



# Employability as a Function of Age and OCM Practices: A Cross-country Comparison

Silvia Dello Russo – ISCTE-IUL, Lisbon  
Emma Parry – Cranfield University  
Janine Bosak – DCU  
Sonia Ferencikova – School of Management VSM  
Michael Dickmann – Cranfield University



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# Motivation of the study

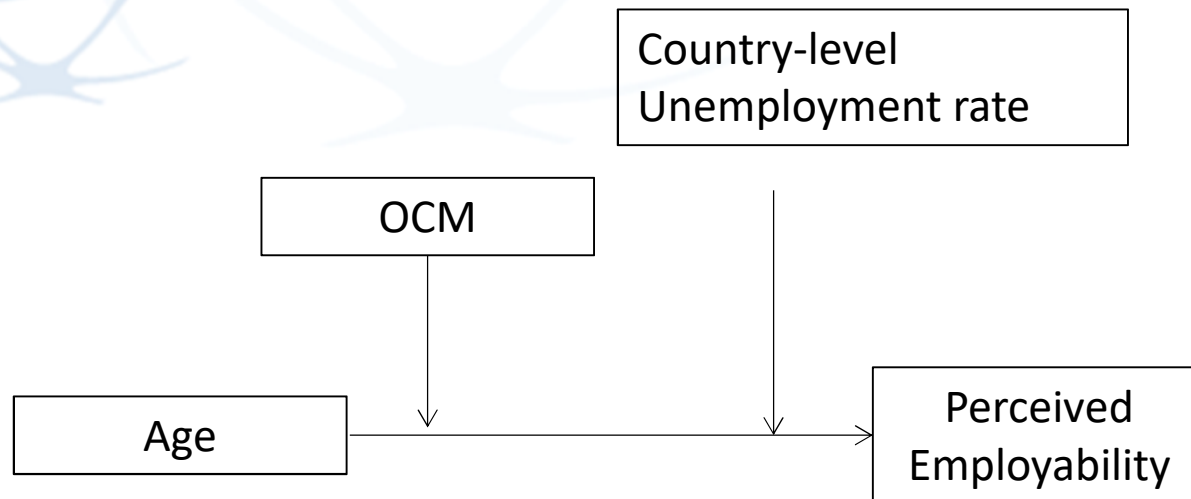
- Lifelong employability is a major concern in light of increasingly ageing population
- 1<sup>st</sup> European Pillar for social rights (2017):

The right to quality and inclusive **training and learning** as a means to “to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market” (p. 11)

- Critical role of organizations
- Yet, the moderating role of HR practices is underinvestigated.

# Research aim and questions

- To understand how to support older workers' employability.
  - 1) Is age negatively related to employability?
  - 2) Can Organizational Career Management (OCM) practices buffer this relationship?
  - 3) Does the country economic situation impact the age-employability relation?



# Theoretical framework

Employability → “an individual’s chance of a job on the internal and/or external labor market” (Forrier & Sels, 2003, p. 106)

Perceived employability → The belief of being able to find a job – based on an implicit assessment of one’s skills, competencies, abilities.

- Based on Conservation of Resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 2002; ; Hobfoll et al., 2018), resource losses are salient.
- With aging there are inevitable losses (Baltes, 1997) and due to this people may tend to perceive themselves as less employable.

## Literature review (2)

- OCM → subset of HRM practices targeted at development (Baruch & Peiperl, 2000)
- OCM practices are organizational-based support resources that increase employees' employability (De Vos, De Hauw, & Van der Heijden, 2011; Jung & Takeuchi, 2017; Van den Broeck et al., 2014; Van Der Heijden, Boon, Van der Klink, & Meijs, 2009; Wittekind, Raeder, & Grote, 2010).
- They may buffer the losses due to aging, especially if we consider these developmental initiatives as initiatives that over time allow gaining and preserving resources.

## Literature review (3)

Context provides constraints and opportunities (Johns, 2006; 2017), fosters conditions that make the losses either more or less salient.

- Unemployment rate at the country level is a relevant variable for employability as it reflects the external labor market conditions.
- High unemployment rate may increase the salience of one's losses. E.g., it may reinforce the view that opportunities are scarce, competition fierce, ageism an actual bias, etc.

# Method

- Data collected within 5C Network (Briscoe, Hall & Mayrhofer, 2012)
- Subsample of professionals and managers: N = 9119 from 30 countries 50/50 men and women, age M=40.5, SD=10.68.
- Web-based self-report questionnaire:
  - **OCM practices** -> checklist of 10 practices based on Baruch & Peiperl (2000)  $\alpha = .79$
  - **Perceived employability** -> 3-item scale (Janssens et al. 2003; Trevor, 2001)  $\alpha = .78$
  - **Age** -> continuous
  - **Control variables** -> Gender, Occupation, Hierarchical level, Education.
  - **Country unemployment rate** -> OECD, 2015 official statistics.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Intercept	4.866 ***	4.649***	5.985***	6.072***	4.769***
Gender		-0.057	-0.091*	-0.071	-0.076
Education		0.050	0.039	0.030	0.028
Hierarchical Level		-0.028	-0.028	-0.027	-0.022
Manager		0.169***	0.249***	0.209***	0.218***
Age			<b>-0.029***</b>	-0.038***	0.052
OCM				-0.011	0.056***
OCM*Age				<b>0.002**</b>	0.001
Unemployment					-0.041***
Age*Unemployment					<b>0.000</b>



# Key take-away messages

- Age seems to be a competitive disadvantage, in the perception of workers.
- The variance in the age->employability relation across countries is minimal, so it seems a universal finding.
- OCM practices can buffer this – although it is a small effect. This moderation also does not vary by country.
- More responsibility for employability resides with the organizations in a long-term investment (Selm & Van der Heijden, 2013).



Thank you

[silvia.dellorusso@iscte.pt](mailto:silvia.dellorusso@iscte.pt)