Ageism in the Workplace: The Role of Psychosocial Factors in Predicting Job Satisfaction, Commitment, and Engagement

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With a worldwide aging population and increasingly youth-centered societies around the world, there are mounting concerns about how perceptions of age and aging may influence the workplace. Using an age diverse national sample of workers (n = 800) from a wide range of occupations and socioeconomic backgrounds in the United States, this study investigated understudied psychosocial factors (age identity, aging anxiety, perceived age discrimination, perceived social support at work, and work centrality) that may buffer or hinder job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. Identity variables, both age identity and work centrality, as well as perceived social support at work, were found to be positively associated with job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, while both perceived age discrimination and anxiety about aging were negatively associated with these three job longevity variables. The results suggest that psychosocial factors such as age identity, work centrality, and perceived social support could be targeted to improve job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, while it would be beneficial for organizational policies to continue to focus on reducing age discrimination as well as reducing anxiety about aging in the workplace.

Internationally, many adults spend a substantial amount of their time working. In the United States, for example, adults (ages 15 and over) spend on average 8.12 hours working per weekday (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Thus, the workplace and its effect on individuals is an important area of study. With a worldwide aging population and increasingly youth-centered societies around the world (e.g., Nelson, 2002, 2009; WHO, 2012), there are mounting concerns about how perceptions of age and aging may influence the work environment

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including job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement (e.g., Bal & Kooji, 2011). Researchers are increasingly considering the role that psychosocial factors play on job longevity.

One psychosocial factor is perceived age discrimination in the workplace including discriminatory practices based on age, such as firing and lack of hiring, as well as perceived lack of support of supervisors of employees of a certain age (e.g., North & Fiske, 2012; Roscigno, 2010). There is evidence that perceived age discrimination influences workers in many age groups with a negative impact on job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement (e.g., Hassell & Perrewè, 1993; Snape & Redman, 2003), whereas perceived social support may help to alleviate these negative effects (e.g., Redman & Snape, 2006; Schaufeli, Taris, & van Rhenen, 2008). Another related factor that influences workers is how anxiety about aging may undermine job satisfaction and commitment (e.g., Gendron, 2014). Both perceived age discrimination in the workplace and concerns about aging can undermine people's identification with work. There is a smaller but growing body of research examining the role of identification with work and one's age group, showing that social identification influences work engagement and outcomes (e.g., Bal & Kooji, 2011; Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2014; Desmette & Gaillard, 2008). For example, greater work centrality, or how central one sees work, is related to more positive attitudes towards one's occupation, increased job satisfaction, work engagement, commitment to one's organization, and reduced turnover intentions (e.g., Bal & Kooji, 2011; Hirschfeld & Field, 2000). Taken together, these findings point to the importance of studying psychosocial factors affecting job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement among workers along the age continuum.

Building and expanding on past research, the present investigation focuses on whether these psychosocial factors (age identity, aging anxiety, perceived age discrimination, perceived social support at work, and work centrality) bolster or hinder job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. Moreover, this study includes an age diverse community sample of workers from a wide range of occupations and socioeconomic backgrounds from across the United States. In the next sections, we provide a brief review of past research and theorizing on these psychosocial factors in turn and how this study aims to fill gaps in the literature toward a better understanding of how perceptions of age and aging influence individuals in the workplace.

Social Identity

Long-standing research on social identity theory (e.g., Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) has shown that people develop affiliations or identities with relevant groups (e.g., with their age group; with an occupation or as a worker) and that different social contexts (e.g., the workplace) can elicit thoughts, goals,

and behaviors consistent with these identities. Likewise, having a strong and positive identity (e.g., as a worker) can set in motion a positive set of thoughts (e.g., increased satisfaction and engagement at work) and behaviors (e.g., remaining in the job for long periods of time) that maintain that identity. Past research, for example, has shown that having a positive ethnic identity can act as a protective factor against perceived discrimination (e.g., Romero, Edwards, Fryberg, & Orduna, 2014). Although there is substantial research demonstrating the pivotal role of social identity (e.g., gender, race) within environments such as academic ones (e.g., London, Rosenthal, Levy, & Lobel, 2011), there is relatively little research on social identity in the workplace, with some research on work centrality (Bal & Kooji, 2011; Hirschfeld & Field, 2000; Witt, Patti, & Farmer, 2002) and minimal research on age identity in the workplace (Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2014; Desmette & Gaillard, 2008; Gaillard & Desmette, 2008). Below, we focus on the study of two types of identity—age and work—that may offer insights into understanding job longevity variables in an age diverse workforce.

The little research on age identity has been limited in scope, examining older workers with a focus on how greater age identity could be a barrier to job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. The age group of older adults, which in the workplace can be conceived to be 55 years or older depending on the study and occupation (e.g., Duncan & Loretto, 2004), is generally thought to be a lower status group, who face mistreatment and stereotyping in this particular domain (e.g., Roscigno, 2010; Lamont, Swift, & Abrams, 2015). There are a few studies that show that identification as an older or late career worker has negative consequences for job engagement and retirement intentions. For example, two studies in Belgium of workers nearing retirement, ages 45–59 (Gaillard & Desmette, 2008) and ages 50–59 (Desmette & Gaillard, 2008), found that participants who identified as an "older worker" were more likely to report intentions to retire early, which in these studies was viewed as the negative consequence of withdrawing from the workforce. Other research findings also suggest that identification as a late career worker may have a negative effect on job engagement (Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2014). Taken together, this past research has highlighted that identification with a stigmatized identity ("late career worker") in the workplace can be detrimental to job outcomes.

Expanding this line of research and drawing on social identity theory (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), this study examines age identity in a more general way, which is not explicitly linked to a specific stigmatized identity such as a late career worker. That is, this study focuses on assessing people's level of identification with an age group and how important or central that identity is to their self-concept (e.g., Garstka, Schmitt, Branscombe, & Hummert, 2004). Age identity in particular is unique, compared to other identities like gender and race/ethnicity, in that individuals move through age groups that vary by high or low status as they age. Although no studies have yet assessed age identity in this

general sense in the workplace, past research has assessed age identity without focusing on a specific context showing that increased identification with one's age group for younger adults is related to increased self-esteem and for older adults is related to both increased self-esteem and life satisfaction in a U.S.-based sample (Garstka et al., 2004). Given this and past research from social identity theory, we expect increased age identity to positively influence job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement in the workplace. For example, having a strong and positive identity with one's age group could create positive buffers that are realized in the workplace such as facilitating engagement, commitment and satisfaction at work.

Although there is little research on age identification among workers, and no specific research on age identity as a distinct construct in the workplace in age diverse samples, there is research on identification with one's occupation, or work centrality (e.g., Bal & Kooji, 2011). Consistent with the way identity is conceptualized within social identity theory, we use Paullay, Alliger, and Stone-Romero's (1994) definition which conceptualizes work centrality as "beliefs that individuals have regarding the degree of importance that work plays in their lives" and that "individuals may come to believe, through their own experiences, that work to them is a central component of their lives." (p. 225). Research has suggested that work centrality is related to more positive attitudes towards one's occupation, increased job satisfaction, job engagement, job commitment, and reduced turnover intentions. For example, in samples from the United States, higher work centrality was found to be related to increased job commitment (Hirschfeld & Field, 2000; Witt et al., 2002). A study in the Netherlands, which is also a youth-centered culture similar to the United States and other Western countries (see Kooij & Zacher, 2016), found that work centrality was positively related to both job satisfaction and job engagement and negatively associated with turnover intentions (Bal & Kooji, 2011). Building on this research, the present investigation for the first time to our knowledge examines work centrality along with age identity as well as other psychosocial factors, as discussed next, in the context of workplace issues.

Aging Beliefs and Treatment in the Workplace

Beliefs about aging and treatment in the workplace are relatively well-documented as powerful factors affecting job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, and understanding these factors is increasingly important as the workforce continues to become more age diverse. Ageism in the workplace in particular continues to be a worldwide problem (e.g., McCann & Giles, 2002). In the United States, for example, according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2013), age discrimination claims are on the rise increasing from 15,785 in 1997 to 21,396 in 2013. Rising reports of age discrimination may be due in part to the growing older population (WHO, 2012) or age discrimination

laws shifting to include claims from younger age groups (ages 45 and up) in the United States (EEOC, n.d.), or including age discrimination claims from working individuals of any age in the United Kingdom (Duncan & Loretto, 2004) and Australia (Encel, 2001) for example. At the same time, recent shifts in the economy and workforce in many countries have led to dramatic increases in job turnover and sometimes even forced early retirement, which have negatively affected and potentially increased discrimination toward workers across age groups (e.g., Rampell, 2010; Roscigino, 2010). There is some evidence that young workers have been hit the hardest during the poor economy with great difficulty securing jobs (e.g., Greenhouse, 2009). Workers over 55 years of age who have lost a job on the other hand, if rehired, tend often to experience a downgrade when taking a new position such as, part-time work, lower salaries, and less benefits (e.g., Roscigno, 2010). Older workers on the job market may also face discrimination in hiring based on stereotypes associated with specific skill sets generally associated with older workers (see Abrams, Swift, & Drury, 2016).

Also as a result of the poor worldwide economy, workers may be more motivated to continue to work and delay retirement. Workers may also wish to work longer than the traditional retirement age of 65 in the United States for other reasons such as good health (e.g., WHO, 2012). Thus, despite facing expectations from employers and even younger workers to retire, older workers may decide to continue to work (North & Fiske, 2013). This may increase tension between younger and older age groups, particularly since younger age groups may see older age groups as infringing upon resources such as job opportunities (e.g., North & Fiske, 2012, 2013, 2016; Scrutton, 1999). This confluence of factors suggests it is vital to make progress in understanding perceived age discrimination affecting a wide range of age groups in today's workplace environment.

Perceived age discrimination in the workplace has been shown to negatively affect job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement (e.g., Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2014; Hassell & Perrewè, 1993; Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch, 2011; Orpen, 1995; Redman & Snape, 2006; Snape & Redman, 2003). Past research has more often focused on particular age groups, such as older adults, since studies suggest that ageism and discrimination against this group is the most pernicious (e.g., Nelson, 2005). However, a select few studies assessing age discrimination in the workplace in age diverse samples have found that internationally other age groups, for example, young adults and middle-age adults, also report experiencing age discrimination (Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Gee, Pavalko, & Long, 2007; Hassell & Perrewé, 1993). Young adults report being treated as too young and inexperienced as a reason for negative treatment in the workplace, while older adults more often cite negative stereotypes of incompetence; however, both young adults and older adults report less opportunity for promotions in the workplace based on their age (Duncan & Loretto, 2004). For example, in a study of workers 45 years and older in Australia, perceived age discrimination in the workplace was related to reduced

work engagement (Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2014). In a sample of police officers, ages 19–57 in England, perceived age discrimination was associated with reduced job satisfaction and commitment (Redman & Snape, 2006). In a study assessing a representative age-diverse sample of workers in the United Kingdom, perceived age discrimination in the workplace was shown again to reduce commitment (Snape & Redman, 2003). These findings highlight the importance of assessing how factors such as age discrimination affect job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement across age groups. Furthermore, past studies have tended to only focus on certain occupations or organizations such as police officers (e.g., Redman & Snape, 2006), employees at large companies, or at government agencies and assess unrepresentative samples, such as white-collar workers (e.g., Bayl-Smith & Griffin, 2014; Post, Schneer, Reitman, & Ogilvie, 2013).

A related factor in the workplace is perceived social support from both coworkers and supervisors, which can potentially buffer the negative effects of age discrimination and foster positive relations among workers of different age groups. Past work has found that social support in the workplace is negatively related to age discrimination (Chou & Choi, 2011). Social support in the workplace has also been shown to have positive effects on job satisfaction and job commitment (Redman & Snape, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008). Increased perceived supervisor support, for example, has also been shown to be related to increased job engagement (James, McKechnie, & Swanberg, 2011). Lack of social support should be expected to have the opposite effect and potentially could make workers more vulnerable to negative influences on job longevity variables at work, particularly for both older and younger age groups who report the most age discrimination (Gee et al., 2007).

Although both age discrimination and social support are somewhat well-studied, another related factor, aging anxiety, has rarely been investigated in this context. Aging anxiety can include anxiety about aging in general, reduced mental and physical capabilities, and effects on physical appearance (Lasher & Faulkender, 1993). Aging anxiety is found not just among middle age and older adults, but young adults as well (Bousfield & Hutchison, 2010) likely due to youth-oriented cultures of Westernized countries (Nelson, 2009). Aging anxiety is rarely studied, particularly in the workplace, but it has been shown to be negatively related to job longevity variables. One study of workers in gerontological fields, ages 20–83, in the United States found that aging anxiety was negatively related to both job satisfaction and commitment (Gendron, 2014).

The Current Study

To obtain a more complete understanding of the psychosocial factors influencing job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, this study utilizes an age diverse national community sample of 800 workers from a range of occupations,

organizations, and socioeconomic backgrounds in the United States. This study is consistent with calls for a "lifespan" approach to studying ageism across the life course (Giles & Reid, 2005; Levy & Macdonald, 2016) and calls for the use of social psychological theories to better understand psychosocial factors in the workplace (Abben, Brown, Graupmann, Mockler, & Fernandes, 2013).

Based on past research, we hypothesize that identity—age identity and work centrality—will be positively related to job longevity variables examined in terms of job satisfaction, commitment and engagement. We expect both perceived age discrimination at work and aging anxiety to be negatively related and likewise for perceived social support at work to be positively related to job longevity variables. Furthermore, we expect identity factors to predict job satisfaction, commitment and engagement over and above aging beliefs and treatment in the workplace factors. In testing our hypotheses, we also assessed other variables that are related to ageism including gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (e.g., see Chrisler, Barney, & Palatino, 2016).

Method

Participants

Participants ($N = 1,246$) were internet users recruited through craigslist ($n = 780$) or Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Mturk; $n = 466$) living in the United States. Some participants began the study and only answered a few questions; thus, data from those participants were not included in the analyses ($n = 184$ from craigslist and $n = 54$ from Mturk). Data were not included from participants who reported being younger than 18 years of age ($n = 5$), who did not include usable demographic information ($n = 96$), and who reported that their health was "poor" ($n = 29$) in response to the question "In general, would you say your health is" on a scale of 1 (*poor*) to 5 (*excellent*) (see Ware & Sherbourne, 1992) because poor health may require an individual to take more time off of work and thus affect job longevity variables. Data were not included for participants who indicated that they were not currently working at the time of the study ($n = 78$). The final sample included 800 participants ($n = 451$ from craigslist; $n = 349$ from Mturk). The sample was diverse in terms of age ($M = 38.94$, $SD = 14.21$, range 18–75). Participants were also diverse in terms of occupation (e.g., accounting associates, bankers, computer programmers, construction workers, engineers, nurses, real estate agents, sales representatives, teachers, and writers). The samples came from across the United States with craigslist participants living in 33 states and Mturk participants living in 45 states. See Table 1 for demographic information of the sample.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Sample (Craigslist $n = 451$, Mturk $n = 349$, Total $n = 800$)

	Craigslist n (%)	Mturk n (%)	Total n (%)
Age			
18–24	107 (23.7)	29 (8.3)	136 (17.0)
25–34	133 (29.5)	112 (32.1)	245 (30.6)
35–44	60 (13.3)	72 (20.6)	132 (16.5)
45–54	65 (14.4)	61 (17.5)	126 (15.8)
55+	86 (19.1)	75 (21.5)	161 (20.1)
Gender			
Male	125 (27.7)	125 (35.8)	250 (31.3)
Female	326 (72.3)	224 (64.2)	550 (68.7)
Race/ethnicity			
White/European American	310 (68.7)	275 (78.8)	585 (73.1)
Black/African American	43 (9.5)	36 (10.3)	79 (9.9)
Latino/Hispanic	47 (10.4)	14 (4.0)	61 (7.6)
Asian	19 (4.2)	14 (4.0)	33 (4.1)
East Indian	16 (3.5)	2 (0.6)	18 (2.3)
Native American	9 (2.0)	6 (1.7)	15 (1.9)
Caribbean	5 (1.1)	2 (0.6)	7 (0.9)
Middle Eastern	2 (0.4)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.3)
SES			
Lower class	39 (8.6)	42 (12.0)	81 (10.1)
Lower middle class	93 (20.6)	97 (27.8)	190 (23.8)
Middle class	225 (49.9)	178 (51.0)	403 (50.4)
Upper middle class	89 (19.7)	30 (8.6)	119 (14.9)
Wealthy	5 (1.1)	2 (0.6)	7 (0.9)
Education			
Some middle/high school	6 (1.3)	8 (2.3)	14 (1.7)
High school degree	30 (6.7)	34 (9.7)	64 (8.0)
Some college	119 (26.4)	96 (27.5)	215 (26.9)
2-Year college degree	36 (8.0)	34 (9.7)	70 (8.8)
4-Year college degree	160 (35.5)	120 (34.4)	280 (35.0)
Master's degree	76 (16.9)	47 (13.5)	123 (15.4)
Doctorate or professional degree	17 (3.8)	9 (2.6)	26 (3.3)
No answer	7 (1.6)	1 (0.3)	8 (1.0)
Working status			
Part-time	155 (34.4)	111 (31.8)	266 (33.3)
Full-time	296 (65.6)	238 (68.2)	534 (66.7)

Procedure

For participants recruited through craigslist, an advertisement named "Volunteer for online research survey on Age Issues" was placed in the volunteer

section of www. craigslist.com in states across the United States including California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Nevada, New York, Oklahoma, and Texas. After potential participants clicked the link to the study, they were brought to www.qualtrics.com, a secure online data collection site, and were instructed to read through the consent form, which described the study and offered a chance to win an Amazon gift card for completion of the survey, which was typical for completing surveys of this length on craigslist. The procedure was the same for Mturk participants, but given that they were recruited through a volunteer website, the advertisement read "Research: reflecting on age issues." Participants were paid for successful completion of the survey, which was typical for completing surveys of this length on Mturk. After participants consented to participate, they completed the identity measures (age identity and work centrality), the aging beliefs and treatment in the workplace measures (anxiety about aging, age discrimination, social support in the workplace), the job longevity measures (job satisfaction, work commitment, work engagement), and demographic measures. Measures were shortened for use in this brief internet study. The last page of the survey for all participants was a debriefing page, which described the goals of the study and contact information of the investigators.

Measures

Identity Measures

Age group identity. Participants completed a 5-item shortened version of the established 13-item measure of age group identity (Garstka, Branscombe, & Hummert, 1997). On a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), participants rated "I value being a member of my age group," "My age group membership is important to me," "My age group is central to who I am as a person," "I have a strong sense of belonging to my own age group," and "I identify with being a member of my age group."

Work centrality. Participants completed a 5-item (2 reversed scored items) shortened version (Bal & Kooji, 2011) of the established 13-item measure of work centrality (Paullay et al., 1994). On a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) participants rated "The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job," "The most important things that happen to me involve my work," "I have other activities more important than my work," "I consider work to be central to my life," and "To me, my work is only a small part of who I am."

Aging Beliefs and Treatment in the Workplace Measures

Aging anxiety. Participants completed a 4-item (1 reverse score item) established measure of aging anxiety (Bousfield & Hutchison, 2010). On a scale

of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) participants rated "I am relaxed about getting old," "I am worried that I will lose my independence when I am old," "I am concerned that my mental abilities will suffer when I am old," and "I do not want to get old because it means that I am closer to dying."

Perceived age discrimination at work.   To assess perceived age discrimination, participants answered the following question: "How often have you been treated poorly or been negatively discriminated at work because of your age?" on a scale of 1 (*never*) to 7 (*daily*).

Social support at work.   Participants completed a 4-item shortened version of an established 6-item measure of perceived social support in the workplace (Bosma et al., 1997). On a scale of 1 (*never*) to 5 (*all the time*) participants answered "How often are your co-workers willing to listen to your work-related problems?," "How often do you get the information you need from your supervisor or superiors?," "How often do you get help support from your immediate supervisor?," and "How often is your immediate supervisor willing to listen to your work-related problems?"

Job Longevity Measures

Job satisfaction.   To assess job satisfaction, participants completed a 4-item shortened version of an established 6-item measure of job satisfaction (Bal & Kooji, 2011). On a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) participants rated "I am satisfied with my current job," "I am satisfied with my work environment," "I am satisfied with my career so far," and "I am satisfied with my learning opportunities."

Job commitment.   Participants completed a 4-item shortened version of an established 8-item measure of affective organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). On a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) participants rated "I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it," "This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me," "I feel emotionally attached to this organization," and "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization."

Job engagement.   Participants completed a 6-item shortened version of the established UWES 9-item measure of work engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006), which included 3 items from the absorption subscale and 3 items from the dedication subscale. On a scale of 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*) participants rated "I am enthusiastic about my job," "My job inspires me," "I feel happy when

I am working intensely," "I am proud of the work I do," "I am immersed in my work," and "I get carried away when I am working."

Results

Table 2 displays means, standard deviations, Cronbach's α, and bivariate correlations for all study measures for all study participants. The means of all items in each measure were summed and averaged to create a composite score for that measure.

The pattern of correlations mostly fit with our hypotheses and is consistent with prior relevant research. As expected, greater age identification overall was positively correlated with job longevity variables— job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. As expected and replicating past research (Bal & Kooji, 2011; Hirschfeld & Field, 2000), greater work centrality overall was strongly positively correlated with the job longevity variables. Aging anxiety, as expected and consistent with past work (Gendron, 2014), was negatively related to job longevity variables. In line with past research (Hassell & Perrewè, 1993; Redman & Snape, 2006; Snape & Redman, 2003) age discrimination at work was negatively related to job satisfaction and job commitment; however, it was not significantly related to job engagement. Social support as expected was positively related to job longevity variables, which is consistent with past work (Redman & Snape, 2006).

Sequential Regression Analyses

Next, we turned to the key analyses of how psychosocial factors (age identity, aging anxiety, perceived age discrimination, perceived social support at work, and work centrality) bolster or hinder job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. We conducted three sequential regression analyses regressing all predictors separately on each of our dependent variables (job satisfaction, job commitment, and job engagement). For each set of analyses, control variables, age, gender (coded $0 = male$, $1 = female$), race/ethnicity (coded $0 = numeric\ minority$, $1 = numeric\ majority$) and socioeconomic status (see Ramírez & Palacios-Espinosa, 2016), were entered in the first step. Aging beliefs and treatment in the workplace variables, age discrimination at work, aging anxiety, and social support at work were entered in the second step, and identity variables, age identity and work centrality, were entered in the third step. Results from the sequential regression analysis predicting job satisfaction are shown in Table 3. The first model which included demographic control variables, explained 3% of the variance in job satisfaction ($F(4, 795) = 5.37$, $p < .001$), with socioeconomic status as a significant predictor. With the addition of aging beliefs and treatment in the workplace variables in the second step, variance in job satisfaction significantly increased to 15% ($F(3, 792) = 37.28$, $p < .001$). As expected, age discrimination at work, aging anxiety, and

Table 2. Bivariate Correlations among Variables, Descriptive Statistics, and Internal Reliability

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age identity	–											
2. Work centrality	.08*	–										
3. Age discrimination at work	–.01	.07	–									
4. Aging anxiety	–.13**	.01	.10**	–								
5. Social support at work	.23**	.11**	–.23**	–.14**	–							
6. Job satisfaction	.20**	.28**	–.18**	–.13**	.34**	–						
7. Job commitment	.27**	.32**	–.10**	–.07*	.39**	.54**	–					
8. Job engagement	.24**	.40**	–.05	–.14**	.41**	.54**	.71**	–				
9. Age	.04	–.09*	.05	.05	–.05	.002	.06	.03	–			
10. Gender	.001	–.002	.10**	.11**	.03	.02	.03	.02	–.06	–		
11. Race/ethnicity	–.13**	–.04	–.02	.16**	.02	.06	.03	–.01	.23**	.01	–	
12. SES	.09**	.05	–.04	–.03	.11**	.15**	.18**	.18**	.06	–.02	.05	–
Mean	4.69	2.50	1.87	4.30	3.49	3.34	4.26	4.73	38.94	0.69	0.73	2.72
SD	1.36	0.82	1.45	1.32	0.88	0.98	1.53	1.25	14.21	0.46	0.73	0.87
Cronbach's α	.91	.81	–	.69	.86	.86	.87	.92	–	–	–	–

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

Table 3. Sequential Regression Analysis for Job Satisfaction

Predictors	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β
Age	−.02	.01	.02
Gender	.02	.03	.04
Race/ethnicity	.06	.06	.08[*]
SES	.15[***]	.11[***]	.09[**]
Age discrimination at work		−.10[**]	−.13[***]
Aging anxiety		−.09[**]	−.09[**]
Social support at work		.29[***]	.23[***]
Age identity			.11[***]
Work centrality			.25[***]
R^2	.03	.15	.22
Adjusted R^2	.02	.14	.21
$\triangle R^2$	.03[***]	.12[***]	.08[***]

[*]$p < .05$, [**]$p \leq .01$, [***]$p \leq .001$.

Table 4. Sequential Regression Analysis for Job Commitment

Predictors	Model 1 β	Model 2 β	Model 3 β
Age	.05	.07[*]	.08[**]
Gender	.04	.03	.04
Race/ethnicity	.01	.003	.04
SES	.17[***]	.13[***]	.11[***]
Age discrimination at work		−.01	−.05
Aging anxiety		−.02	−.02
Social support at work		.37[***]	.30[***]
Age identity			.17[***]
Work centrality			.28[***]
R^2	.04	.18	.28
Adjusted R^2	.03	.17	.27
$\triangle R^2$	.04[***]	.14[***]	.11[***]

[*]$p < .05$, [**]$p \leq .01$, [***]$p \leq .001$.

social support at work significantly predicted job satisfaction. With the addition of identity variables, variance significantly increased to 22% ($F(2, 790) = 38.84$, $p < .001$). Both identity variables significantly predicted job satisfaction.

For job commitment (see Table 4), the first model, including demographic control variables, explained 4% of the variance ($F(4, 795) = 7.17$, $p < .001$)

Table 5. Sequential Regression Analysis for Job Engagement

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Predictors	β	β	β
Age	.03	.05	.07[*]
Gender	.03	.02	.03
Race/ethnicity	−.03	−.03	.001
SES	.18[***]	.14[***]	.11[***]
Age discrimination at work		.05	.01
Aging anxiety		−.09[**]	−.09[**]
Social support at work		.40[***]	.32[**]
Age identity			.11[***]
Work centrality			.36[***]
R^2	.03	.20	.34
Adjusted R^2	.03	.19	.33
$\triangle R^2$	.03[***]	.16[***]	.14[***]

[*]$p < .05$, [**]$p \leq .01$, [***]$p \leq .001$.

with only socioeconomic status as a significant predictor. With the addition of aging beliefs and treatment in the workplace variables to the model, variance explained significantly increased to 18% ($F(3, 792) = 44.71$, $p < .001$); yet, age discrimination at work and aging anxiety were not significant while social support at work was a significant predictor of job commitment. With the addition of identity factors explained variance significantly increased to 28% ($F(2, 790) = 57.68$, $p < .001$), and both age identity and work centrality were significant predictors of job commitment.

For job engagement (see Table 5), the first model, including demographic control variables, explained only 3% of the variance ($F(4, 795) = 7.09$, $p < .001$). With the addition of aging beliefs and treatment in the workplace variables to the model, variance explained increased to 20% ($F(3, 792) = 53.91$, $p < .001$). Age discrimination at work was not a significant predictor, but aging anxiety, and social support at work were significant predictors of job engagement. With the addition of identity factors variance increased to 34% ($F(2, 790) = 83.71$, $p < .001$), and both age identity and work centrality significantly predicted job engagement.

Discussion

Given that the workplace is where people spend a great deal of time and earn their livelihood, it is important to understand factors that influence job longevity among an age diverse workforce across occupations and socioeconomic backgrounds. Building on past research, this study focused on the relatively

understudied role of psychosocial factors including identity factors as well as be-liefs and treatment about aging in the workplace. Above and beyond the contri-bution of demographic variables and aging beliefs and treatment in the workplace (age discrimination, aging anxiety, and social support), age identity and work centrality significantly predicted job longevity variables. Increased identification with one's age group and with one's occupation significantly predicted increased job satisfaction, job commitment, and job engagement.

Age identity was most strongly related to job commitment which may be because having a positive social identity can lead to behaviors that maintain that identity, such as increased commitment to one's occupation, and workers of all ages might be motivated to prove that they are valuable workers to others and their organization, at any age. Work centrality was a strong predictor of job longevity variables in this study, which is consistent with past research (Bal & Kooji, 2011; Hirschfeld & Field, 2000). Workers who see their occupation as an important aspect of their self-concept and a central component in their lives seem likely to show increased job commitment, and job engagement to maintain that identity and as a result would report more job satisfaction as well.

Findings from this study also showed the contributing roles of aging beliefs and treatment in the workplace on job longevity variables. Increased aging anxiety predicted decreased job satisfaction and job engagement, although it did not sig-nificantly predict job commitment. Generally, aging anxiety was weakly related to the job longevity variables, which may suggest that aging anxiety may not affect these directly, but through another variable. For example, stereotypic beliefs about aging and older adults have been shown to be related to increased aging anxiety (Bousfield & Hutchison, 2010) and this may moderate the relationship between aging anxiety and job longevity variables, particularly if one has negative per-ceptions of aging. Aging anxiety, while weakly related to job longevity variables, should continue to be investigated, especially with regard to other variables such as individual differences, particularly since findings from this study and past re-search has suggested that females and racial/ethnic minorities tend to report more aging anxiety (Bergman, Bodner, & Cohen-Fridel, 2013; Lynch, 2000).

Findings with regard to perceived age discrimination were mixed. Consis-tent with past research it negatively, although weakly, predicted decreased job satisfaction (Hassell & Perrewè, 1993; however, it was not significantly related to job commitment or engagement. These inconsistencies in findings may be due to the small number of participants (30%) who reported ever experiencing age discrimination, which may also reflect the underreporting of age discrimination in the workplace (Nicholson, 2003). There may be an underreporting issue in that people are hesitant to report on the survey or to themselves that they have been discriminated against. It may also be that people placed a high threshold on what discrimination means in the workplace such as a blatant firing because of one's age or explicit ageist feedback on work performance. More subtle forms of age

discrimination, like ageist remarks from a coworker, may not be recognized as age discrimination despite the potential negative effects on individuals, due to the institutionalization of ageism in the United States (Nelson, 2002, 2009).

In contrast, perceived social support at work was a strong significant predictor of job satisfaction, job commitment and job engagement, which is consistent with past research (Redman & Snape, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008). Workers who perceive that they can turn to either their supervisor or other co-workers when work-related problems arise, would likely be better able handle such situations and stay more committed, engaged, and satisfied.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations of this study. First due to the design of the study, it is not possible to determine causality. Although our sample was diverse in some ways (e.g., age, socioeconomic status, workers from diverse fields), the sample was not diverse in terms gender or race/ethnicity, limiting the analyses and investigation of the potentially important role of these individual differences (see Chrisler et al., 2016). Although this study included established measures from the literature, the measures were shortened to allow for a brief internet-based survey. Furthermore, a one item measure was used to assess age discrimination at work, which is sometimes used in past work (Gee et al., 2007), although this potentially limits our understanding of this social problem. Future studies should assess age discrimination with longer more detailed measures including qualitative measures that can capture nuances of this social issue. Finally, the sample consisted of individuals living in the United States, and may not generalize to other countries and cultures. Results from the current study did replicate some findings from past research which was largely from international samples in Westernized countries. It is likely that results would be similar in other Westernized countries; however, studying these constructs in nonindividualistic cultures could yield different results. Perceptions and the importance of age identity and work centrality may vary based on culture, and studies have suggested that there are differences about beliefs of aging in the workplace and stereotypes of workers as they age based on culture (Chiu, Chan, Snape, & Redman, 2001).

Another fruitful future direction is to expand the exploration of identity issues. In this study, identity explained unique variance over and above demographic controls and aging beliefs and treatment in the workplace variables. As age identification continues to be investigated, future studies may consider defining what is meant by an "age group" for participants (see Levy & Macdonald, 2016). In the current study participants were not prompted with any indication of what an "age group" meant, although they did fill out a free response follow up question asking what age group they were thinking of while rating items. Assessment of the free responses indicated that perceptions of what an "age group" meant varied

among participants. For example, some participants viewed this to mean just their own chronological age, while others viewed it as meaning individuals within a ten year span of their chronological age. Future research should also assess variations by age identity with regard to culture among age diverse samples. There has also been some research to suggest that age identification among young adults varies by culture and gender (McCann, Kellerman, Giles, Gallois, & Viladot, 2004). Researchers have continued to call for more research on intersectionality, or individuals who are identified with multiple stigmatized groups based on gender or race/ethnicity, and have noted that studies assessing ageism in relation to sexism or racism are rare (see Chrisler et al., 2016). Thus, assessing social identity relating to one's gender and race ethnicity in the workplace is important to future studies.

Work centrality played a significant role in predicting job longevity variables. Work centrality has been found to be a buffer of negative effects of aging on work outcomes (see Kooij & Zacher, 2016), which opens up avenues for policy implications as discussed next.

Implications for Workplace Policies

There are a number of policy implications that grow out of the present investigation. As just noted, the findings on work centrality, along with a solid base of past research (e.g., Kooij & Zacher, 2016), increasingly suggest that employers and organizations who focus on creating positive, inclusive work environments, where employees feel their work is valued, regardless of individual differences, can increase the importance that one's occupation plays in an individual's self-concept and thereby increase work outcomes.

Similarly, the findings on social identity also suggest that increasingly social identification with one's age group could be a worthwhile avenue for organizations seeking to improve worker's satisfaction, commitment and engagement. For example, policies explicitly stating that workers of all ages are valued and respected members of a workplace organization or zero tolerance policies for ageist remarks and age-based discrimination would help to facilitate and reinforce a strong positive identification with one's age group and working at the organization.

Governments internationally have acknowledged age discrimination in the workplace as a pressing social issue with policies aimed at protecting individuals in this context, although it seems that these policies need to be updated to help alleviate the problem, particularly in the United States (e.g., Rothenberg & Gardner, 2011), which only protects workers over the age of 40 (EEOC, n.d.). In the United Kingdom (Duncan & Loretto, 2004) and Australia (Encel, 2001) workers of all ages are protected from age discrimination at work.

However, more subtle forms of ageism in the workplace, such as ageist remarks toward an employee, not connected to concrete aspects of one's job like retirement decisions are often difficult to prove in age discrimination suits

(e.g., North & Fiske, 2012, 2013). Furthermore, although it is important to protect older workers, it is also important to acknowledge that younger individuals can experience age discrimination as well. Age itself can be a tricky categorization, since it can be argued that one's age is apparent externally, however an individual can sometimes look younger or older than their chronological age. It is possible that an individual younger than the age of 40, who may appear significantly older than their chronological age for instance, is potentially at risk for age discrimination, however in the United States they would not be protected based on their chronological age. Another aspect that is problematic with regard to age discrimination laws, as researchers have noted, is the tendency to not attend to individual differences of older workers and instead treat this group as homogeneous and without attention to its intersection with other forms of discrimination by gender or race (Spencer, 2013).

Since perceived social support at work, which includes support from both supervisors and coworkers in the current study, appears to be a key component in increasing job longevity variables (Redman & Snape, 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2008), policies aimed to increase support in this context should be a focus of organizations. Increasing contact, particularly in the form of diversity training (age, gender, race/ethnicity) among workers and creating mixed groups for training may foster support and respect from workers (e.g., Brooke & Taylor, 2005).

Conclusion

With a national community sample which was diverse in terms of age, occupation, and socioeconomic status, findings from the present investigation advance our understanding of the role of psychosocial factors in the workplace. Work centrality, age identity, and perceived social support at work were found to be buffers of satisfaction, commitment, and engagement at work, whereas perceived age discrimination and anxiety about aging were barriers to these key job longevity variables. Accordingly, these findings have implications for social policies and programs in the workplace, and these findings are especially relevant in today's workplace which may include non-trivial levels of age discrimination and lack of social support for workers across an increasingly age diverse workforce. Given these findings, and that psychosocial factors as a whole are understudied, we hope that future studies continue to investigate these factors in the workplace setting in the United States as well as other countries.

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