THE IMPACT OF AN AGE-INCLUSIVE ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE ON EMPLOYEE INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Shavkatova Elnora Bakhtiyor kizi
Email: elnorashavkatova5@gmail.com
Telephone number: +998995340772

ANNOTATION

The article examines the relationship between an age-inclusive organisational climate, employee innovation, and knowledge sharing. Drawing on international empirical research, it explores how psychological safety, mutual trust, and fair treatment may encourage employees to propose new ideas and exchange professional knowledge. The article also examines empirical evidence challenging the assumption that older age necessarily limits innovation. Finally, practical recommendations are proposed for developing age-diverse teams, implementing reciprocal mentoring programmes, and promoting inclusive leadership.

Keywords: age-inclusive organisational climate, employee innovation, knowledge sharing, psychological safety, age diversity, intergenerational collaboration, inclusive leadership.

ANNOTATSIYA

Maqolada yosh jihatidan inklyuziv tashkiliy muhitning xodimlar innovatsion faolligi va bilim almashinuvi bilan o‘zaro bog‘liqligi tahlil qilinadi. Xorijiy empirik tadqiqotlarga asoslanib, psixologik xavfsizlik, o‘zaro ishonch va adolatli munosabat xodimlarning yangi g‘oyalarni ilgari surishi hamda kasbiy bilim va tajriba almashishiga yordam berishi yoritiladi. Shuningdek, katta yosh innovatsion faollikni cheklaydi, degan qarashning empirik tadqiqotlarda yetarlicha tasdiqlanmagani ko‘rib chiqiladi. Turli yoshdagi xodimlardan iborat jamoalarni shakllantirish, o‘zaro ustozlik dasturlarini joriy etish va inklyuziv rahbarlikni rivojlantirish bo‘yicha amaliy tavsiyalar ishlab chiqiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: yosh jihatidan inklyuziv tashkiliy muhit, xodimlar innovatsion faolligi, bilim almashinuvi, psixologik xavfsizlik, yosh xilma-xilligi, avlodlararo hamkorlik, inklyuziv rahbarlik.

In today’s competitive business environment, organisational success increasingly depends on employees’ ability to generate innovative ideas, share knowledge, and adapt to changing conditions. A diverse workforce can provide organisations with a wide range of professional experiences, skills, and perspectives. However, these advantages can only be fully realised when employees work in an inclusive environment that values their contributions regardless of age. Age-related stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes may create barriers to communication, collaboration, and professional development. Such barriers can discourage employees from expressing their ideas, sharing knowledge, and participating in innovation processes.

An age-inclusive organisational climate promotes fairness, mutual respect, equal opportunities, and active participation among employees of different age groups. It recognises that professional knowledge, creativity, and innovative potential vary between individuals and cannot be determined by age alone. In

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an inclusive workplace, employees can exchange experiences, learn from one another, and contribute to organisational development. Knowledge sharing is particularly important because it enables employees to combine their expertise, improve problem-solving, and develop new approaches to workplace challenges. Similarly, an environment that encourages open communication and values diverse perspectives may support employee innovation and constructive organisational change.

Despite the potential benefits of age inclusion, further research is needed to understand how an age-inclusive organisational climate relates to knowledge sharing and innovative behaviour. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between age-inclusive organisational practices, employee innovation, and knowledge sharing. It focuses on how fairness, respect, and opportunities for collaboration may contribute to a more supportive working environment. The findings may provide useful insights for human resource management and help organisations develop practices that reduce age-related barriers, encourage knowledge exchange, and strengthen employee participation in innovation. Ultimately, promoting age inclusion may enable organisations to make more effective use of employees' diverse skills, experiences, and professional knowledge.

Innovation and knowledge sharing are closely associated with employees' psychological safety within an organisation. Edmondson (1999) explains that when employees feel safe to express opinions, ask questions, and acknowledge mistakes without fear of negative consequences, they are more likely to engage in learning and collaborative activities. Similarly, Carmeli et al. (2010) demonstrate that inclusive leadership can encourage employee involvement in creative tasks through psychological safety. Shore et al. (2011) define inclusion in terms of employees' sense of belonging and the recognition of their individual uniqueness. In the context of age inclusion, this means that employees of different ages should be recognised as equal members of the organisation whose knowledge, experience, and perspectives are valued.

Although age-related stereotypes often portray older employees as less innovative, empirical evidence does not necessarily support this assumption. Ng and Feldman (2013), in a meta-analysis of 98 studies, found little evidence that older employees engage in less innovation-related behaviour than their younger colleagues. Furthermore, Kooij et al. (2011) identified age-related differences in work motives, although these differences vary across motivational dimensions and employee groups. These findings suggest that organisations should avoid making assumptions about employees' capabilities based solely on age and instead create opportunities for knowledge exchange and professional collaboration.

Research at the organisational level also highlights the importance of an age-inclusive climate. Kunze et al. (2011) found that an age-discrimination climate was associated with lower organisational performance, partly through its relationship with employees' affective commitment. Similarly, Boehm et al. (2014) showed that age-inclusive human resource practices can contribute to a positive age-diversity climate and favourable organisational outcomes. Wang and Noe (2010) also emphasised the importance of organisational context, interpersonal relationships, and motivational factors in understanding knowledge-sharing behaviour. Collectively, these studies indicate that fairness, trust, and supportive organisational practices are important conditions for effective knowledge exchange.

Based on this literature, an age-inclusive organisational climate may support employee innovation and knowledge sharing by strengthening psychological safety, encouraging collaboration, and reducing age-related barriers. Organisations can promote these outcomes through mixed-age project teams, mentoring and reverse-mentoring programmes, transparent professional development opportunities, and

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platforms where employees can freely exchange ideas. For example, experienced employees may share professional expertise, while colleagues with different skills and backgrounds may contribute alternative approaches and technological knowledge. Such practices should be adapted to individual competencies rather than determined by age alone. Therefore, developing an inclusive workplace culture can help organisations make better use of their employees' diverse knowledge and support continuous learning and innovation.

The findings of the literature analysis suggest that an age-inclusive organisational climate may positively contribute to employee innovation and knowledge sharing. These relationships are associated with psychological safety, mutual trust, and fair treatment. When employees feel that they are evaluated based on their competencies and contributions rather than their age, they may be more willing to express ideas openly, exchange professional knowledge, and participate in collaborative activities.

The analysis also challenges the widespread assumption that older age necessarily limits innovation. Existing research suggests that age alone is not a reliable indicator of an employee's innovative potential. Employees at different career stages may contribute complementary knowledge, skills, and experiences. Experienced employees can share valuable professional knowledge, while colleagues with different backgrounds and technological competencies may introduce new tools and approaches. An inclusive organisational climate can help bring these contributions together, whereas age-related stereotypes and discriminatory practices may create barriers to cooperation and knowledge exchange. Based on these findings, organisations are recommended to implement the following measures:

1. Establish project teams comprising employees from different age groups to encourage collaboration and the exchange of diverse perspectives.
2. Introduce reciprocal mentoring programmes in which employees share their respective professional expertise, digital skills, and practical knowledge according to their individual competencies.
3. Develop accessible platforms for sharing ideas and establish transparent, impartial procedures for evaluating employee suggestions.
4. Provide leadership training focused on inclusive management, age-related stereotypes, and fair treatment in the workplace.

In conclusion, promoting an age-inclusive organisational climate may help organisations strengthen knowledge sharing, encourage employee innovation, and make more effective use of their workforce's diverse capabilities. Implementing these practices can contribute to continuous organisational learning and support long-term competitiveness. However, the magnitude of these relationships should be established through empirical research in specific organisational contexts.

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