



Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

Ageism and Bullying in the Workplace

Implications for policy and practice

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Preface

The present report has been developed by the National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre (ABC) at Dublin City University (DCU), arising from a review of research about ageism and bullying in the workplace.

ABC is a university designated research centre located in DCU Institute of Education. Researchers at ABC were the first in Ireland to undertake research on school bullying, workplace bullying, homophobic bullying and cyberbullying. ABC leads the field of research, resource development and training in bullying in Ireland and is an internationally recognised centre of excellence in bullying research.

ABC is a strategic partner with:

- The Norwegian Centre for Learning Environment and Behavioural Research in Education
- The Cyberbullying Research Centre (USA)
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

Executive Summary

This report provides a systematic review of the literature which evaluates discrimination and bullying associated with ageism and ageist attitudes in the workplace. It reviews the literature on ageism in the context of workplace experience in Ireland and at international level. Based on the exploration of the literature, this report provides a solution-oriented approach to address issues affecting employers and employees. This is in particular, to address ageism and ageist attitudes which are noted to exist in a diversity of workplace contexts. In this report, ageism is perceived to be a form of discrimination. This is either a conscious or unconscious bias which can be experienced as a form of bullying in particular by older employees.

Ireland has one of the youngest populations in the European Union. Yet, according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2016), it is anticipated that people over 65 years of age will increase substantially from 629,800 in 2016 to approximately 1.5 million by 2051. This means that older people will be working for a longer period due to longer lives, changes in provision to pensions, changes in house rental and ownership, and changes in overall quality of life and work/life balance. This report addresses issues for people aged 50 years and over who are working either part-time or full-time.

The results of this study on ageism and bullying is presented in five sections. Because of the origin of ageism, stereotyping of older workers has a powerful influence. The negative stereotypes include features like resistance to change and less ability to learn new skills, especially in technology. However, evidence regarding these stereotypes are seldom found and the capacity of older people to learn is largely unaffected by age. It is striking that there is a consistent picture regarding the adverse experience of older workers. The evidence strongly indicates that older people are more likely to report incidents of bullying than any other negative event.

There is evidence that older people are regarded as being unsuitable for acquiring new skills and encounter barriers associated with pensions and taxation. A major barrier is a cultural one which frequently results in negative views regarding the contribution of older workers. Associated with this view are various myths regarding older workers, especially the view that older workers face barriers which have the effect of precluding them from access to employment. These include the idea that older workers do not have the skills which are necessary for working today. However, the evidence based on surveys of older workers do not support these views. These workers take the view that the opportunity to learn new skills is crucial and continued job training is necessary over the years to retirement.

Several studies have examined the circumstances under which bullying of older workers is likely to take place. Awareness of relevant legislation is critical since otherwise there is a reliance on stereotypes. Also of importance is the fit between age of a job applicant and the skills required for the job. It has also been shown that the views of management are crucial. There is evidence that older employees were criticised more severely and often managers took the view that the performance of older workers bore an inherent relationship to their age. There is also evidence regarding the retirement intentions of older workers and bullying, and other negative experiences which can impact on retirement decisions.

There are important challenges for older people around pensions and care after their working life. There is evidence that both employees and people who use long-term care in nursing homes, frequently experience being bullied. In some studies, many of the victims as well as the perpetrators were judged to have cognitive disabilities. This is an especially difficult issue since the victims of bullying in these circumstances may not have the skills to complain about the bullying that they experienced.

More generally there are challenges that can make it difficult for older people to continue in employment. Many of these arise from the stereotypes and misconceptions considered above. A crucial input to addressing these beliefs is a full recognition that stereotypes about aging have no established scientific basis.

A major theme emerging in the research and debate regarding experiences of older people in the workplace is the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing ageism and discrimination. The culture of workplace environments urgently needs addressing. It is especially important to put plans in place that underline the contribution of older people in the workplace and in society.

1. Introduction

1.1 Definitions of Ageism and Workplace Bullying

In this report ageism is understood as a systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this with skin and colour and gender. Ageism is manifested in a wide range of phenomena, on both individual and institutional levels—stereotypes and myths, outright disdain and dislike, simple subtle avoidance of contact and discriminatory practices in housing, employment and services of all kinds. (Butler, 1975; Butler, Lewis & Sunderland, 1998).

Workplace bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a once off incident, is not considered to be bullying. (Health and Safety Authority, 2007)

1.2 Stereotyping, Bullying and Ageism: An International Perspective

Stereotyping is a characteristic which is attributed to be both negative and instrumental in supporting ageism in the workplace. There have been a variety of important empirical studies conducted over the last twenty years in relation to the perceived stereotyping of older workers (Bal, Reiss, Rudolph & Baltes, 2011; Finkelstein, Burke, & Raju, 1995; Gordon & Arvey, 2004; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Posthuma, Wagstaff, & Campion, 2012). Negative stereotypes about older workers may include perceptions that they are poor performers, resistant to change/technology, more expensive to the company, have less ability to learn, and have shorter tenure (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). The positive characteristics attributed to older workers are also somewhat generalised as being reliable and/or dependable. Finkelstein, Burke and Raju (1995) ask are these characteristics or stereotypes accurate? Their understanding is based on the premise that a stereotype is a generalization, and therefore it cannot be an accurate evaluation for every individual worker within any particular workplace. The question of accuracy of a stereotype has to do with whether there are real differences between groups (on average) on a particular characteristic. Two papers have directly investigated this question. In their large-scale review, Posthuma and Campion (2009) concluded that the accuracy of most older worker stereotypes has either not been supported (e.g., no evidence of lower performance and shorter tenure) or has not been sufficiently investigated (e.g., resistance to change and costliness). What is found common to both older and younger workers is that both desire and an ability to learn and develop varies among workers of all ages, recent work has investigated how to improve training and development activities to support those older workers who struggle with motivation and learning (Wolfson, Cavanaugh, & Kraiger, 2013).

An important consideration when looking at research on ageing, especially in the workplace, concerns the hard evidence regarding intellectual functioning. The research deriving from psychometric studies as well as work-based outcomes are both of considerable interest, since the findings suggest that the common perception regarding older people may be quite wrong.

An important point is that increased age is seldom associated with lower levels of cognitive functioning. Salthouse (2012) summarises evidence suggesting that some aspects of intellectual functioning (as measured usually by IQ tests) decline to a small extent from age 40 onwards and more especially from age 75-80 years. The capacity to learn new material (somewhat called fluid intelligence) is especially affected. However, other aspects remain largely unaffected. Thus, skills or knowledge learned in earlier life remain largely intact (sometimes called crystallized intelligence). This refers to cumulative learning and involves acquired knowledge.

Furthermore, older people learn to compensate in a variety of ways for those aspects that are affected by intellectual decline. These include strategies that capitalize on their strengths and their experiences of similar events in the past. The result is that studies of competence in the work environment show that people improve even into their sixties and beyond. Sometimes task-specific skills can be acquired with experience. As there is a lack of studies on the topic of ageism and perceived bullying related to ageism in Ireland, this report was chiefly conducted using these phenomena drawn from international literature.

The last decade has seen several high profile publications from every continent and which focus on the older workers' experience in the workplace. The US study by Yanson, Doucet and Lambert (2017) was based on the National-Incident-Based reporting system of the FBI and involved nearly 3,000 cases. The study showed that older workers were more likely to report incidents of workplace bullying than any other type of adverse experience. The study by Namie (2013) also carried out at the Workplace Bullying Institute sought to establish with some precision how great were age differences associated with bullying of older people. For people who said they were bullied at work, they were asked how old they were when the bullying began. It emerged that for workers less than 30 years, just under 10% said they had been targeted while for people aged 50-54 years the corresponding percentage was 17%.

Studies in Sweden and Australia have added to the accumulating body of research. The work of Einarsen & Skogstad (1996) focused on investigating the prevalence of bullying at work and sought to identify risk groups. Based on data from 14 different Norwegian surveys, it emerged that older workers had a higher risk of victimization than younger workers. A study by Bennington (2001) examined age discrimination in the recruitment and selection process in Australia – a country that prohibits all discrimination based on age. Each of the four studies on this issue showed converging evidence of age discrimination, ranging from the language used in advertisement to reports of employers in their selection process. This shows that the beginning of the bullying process may be associated with selection and promotion.

A major study by Vasconelos (2012) was based on 100 companies identified as being the best to work for in Brazil and sought to establish if these companies exhibit any age bias and discrimination and if so, to what degree does it occur? The results showed that older workers in these companies were being side-lined by their organisations. It seemed that many companies were more concerned about corporate reputation and gave little attention to aspects of ageism. There was a lack of policies on how demographic diversity should be implemented. This is a significant study and shows the impact of ageism on the experience of workers in large multi-national companies.

A study by Ho, Wei & Voon (2002) was concerned with broad issues associated with aging including unemployment. Using data collected from two major surveys it was shown that older workers in Hong Kong are more likely to be unemployed than younger people. It also emerged that older workers face longer periods of unemployment, receive fewer job offers and expect lower future wages than unemployed younger workers. Also comparing promotion and training opportunities, it emerged that older workers are less likely to be promoted or selected for training.

The role of older people as carers to grandchildren to support their adult children to work either full-time or part-time has been frequently overlooked as an important role in the overall contribution to the economy. Ward & McGarrigle (2017) highlight how approximately half of adults (47%) aged 54 to 64 and over half (51%) of adults aged 65-74 years in Ireland provide regular childcare for their grandchildren for an average of 36 hours per month. Buchanan & Rotkirch (2018) evaluate how the increasing role of grandparents is crucially important not only in the United Kingdom but across the world. This is attributed to rising divorce rates and single parenthood, which is aligned with the need for grandparent's supports in childminding. This role is assisted by older people living longer and being more readily available. The authors conclude that societies need to re-evaluate the role of grandparents and to evaluate the role of grandparents into family policies. The role of grandparents they contend, saves on childcare costs which impact directly on parents working hours. The invisible role of grandparents indirectly impacts on the wider financial economy.

Buchanan & Rotkirch (2017) acknowledge that the increasing numbers of grandparents caring for grandchildren is also evidenced across Europe. They cite the work of Glaser et al. (2013) who, using data from the Survey of Health Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) study, found that 44% of grandmothers gave regular or occasional help to looking after grandchildren while 42% of grandfathers played a similar role. The invisibility or lack of extrinsic value placed on the role of older people and grandparents as carers to children while their parents work, needs to be addressed to support the value which is placed on their role in their direct or indirect contribution to the overall economy and to the workplace. The contribution of older adults to their communities has also been addressed in the work of Ward & McGarrigle (2017) as part of the TILDA Irish Longevity Study on Ageing.

Sometimes studies about ageist bullying and discrimination indicate conflicting results. Some results from Australia illustrate this point. A study by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC, 2018) found that age discrimination was an ongoing and common occurrence in the Australian workforce. The AHRC research indicated that 27% of people aged fifty years or more had experienced age discrimination and roughly a similar percentage reported not being offered a job because of their age. However, Taylor, McLoughlin & Earl (2018) were critical of these findings on methodological grounds and particularly the use of leading questions regarding personal experiences of age discrimination. In a representative sample of Australian workers and using more detailed questions on their work experiences, they found that discrimination actually declined with age in the case of men, while for women no age differences were found.

In the literature addressing bullying in the United States, there is evidence of a link between behaving as a bully in adolescence and bullying in later life in the form of ageism. The study by Goodboy, Martin, & Rittenour (2015) examined the association between bullying behaviour in childhood and adolescence and later intolerance including ageism. Specifically, the study examined the retrospective accounts of the bullying behaviour of US students in middle and high school and whether their admissions predicted their later intolerance behaviours including racism and ageism. The results showed that victimising of others in school (largely bullying) predicted intolerant attitudes of which ageism was a major feature. The study also showed that males were more likely than females to report intolerance and bullying.

There are indications that how attitudes/beliefs are measured makes a difference. A study by Malinen & Johnston (2013) compared explicit attitudes of older workers using self-report measures with indirect measures using reaction-time measures. The results indicated that implicit attitudes were negative while explicit measures showed no such bias.

Powell (2010) presented an overview of the experiences of older workers and concluded that not enough attention had been paid to the negative experiences of older workers. Powell noted that considerable media attention had focused on older workers being forced to quit work and that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights carries an implicit declaration of the right to work in a positive atmosphere.

In their 2010 report 'Analysing the Experience of Discrimination in Ireland', McGinnity, Watson & Kingston (2010) noted that 'The 45-64 -year-old group is more likely to report work-related discrimination, specifically in seeking work. They are also more likely to report that this work-related discrimination has a serious impact on their lives than the 25-44-year old reference group.' This report, citing the work of Johnson and Park (2011) noted that it was the 45-64 age group in Ireland who found it the most difficult age group to find work should they leave their current employment, especially during a recession.

2. Recruitment Barriers to Careers for Older Workers

In 2016 a report was conducted by William Fry; a notable law firm which conducted a survey on the opportunities for older workers in relation to recruitment and promotion in Ireland. This was relevant to a diversity of workplace contexts. The survey found that 87% of those currently unemployed believe that their age was a key factor in their inability to secure work. This compares with 38% of unemployed people aged between 35-54 who thought that they were perceived to be too old for specific jobs. Age is not a requirement on resumes or application forms for careers and while legislation exists to protect workers on the grounds of ageism, 45% of employers still deduced a candidates age based on their curriculum vitae (William Fry Report, 2016). The report demonstrates how there has not been a significant shift in attitudes and perceptions of stereotyping of older workers in the last twenty years, especially in relation to recruitment of older workers in Ireland.

In August 2019, SOLAS, the State Agency in Ireland which was established in 2013 to develop the Further Education and Training Sector in Ireland, issued a report which had a particular focus on the training and development of skills of older workers in Ireland. In the SOLAS Quarterly Skills Bulletin (2019) the report noted that since 2008, 'there has been an increase of 330,000 people aged 50 years or over resident in the state' (SOLAS Report, 2019). The participation rate for those aged 50-59 has increased from 70.9% in 2008 to 75.3% in 2018. The report noted that there has been a significant increase of older female workers.

The report also identified that the main areas in which older workers are employed is in health (62,000), followed by industry (51,300), wholesale and retail (48,400), education (44,000) while information communication technology (ICT) had the least number (13,000). The report advocates that employers need to provide opportunities for training so that older employees can remain in the workplace. It noted that older workers are most at risk of leaving the workplace if they feel intimidated by lack of training in relation to new practices related to the use of technology for example, or if they require more work life/balance opportunities.

A number of myths about older people have been identified as inhibiting participation in the workplace:

Myth 1: Older Workers are counting the days until retirement

Myth 2: Older Workers don't have today's skills.

Myth 3: Older Workers won't report to younger managers.

(Capelli & Novelli, 2010).

Furthermore, the research of Neumark, Burn & Button (2015) about older people in the workforce has also highlighted that the problem of ageism against older workers is particularly acute for females.

The tech based industry is generally perceived to be a youth employment sector and the lack of older workers brings with it issues related to ageism and perceived bias of older workers. Silicon Valley and tech businesses such as Google, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft are synonymous with names such as Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates and Steve Jobs who became CEO's of their companies when they were in their 20's and 30's, thus perpetuating the image that this sector is not a place where older people work. It is generally accepted that it is the responsibility of the employer to identify the needs of the workers when it comes to upskilling or retraining.

For this study, it was difficult to access reports and empirical studies based on the experience of older workers aged fifty years of age and over in the information communication technology or social media employment sector. The nature of employment in these sectors requires frequent upskilling and training. In the absence of this research, reports related to this sector were drawn from other sources related to upskilling and training.

In a report by Stanimira et al. (2016), they focused their study on two industrial sectors, the healthcare sector and the information and communications technology sector (ICT). The two sectors were chosen because they were considered to be two of the most rapidly developing sectors in the European economy. The study found that the workforce in the ICT sector, was predominantly male employees, with a high level of age discrimination against older workers and subsequently there were fewer older workers in this sector (Schwartz-Woelzl & Healey, 2007). All the ICT organizations chosen for this study were mainly multinational and private. The number of older workers in these organizations (aged 55 years of age and over) varied between 1% and 12%. One of the findings of this study was that in the case of older workers, what mattered to them was the importance of the job quality and meaningfulness (Kooij et al. 2011).

The study by Stanimira et al. (2016) advocated that individual workers can successfully adapt to age-related changes and challenges in the workplace through using three strategies;

1. Optimization: This they identify as improving one's skills through training and development.
2. Selection: This is choosing and delivering the most important tasks.
3. Compensation: This is demonstrating one's capabilities and strengths in front of others.

3. Law and Legislation and the Role of Management related to Older Workers

A number of studies have sought to identify the circumstances under which bullying of older workers is likely to happen. One feature that has received attention concerns relevant laws and especially the awareness of such legislation. It has been suggested that without knowledge of relevant legislation, workers tend to rely on stereotypes, especially if they are resistant to change. An American study by Cox and Barron (2012) found that when workers were informed forcefully about the laws prohibiting age discrimination, they rated older workers as more competent and capable of change when needed. However, in another study when participants were told of the limits of legislation preventing discrimination of older workers, they were likely to fall back on stereotyped beliefs and thought that such workers were less suitable for their jobs. This is an important illustration of the effect of awareness of relevant legislation.

Another study showing the importance of contextual factors was reported by Gordon & Arvey (2004), they argued that what was crucial was the relative fit between the age of the target person (worker or applicant) and the specific knowledge and skills required for the job. They found evidence that if holistic aspects of a worker did not tie in with the requirements of the job, then age became relevant. However, if age was the only relevant feature, the extent to which older workers were devalued was less. It is also significant, that a study by Richardson et al. (2013), did not support these conclusions. They examined the extent to which job applicants (aged 33-66 years) suitability related to work-related competencies as well as age. The study showed a preference for hiring applicants in relatively younger age-groups and the oldest applicants (over 54 years) were least likely to be hired. Furthermore, the effects of age on hiring evaluations were not mediated by work related competencies, suggesting that age discrimination occurs via direct bias against older applicants.

There is evidence that the attributions of management have a crucial role in ageism in the workplace. The study by Rupp, Vodanovich, & Crede (2006) found that as regards employees' performance errors, older employees drew more severe criticisms from management than did younger workers. It also emerged that managers' attributions regarding the perceived cause of older workers' performance was crucial. Managers who took the view that the performance of older workers was inherently due to their age, tended to be more severe in their judgement of these workers. Managers have a key role in extending the working life of employees because they control various measures in the work environment. A study by Nilsson (2018) of over 900 managers in local authorities in Sweden, found that a major influence in their attitude to older workers was their own retirement plans. If managers were planning to work beyond 66, they had very positive views of older workers but if they were planning earlier retirement they viewed older workers as slower and resistant to change.

The study by McMullin & Marshall (2001) showed how economic concerns of management and ageism can interact in certain circumstances. In a Montreal garment factory, management wanted to get rid of older workers because they were paid more than younger staff. Instead of explaining frankly what the situation was, conventional stereotypes were promoted to discourage older workers from continuing. Thus, ageism in this sense brought about the economic 'benefits' to the factory in question.

Important issues arise with regard to the consequences of bullying. A study by Browne et al. (2018) examined the question of how the workplace psychosocial environment (including bullying) influences retirement intentions. Their meta-analysis is quite extensive and involved a search of relevant data bases with 46 papers being identified as containing relevant evidence. Experiences of low job satisfaction and loss of control over the work environment were associated with both intentions to retire and actual retirement. While it is not very clear whether bullying was directly related to intentions to retire, it can impact on the decision of workers who choose to retire from the workplace. Also relevant is the study by McGann, Kimberley & Bowman (2016) involving interviews with older Australian workers with a view to examining their perceptions of events leading to retirement. The study showed that many of such workers perceived themselves to be on the periphery of the employment market. Instead of recent developments leading to a longer working life, many felt a chronic insecurity existed in the netherworld between work and retirement. Thus, instead of being enhanced by the changes regarding longer working lives, these older workers felt undermined and devalued with no clear sense of the future for themselves and their families. This sense of feeling undermined or undervalued can be considered to be a form of bullying.

In 2018, The Public Service Superannuation (Age of Retirement, Act 2018) in Ireland, was signed into law to enable people to continue to remain in work until 70 years of age. The increase in the pension age together with rising house prices and rent has made this not just a preferred option but a very important career decision for many older employees. In April 2018, The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC, 2018) published new guidelines for employers to ensure that older workers who want to work beyond the age of 65 are permitted to do so. This is based on the premise that older people who leave the workplace at 65 are not eligible to claim the state pension until they are 66 years of age. For many older workers it is not just government driven financial incentives that encourage them back to the workplace, but frequently ageist attitudes create barriers for them to be accepted for interviews for a variety of careers.

The Employment Equality Acts (1998-2015) were established to prevent discrimination in a diversity of employment contexts. The legislation highlights that discrimination occurs when one person in the workplace is treated in a less favourable way than another person in the same circumstances. The legislation recognised that discrimination can occur in relation to nine grounds, one of which is age related. Bullying against someone because of their age, specifically being older, is a form of discrimination.

4. Future provision for older people: Pensions and Care after working life

While the focus of this report is on workplace bullying based on ageism, stereotyping, discrimination and bias related to older workers, this section focuses on Pensions and Care after working life. The issues of pensions are one which can cause considerable anxiety for older workers. The change in pension structures and legislation in relation to pensions in recent years can frequently be a key factor in the influences of older workers to remain or to leave the workforce. This gap between ceasing work and eligibility for the state pension is proving very difficult for many people aged 65 years or younger. This is because they find themselves with at least a one-year deficit between the time they retire and the time that they are eligible for the state pension. The issue of care in later life is also a concern for many older people.

For the purpose of this study, the report acknowledges that a more detailed and extensive report is needed to evaluate the current attitudes, behaviours and conditions associated with bullying and ageism in the care and support of older people in later life. The report also notes that the health care sector is also a sector with the largest number of older workers in employment in Ireland today (William Fry Report, 2019). Two thirds of older workers are comprised of nursing and care staff.

4.1 *Bullying in Long-term Care Facilities.*

A significant number of older people are in long-term care, as in nursing homes, so the question arises as to whether residents in care experience bullying. Unfortunately, the answer is in the affirmative. Elder abuse can be physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, financial or material abuse, neglect or discriminatory abuse which includes ageism. A study by Andresen & Buchanan (2017) interviewed 45 staff in such facilities and found that the majority had witnessed bullying. Verbal bullying was most prevalent but social bullying was also prevalent. Many of the victims and perpetrators were judged to have cognitive disabilities. This is a particular concern when the victims can be vulnerable and do not have the ability to articulate the bullying experienced by them.

Trompetter, Scholte, & Westerhof (2011) examined the extent that relational aggression (an indirect and mature form of aggression) might occur in assisted living facilities. In their study, 121 residents from six assisted living facilities completed questionnaires assessing personal experiences as victims of such aggression and subjective well-being. Relational aggression was shown to exist in assisted living facilities according to both residents (prevalence: 19%) and nurses (prevalence: 41%). Self-reports of victimization of relational aggression were related to depression, anxiety, dissatisfaction with life and social loneliness. These findings are important for practice and especially for arrangements in assisted living facilities.

The review by Castle, Ferguson-Rome & Teresi (2015) synthesised the literature for the ten years prior to 2015, focusing on elder abuse in the long-term residential care in the US. One important conclusion of the review is that many cases of abuse are not reported. Furthermore, if the abuse is perpetrated by staff, they may be reluctant to report abuse given the possible repercussions that may follow. The review also indicates that resident-to-resident abuse is quite common

and can result in serious injuries. Interaction influences are also quite common. For example, a resident who experiences abuse from another resident may become more vulnerable to abuse by a staff member. There is evidence that bullying may be relevant to nurse and carers as well as people in care.

Bullying in the workplace can be disguised and presented in a different context so that it appears innocuous. The study by Johnson (2018) examined ways in which strands of interaction can be quite different from what the overt purpose involves. Some aspects are especially noteworthy in this study carried out in Washington. Performance reviews of nurse's work, which was disguised as referring to quality of work, was actually perceived as bullying rather than part of supervision. A central outcome was to put pressure on older nurses to leave before they had decided to quit.

Einarsen (2004) refers to the culture of the workplace as 'a filter' through which a range of behaviours come to be accepted or tolerated. As the nature of this workplace context involves the long-term care of older people, employees can experience a high degree of role conflict when they observe aggressive behaviour. This is further made complex and difficult since the abuse can be experienced between the health care providers and the receivers of the care. This is especially when the older person is experiencing negative behaviours which are illness-related. This sector is perceived to be emotional labour where additional practices are required of employees outside of the main workplace requirements. This usually concerns nurturing and emotionally sensitive care. The nature of this work makes reporting of bullying very sensitive for those who have experienced it on a regular basis.

4.2 Impact of workplaces on well-being for older people

Slowey & Zubrzycki (2018) draw attention to a number of specific matters that need attention to enable the continued employment of older workers. The culture of the workplace is important to ensure that older workers can perform to the best of their ability, while simultaneously, their overall mental health and well-being is addressed through the operation of a safe environment which is devoid of bias related to ageing. They advocate that there is a particular need to examine the issue of pensions as a significant percentage of the Irish workforce has no entitlement except for the State Pension. It is also necessary to study the impact on well-being of the ageing population. They suggest that the challenges facing women are worthy of serious attention due to effects of differences in earnings, as well as pension coverage and the responsibilities of caring. It is also suggested that Trade Unions in Ireland should give particular attention to issues relating to the ageing workforce. In particular, they can play a role in arguing for the appropriate support that will help develop skills and knowledge in preparation for longer working lives. They also make the point that employers might address talent shortages by hiring people over 50 and extending the working lives of existing employees.

More than any other requirement, Slowey & Zubrzycki (2018) point to the need to address the common misconceptions about older workers and especially to recognise that most stereotypes about ageing have no scientific foundation.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The evidence reviewed above shows the consistency and strength of ageism in the workplace. Looking at the overall picture emerging, it seems timely to challenge traditional views so that older people can contribute to employment without experiencing discrimination or bullying. Achenbaum (2013) highlights how the holistic understanding of ageing can be achieved through appreciating the gift of extra years which affords time and opportunities for growth. He believes that as we age, we are provided with time to understand the meaning of life and to continue to be actively engaged. What is clear is that as people live longer, creating and cultivating a supportive workplace environment for older workers is now more important than ever. Ageism and ageist attitudes can prevent this form of working environment.

A number of studies have examined ways in which policies and practices can be changed with a view to preventing bullying and discrimination on grounds of age. Walker (1999) reviews examples of good practice based on EU projects. He concludes that a holistic approach is essential and that it is inappropriate to focus exclusively on older workers since such an approach might stigmatise them. Among the important features that help prevent bullying is support from senior management, a supportive HR climate as well as a commitment from aging workers who are being targeted to report on their experiences. Walker also recommended a careful and flexible implementation of any interventions.

Levy (2016) put forward an integrative model drawing on empirical evidence on ageism in psychology, social work and sociology with a view to challenging conceptions about ageing. The Positive Education about Ageing and Contact Experiences Model (PEACE Model) focuses especially on two key contributing factors that might be expected to reduce ageism: (i) education about ageing including awareness of positive older role models that dispel inaccurate images of older adulthood and (ii) positive contact experiences with older adults that provide equal status are cooperative and involve sharing of information.

5.1 The Case for Multigenerational Workplaces to address ageist attitudes

Murphy (2012) and Morris (2017) evaluate the development of multigenerational workplaces that employ approaches such as “reverse mentoring” as an innovative way to engage older and younger workers together. This has been found to be very successful. This is where a mentoring programme uses millennial capabilities as a useful resource for older employees, particularly in tech skills for example, which has proven to be very useful to bridge the gap of ageist attitudes in the workplace. This is a concept which has grown as a strategy in the workplace to assist with re-training and which addresses ageist attitudes, it was first developed by Jack Welch the Chief Executive Officer of General Electric in 1999. Companies such as Microsoft have been advocating this strategy since 2014.

5.2 Changing internalised views of ageing across the lifespan.

An important consideration is around the age at which people develop negative attitudes to older people and whether or not this can be addressed. Robinson & Howatson-Jones (2014) undertook a national literature-based research to examine what is known regarding children's views of older people. Their meta-analysis led to the conclusion that from a young age children adopt a stereotype, and that these beliefs become internalised and continue across the lifespan. A further development of this idea comes from the work of Lloyd, Devine, & Carney (2018) who examined the consequences of beliefs that develop in early childhood. Their research with 2,365 children showed that if children held negative views regarding older people, they also believed that they themselves would experience negative happenings when they reached the age of 70. These studies demonstrate that views regarding older people can become internalised with long-term consequences.

There is a particular interest in the participation of older people in the workforce and how this is likely to change in the future. The study by Slowey & Zubrzycki (2018) note from recent census data that there was a major increase in Ireland (of over 100,000) of people aged 65 and over. Thus the argument is made that the opportunity for older workers to continue to work in ways that are suitable and appropriate for them might become a core feature of public policy. However, to enable greater participation in the workforce by older people a number of changes are required. One major requirement is that the stereotypes involved in age-related biases need to be addressed. There is also a need for provision of continuing education and upskilling to include all age-groups. Policy changes at several levels are also required to facilitate the continued employment of older workers.

5.3 Providing Opportunities for Older People to be part of work based sectors such as the Information Communication Technology Sector

At a macro level, there are many issues of ethical importance facing the tech multinational industries across the world. One important issue facing this sector is to address the deficit of the lack of presence and the lack of voice of older workers who are not employed within the wider tech industry. Specifically, in expertise related to innovation and entrepreneurship in developing new technologies. If older workers are not present in this sector this further contributes to the unconscious and conscious bias and stereotyping of older people. Older workers should be encouraged and supported to join this workforce with access to training and upskilling provided relevant to their skills and expertise. This is to ensure that the provision of training is relevant to productivity, workers as young as forty years old can be perceived to be older workers. It is now time to increase the number of workers over forty years of age in this sector. It is also timely to value their expertise, knowledge and skills and to recognise that many older workers embrace re-skilling and re-training if this opportunity is provided for them.

5.4 Valuing the Lived Experience of Older Workers

The PEACE model and multigenerational mentoring engagement has proved to have the potential to reduce stereotypes, ageing anxiety and discrimination associated with ageist attitudes in the workplace. If the workforce is comprised solely of a young generation, it misses an opportunity to learn from the experience, knowledge and expertise of an older generation. In addition, it is prevented from developing a multigenerational culture which has the potential to benefit the ethos, the productivity and the culture of an organisation. The retirement age needs to be addressed so that a wider sector of the workforce can remain in the workplace for a longer time if they wish to continue.

Where ageist attitudes prevent older workers entering the work place, a key focus should turn to perceptions of the potential of what many older workers have to bring to their work. This is particularly relevant when they are transitioning to new careers. What older employees have is the potential to bring is a wealth of tacit knowledge and experience which has been acquired over many years. This can prove beneficial for younger staff and for productivity. It has the potential to be valuable in terms of the use of management skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, resilience and other attributes which can prove to be both beneficial and productive within a new organisation.

Older workers might themselves have experienced difficulties either in their personal or professional life and many of these experiences can be beneficial in the transfer of knowledge and skills to younger workers. This experience has the potential to be meaningful in assisting younger people for example, to deal with stress, anxiety, resilience and coping skills relevant within and outside of employment. Age discrimination and stereotypes of ageing can frequently be evidenced in language, social media, advertising, in print, films and television. A new narrative needs to be developed to define the positive dimensions of ageing. New definitions of ageing are emerging in recent years, but more needs to be accomplished. It is not helpful to define a diverse group of older people as 'the elderly.' It is a definition that does not define the characteristics of the diversity of older people as energetic, vibrant and lively. It is now time that the narrative and definition of ageing places emphasis on the positive aspects and on the positive contribution of older people in the workplace and in society.

6. Conclusions

The recommendations from this report can be briefly analysed as follows:

- Employers need to develop positive attitudes and behaviours related to older employees who seek new career opportunities.
- Organisations need to create a supportive Human Resources (HR) climate which assists with addressing ageism related to older workers.
- Opportunities need to be developed to support multi-generational workplaces.
- A positive attitude to ageing should be nurtured from early childhood and across the lifespan.
- An increase of older workers to new career sectors should be supported such as the information communications technology sector.
- A greater need to value the life experience of older workers as an important contribution to the workplace.
- Awareness of both employers and employees of legislation to prevent ageism and bullying in the workplace.
- Attention to the age at which a person is requested to cease work aligned to the provision of pensions.
- The positive dimensions of ageing are highlighted to promote well-being following retirement.

This report highlights the recent policy and relevant literature which addresses ageism in the workplace. It provides recommendations to address ageist attitudes and discrimination related to training, promotion and the re- skilling of older workers. It requires that a change in work culture is needed. This is to ensure that older workers are not treated with unwanted, aggressive behaviour or behaviour which involves a real or perceived power balance on the grounds of discrimination based on age. To achieve this, organisations and companies need to adopt clear guidelines based on policies and legislation which seeks to eliminate ageism and discrimination of older workers. This is to recognise that older workers have much to contribute within organisations and in a variety of workplace contexts.

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