

MATURE – How Is Ageing Perceived in Today's Workplace?

Do older employees feel valued, or do they experience subtle (or obvious) forms of age discrimination? How does this shape their **sense of self**, **professional identity**, and **role in the workplace**? And just as importantly – how can experienced professionals continue to bring meaningful contributions to a **purpose-driven**, **inclusive**, and **thriving** work culture?

Who Took Part in Our Study?

Our participants are 45 **professionals from diverse industries and job roles**. They bring a rich mix of **experience levels**, **seniority**, and **perspectives** – giving us a nuanced look into how ageing is experienced across today's workforce.



Do Our Participants Experience Age Discrimination at Work and How?

We asked participants whether they perceive **ageing as a disadvantage in the workplace** and whether they feel **personally affected** by age-related challenges.

Individual Differences in Perception

The short answer: **it depends**. People vary widely in whether they view aging as a disadvantage. Interestingly, our data shows **no significant correlation** between a person's age and whether they see ageing as a disadvantage:

"There's no significant linear relationship between age and perception of ageing as a disadvantage ($r = 0.26$, $p = 0.085$)."

This means older participants weren't necessarily more likely to feel that ageing is a disadvantage than younger ones.

Feeling Affected by It

However, **perceived disadvantage and feeling personally affected** by ageing-related challenges are **moderately and significantly correlated**:

"The more participants saw ageing as a disadvantage, the more they felt personally affected ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$)."

This makes intuitive sense – if someone feels personally impacted by workplace challenges, they're also more likely to view ageing as a disadvantage.

But Age Itself? Still Not a Factor

Surprisingly, **how personally affected someone feels is not significantly linked to their actual age** either:

"There was no significant correlation between age and feeling affected ($r = 0.29$, $p = 0.054$)."

So it's not the number of candles on the birthday cake that matters – it's about **individual experience** and **perception**.

What Challenges Do Older Professionals Face?

When we asked about specific challenges, some themes stood out:

- **Keeping up with new technologies**
- **Adapting to changes at work**
- **Staying competitive and relevant in the job market**

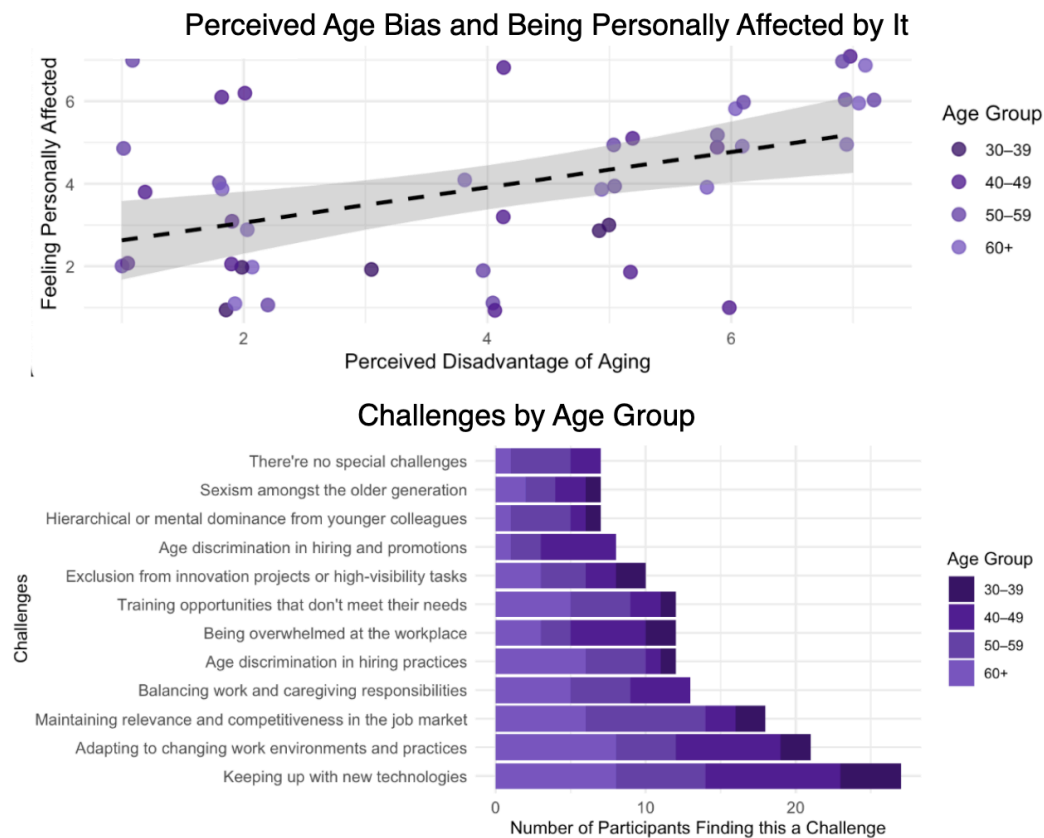
These concerns were **shared across age groups**, indicating that worries about ageing in the workplace are not exclusive to older professionals – younger respondents also recognized them.

Do Older Professionals Report More Challenges? Not Really.

We explored whether older participants reported a higher number of challenges – but the data doesn't support that:

"There was no significant difference in the number of challenges reported across age groups ($F(3, 41) = 0.675, p = 0.56$)."

So, age didn't predict how many challenges someone noticed at work.



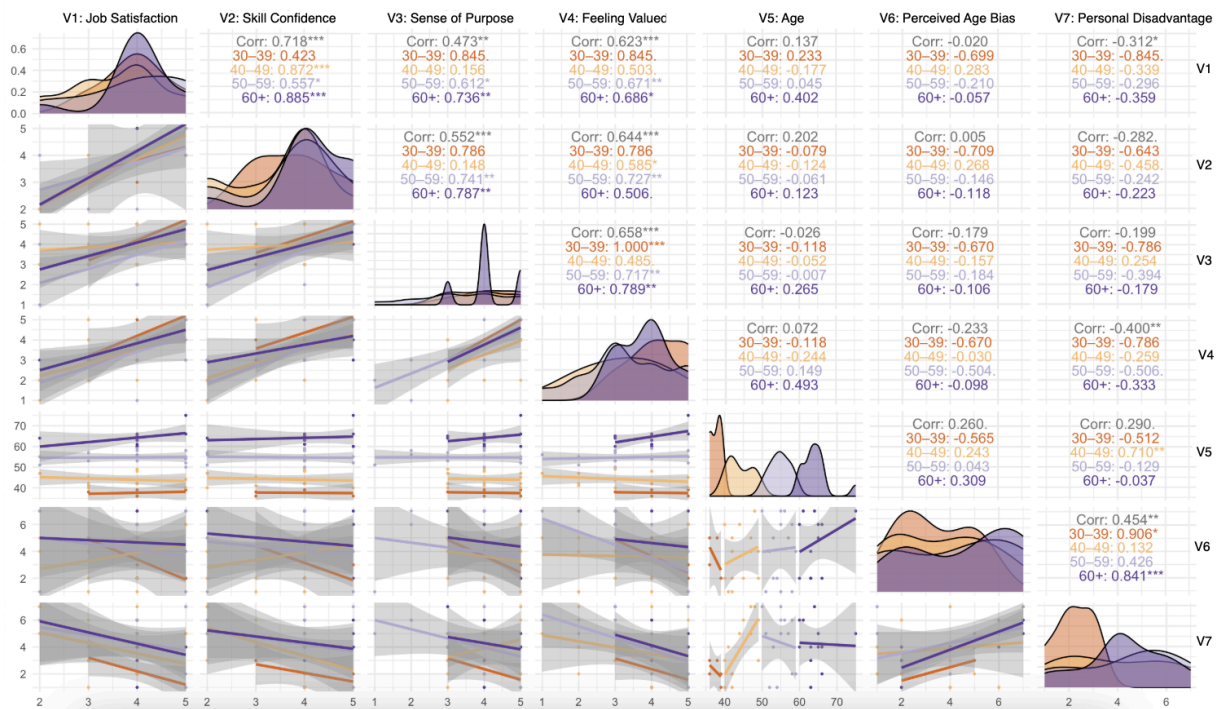
How Do Professionals Feel About Themselves and Their Work and Is This Related to Age Bias?

To understand how older professionals experience their work lives and sense of self in relation to ageing and potential age bias, we examined four key indicators:

- **Job Satisfaction**
- **Confidence in Their Own Skills**
- **Sense of Purpose**
- **Feeling Valued at Work**

We looked at how these feelings relate to three factors:

1. Participants' **age**
2. Whether they perceive **ageing as a disadvantage** in their workplace
3. Whether they feel **personally affected** by age-related challenges



Key Insights

1. A Strong Inner Core

All four indicators—job satisfaction, skill confidence, sense of purpose, and feeling valued—are **strongly correlated with each other**, regardless of age. This suggests a coherent and stable sense of professional self-worth among older employees.

2. Age Is Not the Issue

Surprisingly, **none of these four indicators were significantly correlated with age** itself. Older participants do not report feeling less satisfied, less confident, less purposeful, or less valued simply because they are older.

3. Personal Disadvantage Matters

We examined three factors to see how they influenced job experiences:

- The participants' actual age.
- Whether they viewed ageing as generally disadvantageous in their workplace.
- Whether they personally felt impacted by age-related challenges (i.e., they experienced or perceived age discrimination firsthand).

Our analyses showed that feeling personally affected by these challenges significantly impacted job satisfaction, confidence, and feeling valued. In other words, when participants personally experienced or recognized bias related to ageing, their professional wellbeing was negatively impacted.

Outcome Variable	Predictor	Estimate	t(41)	p-value
Job Satisfaction	Personally affected by bias	-0.20	-2.64	0.0116
Skill Confidence	Personally affected by bias	-0.20	-2.60	0.0129
Sense of Purpose	None significant	—	—	—
Feeling Valued	Personally affected by bias	-0.23	-2.62	0.0122

What Does This Tell Us?

Older professionals do **not necessarily feel worse about their jobs just because they are older**. However, if they **personally feel disadvantaged** by age-related challenges, that experience has measurable consequences: they are less satisfied, less confident, and feel less valued.

This highlights the importance of addressing **subjective experiences of age bias** in the workplace—not just tackling stereotypes, but creating environments where older professionals feel seen, included, and supported. How could workplaces better support employees who personally feel impacted by age bias?

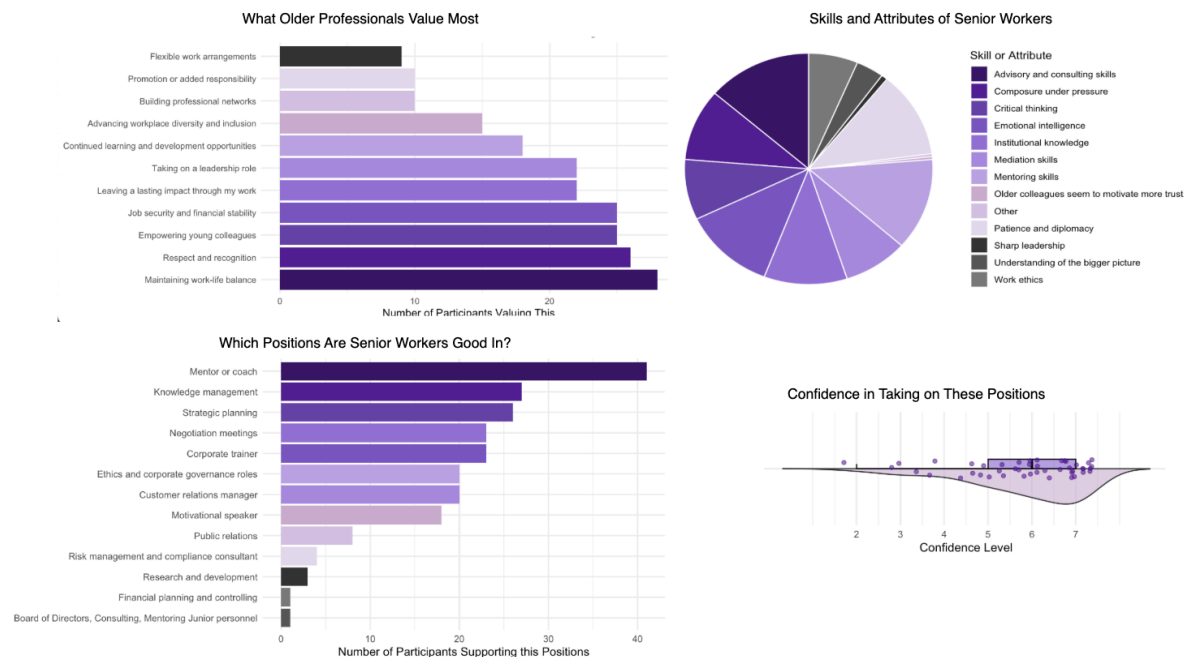
The Strengths and Wishes of Older Employees

What Senior Professionals Value and Contribute at Work

We asked senior professionals about what they value most at their current career stage. Top priorities included maintaining a healthy work-life balance, receiving respect and recognition, ensuring job security and financial stability, and empowering younger colleagues. Many participants also placed importance on taking leadership roles and leaving a lasting impact through their work. Interestingly, fewer participants prioritized flexible work arrangements and building professional networks, reflecting a natural shift in priorities at this career stage.

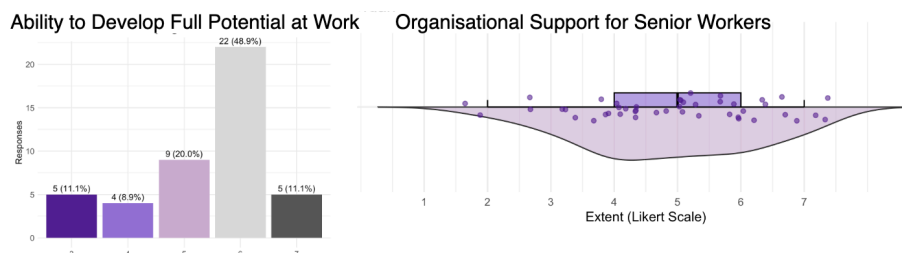
Participants highlighted numerous valuable skills and attributes older professionals contribute to workplaces, including strong advisory and mentoring capabilities, patience and diplomacy, emotional intelligence, and resilience under pressure.

When asked about specific roles suited for senior workers, mentoring and coaching emerged prominently. Participants also identified knowledge management, strategic planning, negotiation, and corporate training as key areas where senior professionals excel. Notably, participants expressed significant confidence in their ability to fulfill these roles.



Developing Potential and Organizational Support

Most senior workers felt they had considerable opportunities to develop their full potential, with approximately 60% rating their ability to realize their career potential highly (6 or 7 on a 7-point scale). Furthermore, participants indicated strong organizational support for senior employees, reinforcing their sense of value and contribution in their professional environments.



We asked participants about opportunities provided by their organizations to leverage the expertise of older employees. Responses revealed diverse experiences. Some respondents, particularly independent consultants or solopreneurs, found it relatively straightforward to apply their skills, whereas others expressed concern about insufficient knowledge transfer from older to younger colleagues.

Several participants emphasized a lack of targeted programs, noting for example, "All training applies to everyone—nothing specifically for older employees." A few highlighted age-neutral, performance-based cultures ("Just results count—not age"), while others observed that older workers are undervalued or overlooked, citing experiences such as older roles frequently being phased out.

What Shaped Our Participants' Growth?

We invited participants to reflect on the key elements that shaped their professional development. Their answers reveal a rich tapestry of **personal drive**, **external support**, and **real-world learning**.

- **Personal Initiative & Motivation**

A strong theme was **self-driven development**:

"Own initiative, and an innovative approach to getting beyond challenges and deadlock."

"Entrepreneur, bought and built businesses – had fun, had trouble. All in all – great journey."

Several credited their **growth mindset**:

"Growth mindset, continuous curiosity, EQ, speaking up, stepping boldly, collaboration, networking, courage, and wise optimism."

- **Learning Through Experience**

Real-world exposure often mattered more than formal qualifications:

"Learning on the job and interaction rather than collecting certificates."

- **External Support & Barriers**

Mentorship and training played a role for some:

"Training and development opportunities offered by the company."

But others mentioned **barriers or disappointments**:

"Training program was terrible... constantly changing."

- **Life Stages Matter**

Work-life balance was another key factor:

"In my prime years, I was also caring for young kids. As a mature worker, I have fewer responsibilities."

Fortunately, most of our participants felt like they could develop their potential!

What Do Older Employees Wish Companies Knew?

We asked participants to share what they'd like their organization to understand about older employees. We identified some key themes:

- **Value and Contribution**

Many emphasized that older employees *still have a lot to offer*. They spoke about **experience, knowledge, emotional stability, and reliability**. One participant shared:

"They bring a greater sense of stability to a somewhat chaotic environment and can emotionally handle the ups and downs."

- **Underused Potential**

Some expressed frustration at being overlooked or underutilized:

"You are not utilizing some of your greatest assets, resulting in loss of customer trust."

- **Wisdom and Perspective**

Several responses called on companies to **listen more** to older professionals and **create roles** that leverage their unique strengths.

"Older employees are not just old – they are wiser. Sometimes, it's worth listening more."

- **Diversity as Strength**

Age diversity was highlighted as a driver of **innovation and growth**.

- **Loyalty and Engagement**

Contrary to stereotypes, some participants stressed their ongoing motivation:

"I don't wake up thinking about retirement. I wake up thinking about what I can do that is positive and productive."

- **Needs and Flexibility**

One participant noted the growing importance of **work-life balance** and **flexible schedules** to retain experienced staff.

What Do Older Employees Wish Younger Colleagues Knew?

We asked older professionals what they'd want their younger colleagues to know. Their responses were filled with wisdom, encouragement, and a call for connection.

- **Experience Is an Asset, Not a Barrier**
Many responses emphasized the **depth of knowledge and experience** that older colleagues bring: *"Most older colleagues have been through similar situations before and have ideas for how to work through them."*
- **Mutual Respect & Open Dialogue**
A recurring theme was **respect** and **two-way learning**: *"Make your seniors your coaches and your allies."*
- **Let's Talk (Face-to-Face)**
Older professionals also reminded us about the value of **human connection** in an increasingly digital world: *"Get off your phone occasionally and engage with your older colleagues."*
- **Stereotypes? Let's Move On**
Several participants challenged age-based assumptions: *"Our passions and work ethic aren't determined by age."*
- **Unity Makes Us Stronger**
Some responses carried a more reflective tone, highlighting the value of **intergenerational unity**: *"Each generation has something that distinguishes it – but it's working together that creates the most value."*

Conclusion: Embracing the Full Potential of an Age-Diverse Workforce

With this survey, we challenge common assumptions about ageing in the workplace. Older professionals are not simply "surviving" their later career years — many are thriving, contributing deeply, and feeling purposeful. While subjective experiences of age bias do affect workplace wellbeing, age itself is not a determining factor in how professionals feel about their roles.

Importantly, senior employees bring unique strengths to organizations — from emotional intelligence to strategic insight and mentorship. Yet their potential is sometimes underutilized or unacknowledged. Organizations that truly value age diversity and foster inclusive, multigenerational cultures will not only retain top talent, but also unlock deeper innovation, stability, and collective wisdom.

Our findings show that ageing at work is not a one-size-fits-all experience. It's not age alone that shapes these experiences—it's context, perception, and support. That's why it's so important to create space for reflection, dialogue, and tailored strategies.