



ARTICLE

The Role of Intergenerational Differentiation in Perception of Employee Engagement and Job Satisfaction among Older and Younger Employees in Slovenia

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ABSTRACT

With the ageing population in the developed world, age diversity in the workforce in organizations is growing. Consequently, perception of the work environment, job satisfaction and engagement are influenced by differences in age as well as a corresponding diverse set of values and often manifested through age discrimination. Using an age-diverse national sample ($n = 1505$) of older ($n = 750$) and younger ($n = 755$) workers in Slovenia, this study investigates the understudied influence of intergenerational differentiation (age discrimination) on job satisfaction and employee engagement between two age cohorts. Three different instruments were used: *Intergenerational Differentiation in the Workplace Measure (IDWM)*, *Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (JSQ)* and *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9)*. The main goal of the study was to (through structural equation modelling) find out if and how the perception of intergenerational differentiation in the workplace affects job satisfaction and employee engagement between young and old employees. The constructed structural model shows that independent of the age group, intergenerational differences have a direct negative effect on job satisfaction and an indirect negative effect on employee engagement. It was also found that perceived age discrimination has both a greater direct effect on job satisfaction among older employees and a greater indirect effect on older employees' engagement than on younger employees' job satisfaction and engagement. Thus, by

examining the organizational level the study implicitly identifies that these intergenerational differences in age related values and value changes exist not only in the organization but spread through society.

KEYWORDS

intergenerational differentiation, age discrimination in the workplace, job satisfaction, employee engagement, older workers, younger workers, age-related value

Introduction

The workforce is ageing in parallel with the ageing of the population (Rippon, Kneale, de Olivera & Demakakos, 2014). Simultaneously, an insufficient number of younger workers (18–35 years old) are entering the labour force to replace workers who are retiring (e.g. Chand & Tung, 2014). As a response, in order to stay competitive and preserve economic growth, organizations are challenged to identify older workers' (aged 55 and older) needs and perceptions, and develop practices that retain them (Sausa, Ramos & Carvalho, 2019). If organizations do succeed in retaining older workers, they are consequently faced with the challenge of managing increased age diversity in their work environment. Diversity across age and work values (e.g. Smola & Sutton, 2002) inevitably produces generational differences in the workplace which enhance the likelihood of encountering greater age-related perspective dissimilarity with one's coworkers (Avery, McKay & Wilson, 2007) and can bring forth age discrimination in the workplace (Prelog, Ismagilova & Boštjančič, 2019) and beyond. Many concerns exist about the effect of age dissimilarity, discrimination and age-based value changes in the work environment, as well as the subsequent perceptions once applied outside the workplace. Two of the most important organizational factors for retaining older workers (decreasing the intention to quit) regard personal outcomes such as job satisfaction and engagement (Bentley et al., 2019; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) and are closely related to positive employee and organizational outcomes at large (e.g. Davar & RanjuBala, 2012).

Researchers found evidence that perceived age discrimination influences workers across different age groups with negative effects on job satisfaction and engagement (e.g. Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2014; James, McKenchie & Swanberg, 2011; Snape & Redman, 2003). Since studies suggested that ageism and age discrimination against older adults is more pernicious, past research and the majority of literature findings have more often focused on a particular age group (e.g. Nelson, 2005). This paper differs from past research by highlighting the importance of age discrimination effects on job satisfaction and employee engagement across the two most prominent age groups, older and younger, which will play a deciding role in the broader socio-economic context via the future job market, providing higher economic growth, a sustainable healthcare and retirement system, etc. While the groups differ in

their current values, they are both subject to constant age-related change, suggesting that personal values change normatively with age (Fung et. al., 2016; Heckhausen, Wroch & Shultz, 2010). Also, in light of past studies which tended to focus only on a certain occupation (e.g. Redman & Snape, 2006), this paper focuses on a wide range of different occupations. It makes several propositions; one, that the level of work engagement is subject to the psychological consequence of age discrimination, which is a derivative of intergenerational differentiation, and that it is a psychological antecedent of preference for early or late retirement. It also proposes that job satisfaction is influenced by age discrimination, and employee engagement by job satisfaction. It lastly proposes that the two most diverse age groups perceive discrimination, job satisfaction and employee engagement differently and that their job satisfaction and engagement are correspondingly differently affected. In this manner, it is visible that people of different ages tend to differ in many aspects (key identifying historical events, physical ageing, life stage requirements) (Schwarz, 2005) of their expectations and values allowing us of clear view to recognize the importance of their value.

Intergenerational Differentiation and Age Discrimination

One of the most prominent and common agents of diversity in organizations is age (Glover & Branine, 2001). Consequently, the topic of intergenerational differentiation in the workplace has been immensely popular over the past decade, though research on this topic has often seemed opportunistic, lacking rigour and depth (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015), or guided by much popular speculation but relatively little substantive research (Reeves & Oh, 2008). The main problems surrounding intergenerational differentiation research were methodological – conceptualization and especially measurement were based on a single item indicator (e.g. Brown, 2001; Utsey, 1998; Williams, Neighbors & Jackson, 2008).

Intergenerational differentiation is based on the assumption that chronological age is the main determinant of an individual's characteristics, assuming that a particular age group is better than another (Cavanaugh & Blanchard-Fields, 2006). The behavioural aspect of that age bias or of intergenerational differentiation is age discrimination. It is linked to the individual's tendency to treat members of the other (in the case of organization) workgroup or members of another generation as inferior (Finkelstein & Farrell, 2007). Age discrimination embodies an unwanted behavioural dynamic between the generations which is grounded in the assumption that each generation or age cohort has different work behaviour patterns, attitudes, expectations, habits, values and motivational mechanisms (e.g. Veingerl Čič & Šarotar Žižek, 2017; Hansen & Leuty, 2012). It is also grounded in a biased assumption that age (any age) is a determining factor of one's ability, talent and potential. Age discrimination can also be perceived through biased decision making and unfair behaviours from superiors or coworkers. In summary, anyone who is subject to unfair or different treatment in the context of his or her employment on the basis of age experiences age discrimination in the workplace (Zacher & Steinvik, 2015).

Although the research in the field of age discrimination has often taken the position of addressing discrimination against the elderly, the assumption that younger employees are not susceptible to age discrimination is not true. For example, Garstka, Hummert & Branscombe (2005) as well as Snape & Redman (2003) indicate that younger employees are in some cases treated less favourably than older employees, so neither younger nor older employees are unaffected by age discrimination (Gee, Plavalko & Long, 2007). Whether older or younger, employees who are subject to age discrimination feel tremendous psychological pressure and burdens. Often, they develop self-defeating patterns of behaviour. Research shows that, similar to other diversity demographics (e.g. gender and race), age diversity rarely has a single effect (Horwitz & Horwitz, 2007). Bias in the form of age discrimination can have a negative effect on productivity (Thorsen, et al., 2012) and the employee-employer relationship (Zacher & Steinvik, 2015), as well as affect working conditions (McCann & Giles, 2002), employee engagement (James, McKechine, Swanberf & Besen, 2013), job satisfaction (Macdonald & Levy, 2016) and one's general life outlook (Donizzetti, 2019).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a desired or pleasant, positive emotional state which results from the employee's experience at work and represents one of the most important constructs in organizational studies (e.g. Judge, Bono & Locke, 2000). It defines an individual's assessment or experience of all aspects of work (working conditions, elements of work, the workplace, etc.) that are important to him or her (Mullins, 2005). More specifically, it is an individual's emotional response to the work environment, or a result of comparing one's own expectations of one's work and the opportunities offered by work (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009) with organizational reality. Job satisfaction is indissolubly connected with the work environment, e.g. interpersonal relations (Thorsen et al., 2012) and social support. Factors such as reward, recognition, cooperation, fair treatment by leaders, sensible organization policy, team spirit, etc. can increase job satisfaction (Abraham, 2012). The impact of interpersonal collaboration can have a positive effect, while the impact of intergenerational differentiation (manifested through age discrimination) can have a negative effect on job satisfaction. Those who perceive the environment positively and interpersonal interactions to be emotionally or instrumentally rewarding with a low perceived degree of age discrimination are usually more satisfied with their work than those who do not (Ducharme & Martin, 2000). Job satisfaction is consequently built on the correspondence between the needs and desires of employees and organizational reality. When employees perceive their job to fulfil their needs, values and personal characteristics, their job satisfaction rises (Ellickson & Logsdon, 2001). Job satisfaction is one of the key prerequisites for an individual's work achievements. Satisfied employees are more productive (Syptak, Marsland & Ulmer, 1999), and according to some studies (using a facet approach to job satisfaction) even more engaged (e.g. Bellani, Ramadhani & Tamar, 2017).

Employee Engagement

Because employee engagement is personified by how an employee thinks, feels and acts in regard to the organizational goals (Cook, 2008) and consequently predicts many positive outcomes for organizations (Saks, 2006), engaging employees is one of the most important management challenges (Avery et al., 2007). "Employee engagement is an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state, directed toward the desired organizational outcomes" (Shuck & Wollard, 2010, p. 103). Cognitive engagement refers to the beliefs about one's employer and the workplace culture, emotional engagement refers to how an employee feels about the workplace (it forms meaningful connections among co-workers [Bakker, 2011]), and behavioural engagement refers to willingness to engage one's job responsibilities to reach high levels of productivity and performance (Shuck & Reio, 2011). It can also be characterized by a "positive fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Engagement arises in employees who are emotionally connected with others (Kahn, 1990). Kahn pointed out that those who perceive more supportive conditions for their type of authentic expression tend to be engaged. He assumed that employee engagement requires three psychological preconditions in the workplace: meaningfulness, psychological safety and availability (Ibid.). Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) found a positive relationship between employee engagement and job resources, such as performance feedback, social support, etc. They stated that the most important situational factor in predicting work engagement is work resources (Ibid.). Saks (2006) supports this claims in the framework of social exchange theory. He explains that if the management of an organization devotes to employees the resources needed, they will respond to the organization's devotion by being engaged. Alfez, Shantz, Truss & Soane (2013) also associated employee engagement with organizational support and employee-manager relationships. May, Gilson & Harter (2004) reported that individuals with a rewarding interpersonal interaction with their coworkers expressed greater psychological safety at work, which is also a prerequisite of engagement. Engaged employees are, after all, those who through the work environment feel energetic, dedicated and immersed at their work (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). By taking into account the research in this area and broadening the findings, this paper further suggests that intergenerational differences and age (dis)similarities to one's coworkers could have an impact on the level of employee engagement.

The Research Subject and Hypothesized Structural Relationship Model

This research aims to address the relationship between the intergenerational differentiation in the form of age discrimination, job satisfaction and employee engagement. None of the previous studies attempted to integrate these three constructs into a comprehensive model. Prior research and literature have shown that coworker relationships influence employee attitudes and behaviours (Avery et

al., 2007). Findings also suggests that coworker relations may impact job satisfaction and employee engagement. The hypothesized relationship model shown in Figure 1 is based on the assumption that intergenerational differentiation (in form of age discrimination) have a direct effect on job satisfaction and employee engagement. The relationship between intergenerational differentiation (age-discrimination), job satisfaction and work engagement can be understood as a social exchange between the worker and the organization. Social exchange theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) suggests that workers who feel valued, appreciated and receive socio-economic resources (from the organization) will be satisfied and reciprocally give organizational investment back in the forms of increased satisfaction, engagement and performance (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006; Sousa et al., 2019). May et al. (2004) also found that workers who have rewarding interpersonal interaction with their coworkers expressed greater psychological safety at work, a significant marker of engagement. The hypothesized model is in line with previous research that shows job satisfaction as a driver and an antecedent of employee engagement (Abraham, 2012; Avery et al., 2007; Garg & Kumar, 2012). Employee engagement is related and, in its ambiguous conceptualization, overlapped with some other well-known constructs (e.g. job satisfaction) (e.g. Nimon, Schuck, & Zigarmi, 2015). It differs from job satisfaction because it combines an increased high level of work pleasure (dedication) with high activation (vigour, absorption), while job satisfaction is typically a more passive form of employee well-being (Bakker & Hakanen, 2014). In fact, many researchers (Djoemadi, Setiawan, Noermijati & Irawanto, 2019; Shmailan, 2015) found that job satisfaction has a significant and direct effect on employee engagement. Job satisfaction is an important driver of work engagement, which (compared to job satisfaction, itself) is directly related to individual and organization performance.

To obtain a more thorough understanding of the psychosocial factors influencing job satisfaction and engagement, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used. The hypothesized research model shown in Figure 1 was tested (using SEM) on two different age groups, older and younger workers.

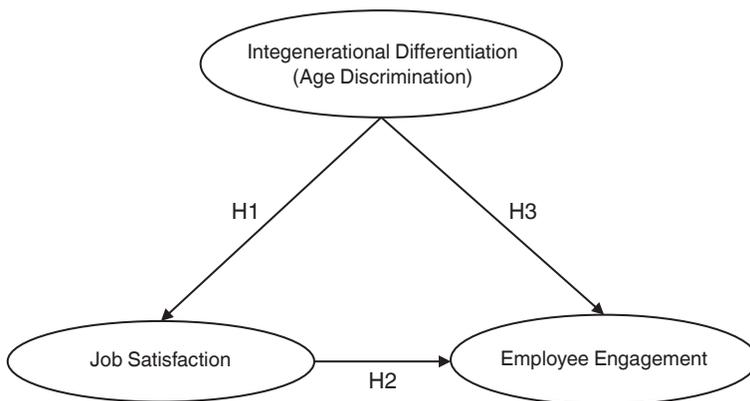


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model of Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination) Effect on Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement.

Methodology

Participants and the Procedure

To obtain a more complete understanding of the age discrimination influencing job satisfaction and engagement, this study utilized an age diverse national sample of 1505 workers from a range of occupations and organizations in Slovenia. Participants ($n = 1505$) were employees of 25 Slovenian organizations recruited through a random sample. The sample was divided between 750 older employees and 755 younger employees. More specifically, socio-demographic characteristics of the overall sample relative to categorisation – older and younger employees – are shown in Table 1. According to the International Classification of Economic Activities (ISIC), participating organizations operated in different parts of industries (Table 2). All organizations involved were approximately equally distributed between the public and private sectors. Out of 25 organizations, 13 (53.5 %) of them (806 employees) were part of the private sector and 12 (46.4 %) were part of the public sector (699 employees).

Table 1. Socio Demographic Characteristic of Sample
($n = 1505$, Younger Employees $n = 755$, Older Employees $n = 750$)

	Total sample		Younger employees		Older employees	
	Total	n (%)	Total	n (%)	Total	n (%)
Gender						
Male	679	45.1	322	42.6	357	47.6
Female	826	54.9	433	57.3	393	52.4
Age						
18–28	250	16.6	250	33.1	/	/
29–35	505	33.5	505	66.8	/	/
55–60	677	44.3	/	/	677	90.2
> 60	73	4.8	/	/	73	9.7
Level of education						
Non-university	754	50.1	348	46.1	406	54.1
University	751	49.9	407	53.9	334	45.9
Position in organization						
Non-Leader	1313	12.8	686	90.9	627	83.6
Leader	192	87.2	69	9.1	123	16.4
Field of work						
Blue collar	719	47.9	346	48.0	373	51.8
White collar	786	52.1	409	52.0	377	48.2

Table 2. List of Participating Companies According to the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)

ISIC code		n of companies	n of employees	Share of participants in the sample (%)
C	Manufacturing	10	632	41.9
P	Education	6	344	22.8
Q	Human health and social work activities	4	236	15.6
I	Accommodation and food service activities	2	116	7.7
R	Arts, entertainment and recreation	1	60	3.9
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	1	59	3.9
J	Information and communication	1	58	3.8
		25	1505	100

The inclusion criterion for participation was holding an employment contract for either a fixed-term or an indefinite period. The age criterion for inclusion was divided into two groups: from 18 through 35 years old and from 55 and on. Inclusion criterion was also a Slovenian citizenship. Additional inclusion criteria for organizations were that they operate in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia (the primary activity the labour force is located in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia) and have at least 30 employees who were less than 35 years old and at least 30 employees who were more than 55 years old. On the basis of the inclusion criteria described above, the HR department representative of each organization sent a link to the questionnaires via e-mail. The average time to complete a set of questionnaires, including socio-demographic variables, was 8 minutes. All participants were granted full anonymity and given the opportunity to see their own results after they had completed the questionnaires (and data were analysed). Data collection took place from January to July 2018.

Research Tools

Participants filled out three different questionnaires. First was the *Intergenerational Differentiation in the Workplace Measure*, a self-assessment questionnaire which included seven items. The participants assessed the frequency of behaviour on a 7-point rating scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always). Participants rated, for example:

- (IGD1) I feel that in communication other employees look down on me and regard me as inferior because of my age;
- (IGD2) In my work, I only work with employees of my age/generation;
- (IGD3) Other employees don't appreciate my knowledge and skills due to my age;
- (IGD4) My manager micromanages my work due to my age;
- (IGD5) Due to my age, I constantly have to do the tasks that the rest of the staff refuses;
- (IGD6) My superiors humiliate me because of my age;
- (IGD7) In my workplace, I only cooperate with employees of my age.

The higher the ratings total of the items, the more the intergenerational differentiation in the workplace is perceived. Based on a preliminary study, the original questionnaire was reduced from 8 to 7 items of intergenerational differentiation. The internal reliability for both questionnaires' variations was adequately high (8 items, $\alpha = .79$; 7 items, $\alpha = .81$), although removal of an item improved internal reliability. Items were then divided into two subsections of factors – cooperation (2 items) and discrimination (5 items). During a preliminary study, it was determined that the results are not equally distributed.

The second questionnaire, *Job Satisfaction Questionnaire*, also a self-assessment questionnaire was developed and used in a broader project of measuring organizational climate and job satisfaction in Slovenia (SiOK). On a 6-point frequency rating scale ranging from 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) it measures 11 different facets of job satisfaction, i.e. satisfaction with: (SAT1) work,

(SAT2) direct superiors, (SAT3) salary, (SAT4) status within the organization, (SAT5) working conditions (equipment, premises), (SAT6) training opportunities, (SAT7) continuity of employment, and (SAT8) working hours. Based on a preliminary study, the original questionnaire was reduced from 11 to 8 items or facets of job satisfaction. The internal reliability of the 11-item questionnaire ($\alpha = .87$) decreased ($\alpha = .83$) for shortened 8 items questionnaire. The decrease in internal reliability was minimal, corresponding with the reduced number of facets. All the remaining features of the original questionnaire were maintained.

The third questionnaire was the *Employee Engagement Questionnaire Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9)*. Participants completed a 9-item shortened version of the established 17-item measure of employee engagement self-reported questionnaire called the UWES-9 (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma & Bakker, 2002). The reason for a shorter version was time-effectiveness and adequately high internal reliability ($\alpha = .85-.92$). An additional advantage was its free accessibility online. Participants assessed the frequency of behaviour on a 7-point frequency rating scale ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (always). They rated: (ENG1) At my work, I feel bursting with energy, (ENG2) At my job, I feel strong and vigorous, (ENG3) I am enthusiastic about my job, (ENG4) My job inspires me, (ENG5) When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work, (ENG6) I feel happy when I am working intensely, (ENG7) I am proud of the work that I do, (ENG8) I am immersed in my job, (ENG9) I get carried away when I am working.

All three questionnaires together form 24 indicators – the *Intergenerational Differentiation in the Workplace Measure* (7 indicators), the *Job Satisfaction Questionnaire* (8 indicators) and *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale UWES-9* (9 indicators). In addition, participants were asked to answer 5 socio-demographic questions regarding their gender, age, level of education, position in their organization (leader or non-leader) and field of work (blue or white collar). Altogether there were 29 items analysed in the survey.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed with the IBM SPSS Statistics 23.0 and IBM SPSS AMOS. First, descriptive statistics (average and standard deviation) and correlation analysis (Spearman's correlation test [p]) were employed. After testing for normality of the distribution, exploratory factor analysis with principal components and varimax rotation was undertaken to examine which indicators comprised coherent groups of items (factors). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was based on findings of exploratory factor analysis (EFA). CFA was made using a maximum likelihood method, which can be used in most cases where non-normality is present (Finney & DiStefano, 2006). The Kaiser criterion was applied to select the number of factors (Blaikie, 2003) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test of sphericity were applied to measure the sampling adequacy (Munro, 2005). The hypothesized model (interaction between the latent and manifest variables and their impact were studied simultaneously) was tested using structural equation modelling (SEM).

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Descriptive statistics (averages and standard deviations) and correlation analysis for the variables are presented in Table 3. This analysis included 19 items across the three constructs (Intergenerational Differentiation (4 items), Job Satisfaction (6 items) and Employee Engagement (9 items)). During the analysis the findings of the preliminary study were confirmed; data acquired with the Intergenerational Differentiation in the Workplace Measure were not equally distributed. The results of Spearman's correlation coefficients between indicators showed that all indicators correlate. The highest values of correlations are among indicators of the same construct, e.g. Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination) correlated moderately and strongly. The strongest correlation was between age discrimination on the basis of inadequate knowledge and discriminatory (inferior) communication because of employees' age. In the construct for job satisfaction, the highest correlation was between satisfaction with working hours and continuity of employment. Among indicators of Employee Engagement all correlations were strong. As expected, all indicators of Employee Engagement correlated moderately with satisfaction with work. Also, most Employee Engagement indicators correlated moderately with satisfaction with working hours. Correlations between indicators of Intergenerational Differentiation, Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement were negative and weak (see Table 3).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Reliability and Validity

After examining EFA, CFA was performed. The model was simplified to ensure a proper model fit. Variables with low factor loadings were excluded. In the case of Intergenerational Differentiation 3 out of 7 items were excluded, in the case of Job Satisfaction 2 items out of 8 were excluded, and in the case of Employee Engagement none was excluded. Indicators were eliminated from the scale in consideration of their utility. According to different authors, the exclusion criteria can be very different. Regarding several authors mentioned below, which for interpretive purposes propose different cut-off limits, current factor loadings in combination with sample size is far above the cut-off limit (MacCallum, Widaman, Preacher & Hong, 2001; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). CFA also showed that the model fits the data adequately (all factor loadings were higher than .5) which indicates that all the latent variables are represented by the indicators (Table 4).

In Table 4, indicators of reliability and validity of the constructs in the model were calculated. Composite reliability (CR) and convergent validity (AVE) were achieved in all cases. Internal consistency was identified with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. As seen from Table 4, all Cronbach alpha coefficients were between acceptable and very good (Cortina, 1993). All scales of measurement here are therefore valid and reliable with a high level of internal reliability and adequate discriminant validity.

Table 3. Average Values (M), Standard Deviations (SD) and Spearman's Correlation Coefficients, between Indicators of the Intergenerational Differentiation in the Workplace Measure (IGD), Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (JSQ) and Employee Engagement (UWES-9)

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
IGD1	2.13	1.409	1																		
IGD3	1.84	1.341	.635**	1																	
IGD4	2.06	1.504	.532**	.548**	1																
IGD5	2.14	1.498	.499**	.458**	.510**	1															
SAT1	3.9	0.824	-.165**	-.170**	-.191**	-.224**	1														
SAT2	3.74	1.064	-.225**	-.187**	-.241**	-.245**	.530**	1													
SAT3	2.95	1.045	-.143**	-.132**	-.188**	-.202**	.477**	.413**	1												
SAT4	3.48	0.955	-.228**	-.204**	-.236**	-.263**	.544**	.531**	.606**	1											
SAT5	3.6	1.063	-.166**	-.171**	-.215**	-.206**	.450**	.434**	.435**	.520**	1										
SAT6	3.51	1.038	-.155**	-.162**	-.184**	-.202**	.489**	.462**	.445**	.563**	.542**	1									
ENG1	4.57	1.312	-.114**	-.131**	-.219**	-.189**	.461**	.374**	.382**	.384**	.310**	.328**	1								
ENG2	4.71	1.299	-.135**	-.125**	-.205**	-.203**	.495**	.416**	.376**	.423**	.332**	.346**	.793**	1							
ENG3	4.95	1.351	-.140**	-.136**	-.194**	-.191**	.518**	.391**	.388**	.440**	.356**	.371**	.652**	.714**	1						
ENG4	4.65	1.538	-.170**	-.181**	-.215**	-.224**	.524**	.398**	.418**	.473**	.369**	.418**	.663**	.690**	.813**	1					
ENG5	4.56	1.548	-.136**	-.144**	-.218**	-.241**	.528**	.432**	.416**	.466**	.336**	.389**	.650**	.710**	.737**	.778**	1				
ENG6	4.67	1.610	-.135**	-.103**	-.213**	-.216**	.454**	.362**	.380**	.408**	.345**	.334**	.633**	.669**	.663**	.691**	.763**	1			
ENG7	5.35	1.513	-.149**	-.149**	-.227**	-.194**	.472**	.364**	.369**	.420**	.329**	.356**	.581**	.609**	.716**	.692**	.710**	.684**	1		
ENG8	5.11	1.469	-.159**	-.145**	-.223**	-.213**	.486**	.381**	.370**	.429**	.349**	.356**	.610**	.642**	.691**	.716**	.715**	.734**	.757**	1	
ENG9	5.08	1.448	-.148**	-.145**	-.217**	-.229**	.455**	.345**	.329**	.385**	.324**	.328**	.597**	.612**	.687**	.705**	.677**	.693**	.708**	.831**	1

Note: **p < .01

Table 4. Standardized Factor Loadings, Validity and Reliability Indicators (n = 1505)

Variable	Construct	λ	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach α	Convergent Validity (AVE)
(IGD1)	Intergenerational Differentiation in the Workplace (Age Discrimination)	0.821	0.890	0.820	0.543
(IGD3)		0.776			
(IGD4)		0.694			
(IGD5)		0.643			
(SAT1)		0.724			
(SAT2)	Job Satisfaction	0.668	0.923	0.854	0.502
(SAT3)		0.689			
(SAT4)		0.809			
(SAT5)		0.662			
(SAT6)		0.695			
(ENG1)	Employee Engagement	0.781	0.977	0.958	0.719
(ENG2)		0.815			
(ENG3)		0.867			
(ENG4)		0.879			
(ENG5)		0.875			
(ENG6)		0.838			
(ENG7)		0.851			
(ENG8)		0.872			
(ENG9)		0.849			

Discriminant validity was also tested in order to avoid the possibility of multicollinearity. Discriminant validity shown in Table 5 determines whether the constructs in the model are highly correlated among each other or not. It compares the Square Root of AVE of a particular construct with the correlation between that construct with other constructs. The value of the Square Root of AVE should be higher than correlations. As Table 6 shows, all values of correlations are lower than AVE (convergent validity), so latent factors are appropriately explained by the observed variables (Henseler, Ringe & Sarstedt, 2015).

Table 5. Discriminant Validity of Factors (Job Satisfaction, Employee Engagement and Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination)) (n = 1505)

		Job Satisfaction	Employee Engagement	Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination)
SIC	AVE			
Job Satisfaction	0.709	0.709		
Employee Engagement	0.848	0.703	0.848	
Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination)	0.737	-0,357	-0.257	0.737

Structural Equation Model

The model presents a good fit of the data. The Table 6 shows multiple indexes of fit which were developed to address sensitivity in the chi-square statistic. Regarding chi-square statistic sensitivity to the sample size, it is no longer relied upon as a

basis for acceptance or rejection of a model (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger & Müller, 2003; Vandenberg 2006). As a result, multiple fit indexes were estimated to provide a more holistic view of fit, taking into account not only the sample size but also model complexity and other relevant issues of the study. Indexes CFI, TLI and NFI approved the model fit. PNFI also indicates that the model shown in Figure 1 is parsimonious.

The structural equation model (Figure 2) follows the hypothesized model based on theoretical findings. It includes three constructs (Intergenerational Differentiation measured in a form of Age Discrimination, Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement). Overall, the structural model included 19 observed variables.

Table 6. Model Fit (n = 1505)

Model	χ^2	df	RMSEA (90% CI)	CFI	TLI	NFI	PNFI	p
DU(S/V)	1704	150	0.083 [0.079; 0.087]	0.924	0.914	0.918	0.805	.000

Note: χ^2 – Minimum of Discrepancy, df – Degrees of Freedom, RMSEA – Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (< 0.05 or 0.08), CI – Confidence Interval, CFI – Comparative Fit Index (> 0.90), TLI – Tucker Lewis Index (> 0.90), NFI – Normed Fit Index (> 0.90), PNFI – Parsimonious Normed Fit Index (> 0.60).

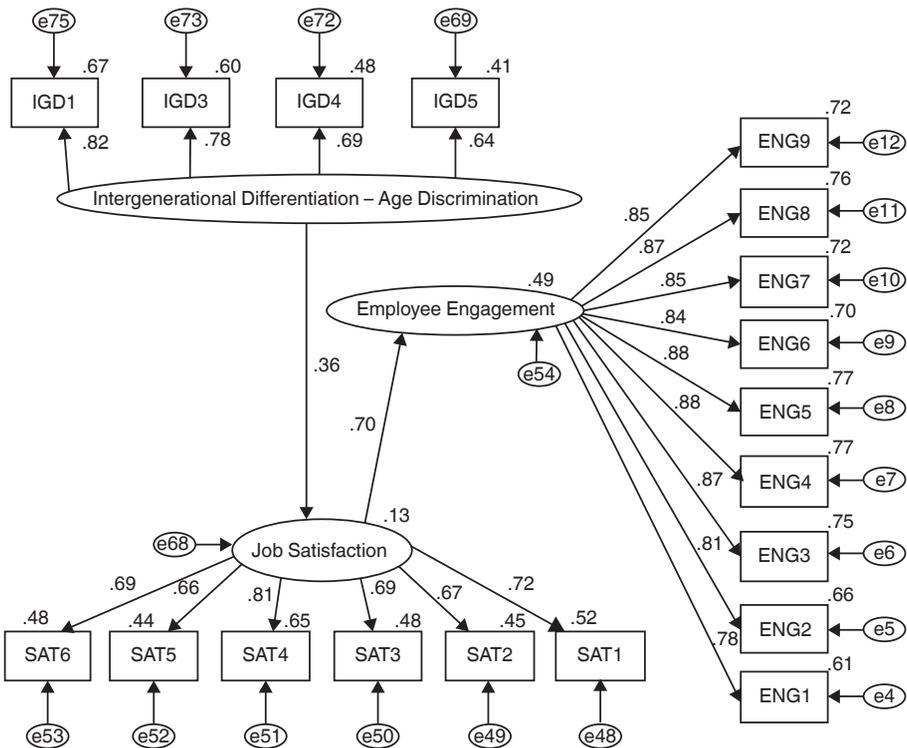


Figure 2. Structural Equation Model (n = 1505)

The structural equation model tested on the sample (n = 1505) shows a negative but weak (–.36) although direct effect of Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination) on Job Satisfaction. Figure 2 also shows a high (.70) effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Engagement. Even though the direct effect of Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination) is not statistically significant, an indirect effect on Employee Engagement is shown. Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination) explains a relatively small (13%) proportion of Job Satisfaction. On the other hand, there is a significantly larger (49%) proportion of Employee Engagement explained by Job Satisfaction and Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination) that contributes to the variance explained by its indirect influence. Both factors explain almost half of the variance of Employee Engagement, so the predictive strength of the model with two predictive factors is estimated as relatively good. In additional research, more factors that improve the predictive strength of the model should be identified and incorporated.

When the structural equation model shown in Figure 2 is compared over the two age cohorts, older (n = 750) and younger (n = 755) employees, the data in Table 7 shows that the effect of Intergenerational Differentiation is negative but higher (–.41) for the sample of older employees than the sample of younger (–.32) employees. Intergenerational Differentiation had greater influence on Job Satisfaction among older employees (greater Age Discrimination corresponds to lower Job Satisfaction). In the group of younger employees, Age Discrimination played a less important role regarding Job Satisfaction.

Table 7. Regression Weights/Influence and R Square Based on a Sample of Older (n = 750) and Younger (n = 755) Employees

			Older	Younger
Regression weights/influence				
Job Satisfaction	<-	Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination)	–0.41	–0.32
Employee Engagement	<-	Job Satisfaction	0.71	0.70
R Square				
Job Satisfaction			0.16	0.10
Employee Engagement			0.50	0.49

There is little difference regarding the effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Engagement between younger and older employees. Moreover, Intergenerational Differentiation account for (explains) a greater degree of Job Satisfaction of older employees (16%) than younger (10%). There is almost no difference in the effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Engagement between the age groups.

Consistent with the lower effect of Intergenerational Differentiation on Job Satisfaction in the younger employee segment, in that age group Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination) also make up a lower percent of the explained variance (6% less) than in the age group of older employees.

Discussion

Results of the research confirm the relationship between Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination), Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement. The hypothesized model was partly confirmed during the analysis. The study confirms that there is a negative but significant direct effect of Intergenerational Differentiation, manifested through Age Discrimination on Job Satisfaction (H1). Also, the findings of Alarcon & Edwards (2011) were confirmed when a significant direct effect of Job Satisfaction on Employee Engagement was (H2) shown. The effect of Intergenerational Differentiation on Employee Engagement is indirect through its effect on Job Satisfaction (H3), as the direct effect was not found as significant. Findings are conclusive and in alignment with SET theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) and the position of Job Satisfaction as a driver of Employee Engagement (e.g. Abraham, 2012).

A focus of interest was also on how Age Discrimination affects Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement in groups of young and old employees. The analysis showed that, statistically, the group of younger employees differs significantly from the older employees regarding the effect of Age Discrimination on Job Satisfaction. Intergenerational Differentiation had a higher influence on Job Satisfaction among older employees. Age Discrimination was perceived as more influential while Job Satisfaction was perceived as less. Also, in the age group of younger employees, Age Discrimination played a less important role in relation to job satisfaction. This could be partly understood through generativity (role of older people to nurture and guide younger people and care for the next generation) (Kuther, 2016) and partly through Socio-emotional selectivity theory (SST) (Carstensen, 1992). SST suggests that older people, relative to younger, have greater selection preferences for social contact that fulfils quality relational needs (Carstensen, 1992) and are more focused on maintaining positive emotions and psychological well-being (Carstensen, 1998). Due to the high importance of interpersonal relationships for older employees, Age Discrimination had more erosive effect on older than on younger employees. Moreover, there were statistically different effects of Job Satisfaction on employee engagement between age groups. The predictive strength of the model was 1 % higher in explaining .50 of variance of Employee Engagement and 6 % higher in explaining Job Satisfaction in .16 in the group of older employees, compared to younger employees.

Limitation and Future Research

It should be pointed out that research had certain limitations and that the conclusions based on the results are also limited. First and foremost, the design of the research tools was based or subject to self-assessment (perception of one's own experience of the work environment). Perception always reflects a certain degree of subjectivity, or from another perspective, individuals could only evaluate those aspects of the work that they have become aware of. One of the potential drawbacks of the research was also the conceptualization of Intergenerational Differentiation in the Workplace Measure. The developed and used measuring instrument should serve as the basis or stepping stone for future researchers to construct a superior instrument which will be

(by its conceptualisation) more complex to include more factors. To further explore this field, a higher quality research tool would need to be constructed to comprehensively capture intergenerational differences regarding knowledge transfer, cooperation, etc. Lastly, the sampling process and the structure of the sample should also be taken into account. The acquisition of organizations that were invited to participate was entirely ad hoc. Both organizations and participants (i.e. employees) volunteered for the survey. In this light, a reasonable suspicion has been made: with greater engagement and participation of a particular organization, the more it has (or at least its management structures considered to have) a more optimal (age discrimination free) work environment, higher levels of satisfaction and engagement. Thus, it can be concluded that environments whose leadership did not share this view elected not to participate. Similarly, employees who participated in the research may have considered themselves more satisfied and engaged than the others.

Conclusion

Increasing age diversity in modern organizations is calling to an increased awareness of intergenerational differentiation and the effects of age discrimination on favourable organizational and personal outcomes. It calls for re-evaluation of organizational practice and management, and recognition of the perception of other older workers who hold somewhat different work values (Smola & Sutton, 2002). The findings of study present key implications for both human resource management and employees. It serves as a better insight into effects of age discrimination across age groups. While several studies have already been performed, much time and effort still need to be invested in composing a more detailed multifactor age discriminate measure, and consequently more detailed research.

Despite the above limitations, the study results provide important insight into effects of age discrimination on job satisfaction and employee engagement. First of all, it confirmed the established relationship between job satisfaction (examined by the facet approach) as an antecedent and predictor of employee engagement (Bellani, Ramadhani & Tamar, 2017). Also, perceived age discrimination had a larger direct effect on job satisfaction among older than young employees. Moreover, the data analysis showed that in the group of older employees, age discrimination explained a larger proportion of job satisfaction among older employees and also a larger proportion of their engagement. Results of this study suggest that older employees are more susceptible to age discrimination and that perceived age discrimination causes more negative effects on positive employee outcomes than it does on younger employees. Findings are conclusive with findings of Fung et al. (2016) who found that older people had lower endorsement of agentic personal values and higher endorsement of communal personal values than did younger people. This highlights the importance of interpersonal contact, relationships, and instrumental and emotional help for older generations which according to researchers sits in a negative relation to age discrimination (Chou & Choi, 2011). It also offers important data for HR practitioners and organization management who should systematically and holistically develop

and implement approaches to prevent age discrimination, especially towards older employees.

Although the differences among younger and older employees were statistically significant, it is valuable to note that only the effect from Intergenerational Differentiation (Age Discrimination) on Job Satisfaction showed an important predictive difference between the age cohorts, explaining more about Job Satisfaction among older employees compared to younger. All other differences in the model showed that the predictive model for both groups are largely alike. This suggests, to different degrees for both age cohorts and in the broader social context, that age discrimination where it derives from differences in age-related values and structural changes can have negative impacts on social cohesion and well-being (Abrams & Swift, 2012; Stokes & Moorman, 2019). In addition to those impacts, when those differences take the form of discrimination, more negative individual and socio-economic effects abound, such as segregation and exclusion (Simms, 2004). These forms of estrangement and isolation shock and weaken the integrity of social institutions and foundations, undermining family and community structure while further burdening the welfare state (Stypinska & Nikander, 2018). On the other hand, older employees have greater need for social and emotional support, and this presents a greater opportunity for knowledge transfer that would fulfil and maximize the positive individual and social aspects of intergenerational differences.

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