce.

On the basis of job analytic evidence, organisations seeking to increase the age diversity of their applicant pools may consider expanding job descriptions to allow for flexible staffing methods that may be especially attractive to older applicants, including bridge employees. Flexible staffing options include flex scheduling, job sharing, part-time work, temporary work, and telecommuting. Flex scheduling is a policy that gives employees the power to set their own hours for the day, week, month or year (Naegele and Walker 2003). This increases involvement and productivity at work while allowing for better work–life balance for employees as they are given the ability to address the demands of other roles, such as care-giving responsibilities, leisure activities, and other personal issues outside of the work domain (Baltes et al. 1999; Vandenberg et al. 1999, Naegele and Walker 2003). Job sharing refers to an arrangement in which two part-time employees share the responsibilities of one full-time position (Böhm et al. 2013). This policy encourages mentoring relationships as an older employee can work with a younger employee and transfer job knowledge onto the younger incumbent (Fyock 2005). Lastly, part-time work and temporary work assignments are typically the most common flexible work arrangement pursued by bridge employees, so organisations seeking to attract these workers should implement these policies as a part of their recruitment strategy (Zhan et al. 2009; Böhm et al. 2013).

Targeting Entry-Level Applicants

While we have so far focused on recruiting for older workers specifically, increasing age diversity efforts means targeting individuals across all stages of the work lifespan. In particular, if job analytic evidence suggests that an entry-level applicant can appropriately fill a position, then the organisation's recruitment and selection system may benefit from an age-targeted recruiting effort. While there is the strong potential for stereotypes towards older workers to bias various aspects of the recruitment process, the same can be said for early career applicants (Richardson, Webb, Webber & Smith 2013). For example, early career job applicants may be stereotyped as being less dependable and less devoted to their work than older applicants (Posthuma and Campion 2008; Gordon and Arvey 2004). Evidence suggests that the perceived "age-type"

of a job (i.e., if the application calls for someone experienced vs. someone that is eager to learn) can bias preferences for older or younger workers in recruitment and selection decisions (Richardson et al. 2013). On a positive note, targeting both older and younger workers can increase the possibility for developing vertical mentoring relationships between older and younger working individuals, thus fostering generativity and knowledge transfer (Naegele and Walker 2010).

When targeting entry-level applicants, organisations should foster an image that they support development across the lifespan. For example, highlighting professional development and training opportunities signals to younger job applicants that growth is valued. If there are mentoring or career development programs in place, recruitment messages should emphasise how they help entry-level employees gain necessary knowledge and diverse skills from their more experienced colleagues (Naegele and Walker 2010). Additionally, organisations should emphasise the value of non-work experiences such as university or vocational education, volunteerism, and leadership experiences in their recruitment of entry-level employees.

Internal Recruitment

Effective succession planning is becoming increasingly important as increasing numbers of older workers retire, leaving a shortage of experienced, well-educated workers prepared to fill those vacancies (Groves 2007; Shen and Cannella 2003). As older workers retire, they potentially take with them years of institutional knowledge, experience, client bases, and skills developed during their career (Taylor and Walker 1998). Given the threat of developmental and knowledge gaps in organisations, it is worthwhile for organisational leaders to invest in employees throughout all stages of their career (Böhm et al. 2013; Naegele and Walker 2010). Pairing career development with succession planning allows for the best identification and development of current incumbents to replace retiring managers (Conger and Fulmer 2003; Rothwell 2010). Thus, organisations should adopt a lifelong learning perspective in their HRM efforts to prepare current employees to assume higher-level positions in the future.

Effective succession planning should be paired with efforts directed towards career development (Rothwell 2010). By developing and supporting employees at the beginning of their careers, organisations take a bottom-up approach to succession planning and provide employees with the tools to effectively manage their future while investing in their future leaders (Rothwell 2010). Considering their wealth of experience and knowledge in their career fields,

older workers can aid succession planning by transferring their knowledge and skill base to future incumbents (Naegele and Walker 2010). Additionally, implementation of flexible staffing options (e.g., bridge employment, phased retirement, and partial retirement) could be helpful in succession planning efforts, in that individuals taking advantage of these policies can transfer their accumulated knowledge to younger incumbents in a way that is flexible, but that facilitates closing important developmental gaps in the organisation (Böhm et al. 2013; Naegele and Walker 2010).

Organisations can take an ageing conscious approach to succession planning for both higher-level management positions and lower-level or technical job roles as well. In their efforts geared towards management succession planning, organisations should identify potential individuals for promotion, clarify developmental gaps or barriers to their advancement to such roles, and provide resources and opportunities to close gaps/address barriers by investing in individual career development plans (Rothwell 2010). This forethought can help organisations identify the incumbents that have the potential to succeed in future leadership positions (Böhm et al. 2013). Compliance from current leaders in the development of their successors can help organisations mitigate knowledge loss that could occur as incumbents retire. Technical succession planning involves similar processes to managerial succession planning (e.g., conducting a job analysis, identifying incumbents to fill the role, and transferring technical role knowledge) but focuses on lower-level technical roles that will become vacant as their older incumbents retire (Rothwell 2010). Again, older workers are instrumental in mitigating technical knowledge gaps in this process (Böhm et al. 2013; Naegele and Walker 2010; Rothwell 2010). Considering the potential strategic advantage of an age-conscious succession plan, researchers could examine the extent to which implementing this strategy helps to close developmental gaps in organisations and foster career-focused behaviours among incumbents. Additionally, future research could examine the factors that contribute to the success of these types of strategies (e.g., management support, barriers to change). In summary, an ageing conscious approach to succession planning represents an internal recruiting strategy that can help address labour shortages associated with large-scale workforce retirement.

Age-Conscious Approaches to Selection

While a well-executed age-tailored approach to recruitment should serve to increase the age diversity of an applicant pool, narrowing down that applicant pool to make selection decisions is the ultimate goal of an organisational

entry system. Next, we consider some important facets of an age-conscious approach to personnel selection. The overarching idea behind this approach is to consciously and actively value the role of experience in the planning, design, and implementation of selection procedures. This idea begins with age-conscious personnel planning and talent management (for thorough expositions, see DeLong 2004; Leibold and Voelpel 2007) and extends to how jobs are defined through job analysis and finally to various predictors that are used to support selection decisions.

Age-Conscious Job Analysis

Job analysis is a fundamental first step in the design and implementation of virtually all human resources processes, and in particular selection systems. Several distinctions can be drawn with respect to the form job analysis takes (e.g., work vs. worker oriented analysis, decomposed vs. holistic judgements regarding job elements/tasks vs. duties, etc., see Doverspike and Arthur 2012). The jury is still out regarding the relative value and utility of decomposed versus holistic judgements in job analysis (e.g., Shippman et al. 2000; Harvey and Wilson 2000). Moreover, there is still debate in the literature regarding the relative value of work versus worker-oriented approaches to job analysis (e.g. Morgeson and Dierdorff 2011; Brannick et al. 2012) versus the contributions of competency-based approaches to work analysis (Campion et al. 2011).

Despite the relatively fractured nature of this literature, there is some insight to be gained about age-conscious job analysis from examining empirical findings and best practices. Systems that accurately capture the characteristics of the job in question, balance work (i.e., task-specific) and worker-oriented (e.g., KSAs) characteristics, and that account for common factors of jobs (e.g., time spent on tasks, task criticality) are commonly cited elements to well-executed job analyses. With respect to age-conscious job analysis, an important factor is the consideration of job-relevant experience in the job analysis process. Job experience is a noted correlate of job performance (e.g., McDaniel et al. 1988a), and research has suggested that experience is a better predictor of job performance ratings than age, although evidence has suggested that there may be non-linear relationships between both age and job experience and job performance (e.g., Avolio et al. 1990).

At first glance, it would appear that valuing job experience may be an immediate benefit to older job applicants, who by virtue of opportunity have potentially accumulated more work (i.e., in terms of *duration* or *quantity*).

However, recent scholarship has suggested that evaluation of the *quality* of job-relevant experience is an important consideration as well (Baugher et al. 2014). More intricate methods of valuing the quality of job experiences may work to the benefit not only of older applicants but also younger applicants with less duration/quantity of experience, but who may have accumulated quality experiences through engagement in education, internships, and volunteerism (among others). Moreover, valuing experience in the job analytic process can easily be linked to the decisions around the design of tools to facilitate the personnel selection process. Three specific examples are noted here—biographical data, training and experience (T&E) evaluations, and experience-based structured interviews. These three examples represent predictors that emphasise and value a range of experiences.

Biographical Data

Biographical data (biodata) is a selection method that asks applicants various questions about their life and work experiences that reflect a historical perspective, including questions that may involve opinions, values, beliefs, and attitudes. The emphasis here is on the use of biodata methods to appropriately weight experience duration and quantity along with quality. Schmidt and Hunter (1998) suggest that biodata measure have high validity (ρ = .35) with respect to predicting job performance. Furthermore, the theoretical assumption that underlies the use of biodata instruments is well-established (see Mumford et al. 2013), and most basically asserts that the past instances of work-related behaviour should be related to future instances (see also Stokes et al. 1994). In practice, biodata questions can be quite broad (e.g., past experiences in general, personality, attitudes, interests); however, more experience-based biodata measures may be particularly helpful in this given context (e.g., focusing on past *work* experiences, education, and training). Moreover, biodata measures can be scored using both rational and empirical means or with hybrid approaches (e.g., unit-weighting) that combine desirable qualities of each method (see Cucina et al. 2013).

Training and Experience Evaluations

A related selection method, T&E evaluations, has demonstrated validity with respect to predicting job performance (McDaniel et al. 1988). Similar to biodata methods, T&E evaluations attempt to quantify past experiences in

that they generally involve applying a systematic means of assessing previous experience, educational backgrounds, and other training information that is provided by job applicants. This information is typically collected as part of a supplement to a standard job application blank, which can then be compared against benchmarks for a particular position, and scores can be derived for the purposes of selection. The idea is to appropriately weight critical factors related to the past experiences which are important for the particular job requirements that have been identified by job analysis (Lyons 1988, 1989).

T&E evaluations are particularly useful for initially screening applicants for entry-level positions, and as such could represent an important method for ensuring the age diversity of an applicant pool with respect to younger employees. However, extensions of the basic weighting strategy can be applied to more complex jobs at higher levels (e.g., McCauley 1987). For example, task-based methods can be applied to assess T&E, for example, by asking applicants to indicate whether or not they have ever performed a number of tasks that are part of the job they are applying for. Such tasks are derived from a list of critical job elements that are identified from job analysis and incumbent input. More broadly, a competency-based method can also be applied, in which applicants are asked to rate the extent to which they possess requisite KSAs and relevant past experiences to address critical job competencies that have been identified through job analysis. Beyond simply identifying one's level of experience in engaging in a particular set of competencies, applicants are asked to provide behavioural evidence of personal accomplishments that illustrate their proficiency on these critical job dimensions to support their self-reported evaluations (see Giffin 1989). Considering these methods, a study by Baugher et al. (2014) used a KSA-based approach to T&E evaluations similar to the task-based strategy to T&E evaluations. Raters judged the quality of applicants' job-relevant experience. Results support the validity of this approach and suggest that using multiple raters increases both the reliability and criterion-related validity of quality-based T&E evaluations.

Experience-Based Structured Interviews

Job experience is perhaps most often evaluated through structured job interviews. The literature on the process of structuring pre-employment interviews is well established (see Campion et al. 1997 for a review). Regarding the development of structured interview questions, best-practice recommendations suggest that interviews should balance experiential questions, including behavioural descriptions of past actions and results (e.g., "What did you do when…?"),

along with the critical analysis of hypothetical situations (e.g., "What would you do if…?"; see Judge et al. 2001). Experience-based interviews (e.g., McCarthy et al. 2010; Roth and Campion 1992) typically involve asking applicants to answer questions about their qualifications, including work experiences and educational background. The notion of asking such questions again rests on the assumption that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour, in a similar context. Thus, asking interviewees about past instances of behaviour that have occurred in work contexts, and that are relevant to a particular job, should result in better predictions regarding one's capacity to perform relevant job tasks in the future.

Experience-based interview questions are inherently past-oriented, as they ask respondents to relate accumulated work and life experiences to job-relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities that are required of successful employees (Pulakos and Schmitt 1995; Janz 1982; Motowidlo et al. 1992). In designing structured interviews, striking a balance between situational and behavioural interview content is important. For example, several primary studies (e.g., Campion et al. 1994; Pulakos and Schmitt 1995) have found evidence for the superiority of behavioural interviews over situational interviews, with respect to criterion-related validity. However, a meta-analysis by McDaniel et al. (1994) suggested evidence for the *opposite* effect (i.e., higher validity for situational interviews). Some caution should be applied in interpreting this particular result, however, because this study collapsed behavioural interviews into larger category, classified as "other job relevant" interviews, thus providing for no direct comparison.

Mitigating Age Bias via Active Intervention

Active age management through policy and procedure is one viable strategy for addressing ageism and age bias in organisational entry processes. One step towards developing an expanded view of age management with respect to organisational entry is the identification and/or development of active means of ensuring that age bias is mitigated at various decision points within the entry process. One particularly relevant approach to this idea would be to identify and actively apply psychologically based interventions that serve to reduce the impact of age bias, through the reduction of ageing stereotypes or their impact of judgemental outcomes.

One possible means of mitigating the impact of ageing stereotypes in the organisational entry process is by implementing interventions designed to inform decision makers of their biases as a means to reduce discrimination.

For example, an organisation may develop a stereotype identification training program that has raters' complete stereotype measures and discuss the implications of their stereotypes for different decisions in the workplace. This type of intervention could serve as an important means to educate and inform key decision-makers; however, research evidence suggests that the effectiveness of such interventions for rectifying discrimination is relatively limited. For example, interventions that are designed to help evaluators control their biases and to be more accurate are often unsuccessful at bias reduction, and have even led to inadvertent "rebound effects" where one's biases are more powerful than before intervention (Bodenhausen and Macrae 1996; Wegner 1994; Macrae et al. 1994). One possible explanation for this ironic effect is that people are generally unaware of the extent to which their prejudicial beliefs influence their judgements, because such cognitions and the process by which they affect action are generally considered to be unconscious (see Devine and Elliot 1995; Dovidio and Gaertner 1996).

Stereotype identification interventions raise an additional issue that is particularly relevant to how we understand diversity practice – namely identifying certain decisions makers who possess the capability to make biased decisions is problematic for organisations on both legal and ethical grounds. For example, once organisations have this information, how do they manage "biased" individuals? It would seem troublesome to proactively act upon the *potential* for one to engage in overt discriminatory behaviour, particularly in light of evidence from a line of research that suggests that people can actively control prejudice (e.g., Plant and Devine 1998). For example, Devine et al. (2002) show that while individuals may endorse a stereotype, they will regulate their responses to not exhibit prejudiced behaviour if they have sufficient motivation to control prejudice. More effective interventions for reducing ageism in organisational entry processes have been identified however. One example, the SFRI (Bauer and Baltes 2002; Baltes et al. 2007; Rudolph et al. 2012) may be particularly valuable at mitigating age-biased selection decisions.

The SFRI is a *recall-driven* intervention. This is unique, in that many interventions that are used in similar contexts are *encoding-driven* (e.g., Rater Error Training, Frame of Reference Training; Sulsky and Day 1992, 1994). The SFRI reduces the impact of stereotypes in evaluative decision-making by structuring the process by which performance-relevant behaviours are recalled *prior* to making judgements. A threshold cognitive model (see Baltes et al. 2007) can explain the effectiveness of the SFRI (see Fig. 25.1). Consistent with information processing theories, the threshold cognitive model suggests that stereotypes are cognitive heuristics that affect how strongly specific behaviours are encoded into memory, and stereotype-consistent behaviours result in stronger memory representations than stereotype-inconsistent behaviours.

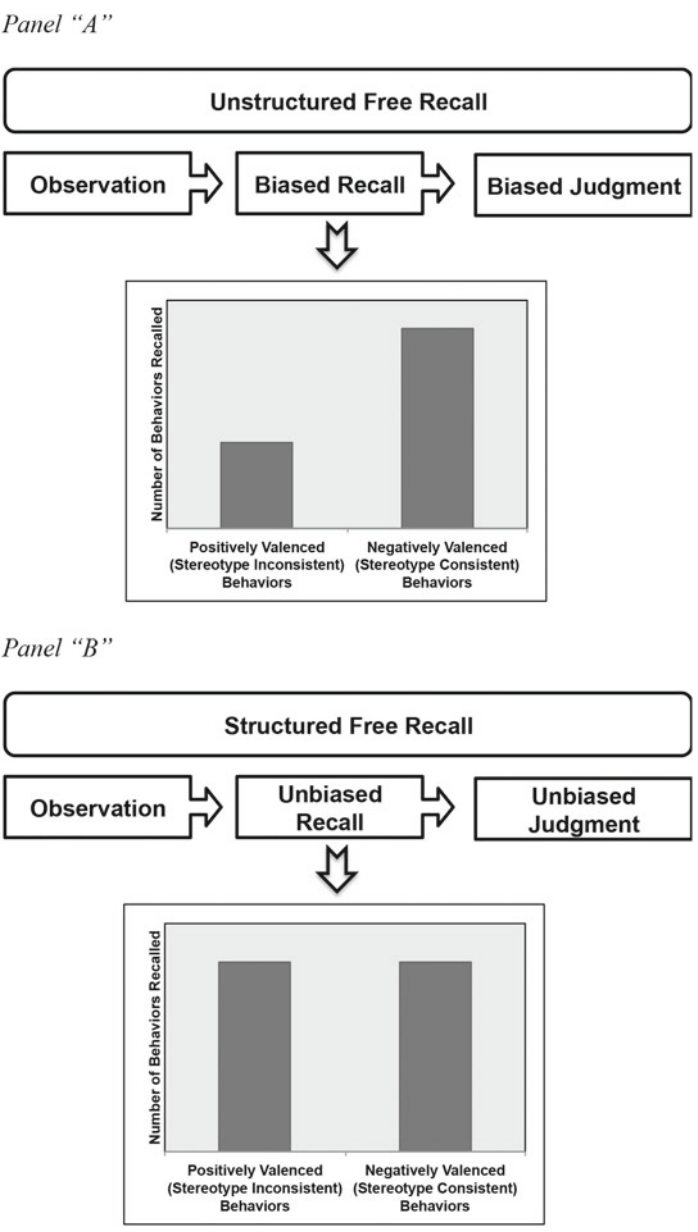

Fig. 25.1 Comparing the unstructured versus structured free recall process

The recall process typically occurs via an unstructured mode. Thus, biased evaluators are more likely to recall stereotype-consistent behaviours because these behaviours are better represented in their memory. Subsequently, this biased recall of behaviour likely has an undue influence on evaluations of

performance potential (see Fig. 25.1, Panel "A"). The SFRI structures the recall of behaviours to circumvent this process. Specifically, the SFRI modifies the retrieval threshold for performance-relevant behaviours by explicitly structuring the process by which raters recall both positive *and* negative behaviours. What this ultimately means is that evaluators undergoing the SFRI have equal access to both stereotype-consistent and -inconsistent behaviours. As a result, evaluators rely less on heuristic processes and are able to translate these behaviours into judgements in a way that is less biased by the influence of stereotypes (see Fig. 25.1, Panel "B").

The SFRI could be implemented as part of various selection processes to mitigate the impact of age stereotypes on employment decisions. For example, the SFRI can be used immediately following a pre-employment interview to reduce the impact of stereotypical assumptions on interview ratings and associated employment decisions. During an interview, a rater has limited access to performance information and may thus rely on more heuristic processes to make hiring decisions (Rudolph et al. 2012). If used shortly following an interview, the SFRI guides raters to recall and explicitly account for observed behaviours that relate to the performance dimensions identified during a job analysis and assessed via the interview protocol. Thus, the rater relies on performance and qualification-related behaviour rather than more heuristic/stereotypical assumptions about an applicant when forming their evaluation. Additionally, the SFRI could be similarly implemented in assessment centre or job-simulation settings used for selection purposes. Raters in these settings often view multiple applicants and are similarly exposed to limited performance information for any given individual, potentially leading to the reliance on more stereotypical assumptions when forming performance judgements. The SFRI could be used shortly after a rater views the performance of an applicant to aide in the recall of relevant performance-related behaviours. When implemented in this type of setting, evaluations of applicants should reflect less biased judgements (i.e., with respect to stereotypes) (Fig. 25.1).

General Discussion and Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter, we presented an expanded view of age management in the workplace and demonstrated how it could be used to help shape various decisions that occur during recruitment and selection. Furthermore, by doing so one should be able to mitigate age-related processes that might lead to ageism for workers of all ages. More specifically, we believe age management provides

one with a set of guidelines that specify best practices for actively managing age across a number of organisational processes. With respect to recruiting, we suggested several ways in which one could make sure to attract candidates of all ages for various positions. Organisations can ensure age diversity by recruiting both older and younger workers. It is necessary to recruit individuals from across the lifespan as workers from each stage represent unique opportunities for organisation effectiveness. Older workers possess unique skills, experiences, clients, and knowledge accumulated throughout their career. Younger workers, though less experienced, are similarly qualified and represent an opportunity for the organisation to develop these entry-level applicants early in their career.

Another decision made during the recruitment process regards using an organisation image and presence to attract employees. Promoting an age-friendly presence is integral in demonstrating the value an organisation holds in successful ageing across the lifespan. However, we emphasise the importance of doing so in a genuine fashion (i.e., organisations should advertise an age-friendly work environment only if it is an accurate representation of the experience within the organisation). The age-management literature underscores the value in conducting an age diversity audit from its HR managers, older employees, and managers to get a better understanding of the current state of age-related processes at work prior to making recruitment and selection strategy decisions (Böhm et al. 2013). Age-management principles can similarly be applied to succession planning. In order to prevent knowledge gaps as older workers retire, organisations can implement age-conscious succession planning. This can take the form of involving older workers in mentoring relationships, knowledge transfer, and job sharing. Additionally, organisations could recruit non-traditional applicants (e.g., bridge employees) to help fill developmental gaps while preparing younger incumbents to fill new job roles. Overall, age-management policies can improve recruitment strategies in increasing age diversity.

With respect to the selection process we discussed using an age-conscious approach to selection where the organisation should approach all components of the selection process consciously and actively value the role of experience (as well as other positive aspects of both older and younger employees) in the planning, design, and implementation of selection procedures. During the planning stages of creating selection batteries, we emphasise the importance of completing age-conscious job analyses (i.e., taking into consideration job-relevant experience). This strategy aids in the development of selection tools that assess the quality of applicant job experience. We recommend utilising biographical data, T&E evaluations, and

experience-based structure interviews to ensure the quality and age diversity of one's applicant pool. For example, T&E evaluations help to screen entry-level applicants by asking individuals about their previous experience with tasks critical to the job. Finally, we discussed using active interventions to reduce age bias in selection and promotion decisions. The use of intervention such as the SFRI should reduce the impact of negative stereotypes of both older and younger workers.

The ideas presented here should perhaps be expanded further to include considerations of age-conscious job design. For example, Truxillo et al. (2012a, 2012b) have recently proposed integrated lifespan models of job design that identify specific job characteristics that are likely to be important to individuals across various career stages (e.g., task characteristics—such as autonomy and skill variety; social characteristics—such as interdependence and social support). Truxillo and colleagues suggest that age-conscious job design is a core facet of effective age management. The age-tailored approach to recruiting and selection that is offered here would certainly be supported by job design approaches that implement age-conscious work characteristics. Moreover, age management must be a holistic effort to incorporate age consciousness not only into recruitment and selection strategies but also into all HRM practices such as lifelong learning policies and practices, flexible work options, health and safety management, and retirement planning. Age-management principles emphasise that age diversity and successful ageing should be considered in all aspects of the employee experience. Here, we offered age-conscious perspectives on organisational recruitment strategies to mitigate age barriers and promote equal opportunity for employment to all individuals across the lifespan. Furthermore, we expanded on the previous age-management literature to emphasise the importance of, and provide recommendations for, age-conscious practices in the selection process to prevent age bias in selection decisions, thereby safeguarding age diversity efforts.

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