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Older workers: stereotypes and occupational self-efficacy

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Abstract

Purpose. The present study aims to explore the relationship between organizational age stereotypes and occupational self-efficacy. First, we intend to test the measurement invariance of Henkens (2005)'s age stereotypes scale across two age group, respectively under 50 years and 50 years and older. Then, the moderator role of age groups in the relationship between age stereotypes and occupational self-efficacy is investigated.

Methodology. The survey involved a large sample of 4667 Italian bank sector's employees.

Findings. The results shows the invariance of the three dimensional structure of organizational stereotypes toward older workers scale: productivity, reliability and adaptability. Furthermore, the moderation is confirmed: the relationship between organizational age stereotypes and occupational self-efficacy is significant only for older respondents.

Research limitations/implications. Further research is necessary in order to verify the generalization of the results to other sectors and countries.

Practical implications. The study suggests the importance to emphasize the positive characteristics of older workers and to reduce the presence of negative age stereotypes in the workplace, especially in order to foster the occupational self-efficacy of older workers.

Originality/value. Our findings are especially relevant in view of the lack of evidence about the relationship between age stereotypes and occupational self-efficacy.

Keywords: age stereotypes; older worker; occupational self-efficacy; age groups; ageing

