

MISQ Archivist

Helping Older Workers Realize Their Full Organizational Potential: A Moderated Mediation Model of Age and IT-Enabled Task Performance

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Abstract

Evidence shows that older users have lower performance levels for IT-enabled tasks than younger users. This is alarming at a time when the workforce is rapidly aging and organizational technologies are proliferating. Since the explanation for these lower performance levels remains unclear, managers are not sure how to help older users realize their full potential as contributors to organizational success. The research model presented here identifies the declining information-processing speed of older workers as the cause of their reduced capacity to perform IT-enabled tasks. According to the model, IT experience and IT self-efficacy reduce the negative impacts of this decline, whereas IT overload and the effort cost of IT use aggravate them. To test the model, data were collected using three complementary studies. The results supported the model and indicated five ways that organizations can help older users improve their capacity to perform IT-enabled tasks. Additional data collected in interviews with human resources directors confirmed the relevance of these solutions.

Keywords: System use outcomes, task performance, systems design, information processing, age, older users, experience, self-efficacy, overload, effort cost