



WORKPLACE AGEISM IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

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BACKGROUND / RATIONALE

- Ageism is stereotypes (thinking), prejudice (feeling) and discrimination (acting) based on age—affecting any age, often harming older adults. Coined by Butler (1969), definitions (WHO; APA; OHRC; Age UK; CfAB) include self-directed ageism and structural, age-exclusive practices.
- Hospitality’s “youthful” image sustains stereotypes of older workers, especially around adaptability and tech.
- Rapid digitalisation can exclude without age-inclusive training and support.
- Hospitality’s “young industry” bias persists. In the UK: **1 in 5 over-50s** feel seen as less capable; **~50%** expect disadvantage when applying (CIPD & CfAB, 2020). CfAB (2021): **36%** expect disadvantage, **17%** were rejected due to age; among affected jobseekers, **~2/3** lost confidence, **43%** reported health impacts.
- A multi-method, cross-cultural approach (UK-China) reveals what drives ageism and which practices improve wellbeing and engagement.

AIM

- To investigate how ageism operates in hotel workplaces and produce evidence-based, age-inclusive management strategies.

METHOD

PHASE 1 – REVIEW + MANAGERS (UK)

- SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF HOSPITALITY AGEISM (PREVALENCE, DRIVERS, OUTCOMES);
- MAPPED TO JD-R;
- SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH UK HOTEL MANAGERS.

PHASE 2 – WORKERS (UK)

- IPA INTERVIEWS: EMPLOYEES AGED 50+ (LIVED EXPERIENCE & DIGITAL INCLUSION)
- CODE TO JD-R: DEMANDS/RESOURCES → WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT
- DELPHI (OLDER WORKERS + MANAGERS): PRIORITISE INTERVENTIONS

PHASE 3 – SURVEY (UK-CHINA)

- CROSS-CULTURAL SURVEY
- SCM (WARMTH/COMPETENCE) + JD-R (DEMANDS/RESOURCES)
- OUTCOMES: WELLBEING, ENGAGEMENT, TURNOVER INTENT
- ANALYSIS: INVARIANCE TESTS; MULTI-GROUP SEM/REGRESSION

INTEGRATION & TOOLKIT

• AGE-INCLUSIVE HR GUIDANCE:

- RECRUITMENT
- TRAINING
- JOB/ROLE DESIGN
- RECOGNITION

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS

- Theory: Extend JD-R with age-linked demands/resources; integrate SCM and IPA to connect structure, stereotypes, and lived experience.
- Practice: Actionable HR toolkit (recruitment, training, job/role design, recognition) for age-inclusive hotels.
- Impact: Developing retention and service quality; guidance for policy and industry on an ageing workforce.

REFERENCE

- Key theories and background evidence are drawn from: Boehm et al. (2014) on age-diversity climate; WHO (2021) global report on ageism; Van Dalen et al. (2015) on employer strategies; hospitality-specific studies (Cheung & Woo, 2021; Magd, 2003); and practice guidance (CIPD & CfAB, 2020; Timewise & CfAB, 2020; NICE NG13, 2015/2016; ILC-UK, 2021).