

## **How German Employees of Different Ages Conserve Resources: Perceived Age Discrimination and Affective Organizational Commitment**

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## **How German Employees of Different Ages Conserve Resources: Perceived Age Discrimination and Affective Organizational Commitment**

The literature claims that perceived age discrimination functions as a stressor. Using conservation of resources theory, this paper examines the moderating effect of employees' age on the relationship between employees' perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment. We collected survey data from 1,255 German employees. Results show a negative relationship between perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment. This relationship was stronger for older employees than for younger employees. Older employees appear to be more vulnerable to the stressor of perceived age discrimination and more motivated to conserve resources by reducing their affective organizational commitment than their younger colleagues. These findings have important implications for organizations' retention management in times of demographic change.

**Keywords:** affective organizational commitment; conservation of resources; perceived age discrimination; stressor; retention

### **Introduction**

The demographic change and an aging workforce combined with increased labor shortages are among today's greatest challenges to organizations. In Germany, in only a few years (i.e., between 2017 and 2024), the working population will include as many 50 to 64 year olds as 30 to 49 year olds with 40% of the workforce in each category (Statistisches Bundesamt 2009). At the same time, different studies predict a labor shortage of 2.0 to 4.1 million qualified employees in Germany until 2020 (McKinsey & Company 2011). These demographic shifts have led more German companies to think about diversity management and raised calls for more diversity-related research in Germany (Süß and Kleiner 2007).

To be able to succeed in the competition for qualified employees, it becomes increasingly important for organizations to be able to retain talent of all ages within the organization over the long term (Billett, Dymock, Johnson and Martin 2011). This allows organizations to make use of the "strategic value of intellectual capital and [reduce] the costs

of replacing valued employees” (Podsakoff, LePine and LePine 2007, p. 438). Therefore, this study examines the affective organizational commitment of employees of different ages because of its relation to important organizational outcomes such as turnover, intentions to leave, members’ efforts on behalf of the organization, and job performance (Mathieu and Zajac 1990; Meyer and Allen 1991; Cohen 1993). Affective organizational commitment is defined as “the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organization because they want to do so” (Meyer and Allen 1991, p. 67).

Because of organizations’ age diversity in times of demographic change, it is important for organizations to signal to employees of all ages that they are welcome in the organization by ensuring a positive age diversity climate (Mor Barak, Cherin and Berkman 1998; Scott, Heathcote and Gruman 2011). Kunze, Böhm, and Bruch's (2011) study at the organizational level, for example, showed a negative relationship between an organization’s perceived age discrimination climate and organizational performance, mediated by employees’ collective affective commitment. This underscores the importance of organizations’ efforts not only to effectively manage age diversity within the organization, but also to ensure fair treatment of employees of all ages and avoid age discrimination (Gelfand, Nishii, Raver and Schneider 2005; Shen, Chanda, D’Netto and Monga 2009). Therefore, this study investigates individual employees’ perceptions of age discrimination, i.e. perceptions that they have personally been excluded or disadvantaged because of their age (McMullin and Marshall 2001). Studies (e.g., Duncan and Loretto 2004; Bibby 2008) have found a curvilinear relationship between age discrimination and age, with both very young and older employees more strongly affected.

Affective organizational commitment is regarded as an employee attitude that is likely to be influenced by perceived age discrimination (Ensher, Grant–Vallone and Donaldson

2001). Previous research mainly addressed the consequences of perceptions of discrimination based on other demographic categories such as sex (e.g., Gutek, Cohen and Tsui 1996) and race (e.g., Sanchez and Brock 1996; Foley, Hang–yue and Wong 2005), while only a few studies specifically examined age discrimination (e.g., Hassell and Perrewé 1993; Redman and Snape 2006; Bibby 2008).

As it is often claimed in the literature that perceived age discrimination functions as a stressor (e.g., Hansson, Robson and Limas 2001; Snape and Redman 2003; Redman and Snape 2006), this paper focuses on the investigation of the relationship between perceived age discrimination and employees' affective organizational commitment using conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001) as the theoretical foundation. COR theory proposes that people try to protect their resources and energy to minimize resource losses in stressful situations (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001). Moreover, to be able to retain talent of all ages in the organization, it is important to know whether employees of different ages react differently to perceptions of age discrimination. This paper contributes to COR theory and age discrimination research by considering moderating effects of age on the relationship between perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment.

The paper makes an important contribution to both theory and management practice. In regard to theory, it extends COR theory (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001) to the area of workplace age discrimination, a context where COR theory has not yet been explored. Moreover, it underlines the important role of employees' age as a contingency factor in how perceived age discrimination is related to affective organizational commitment by considering arguments from stress research. In regard to management practice, the paper gives organizations insights into how perceived age discrimination impairs employees' organizational commitment and how this relationship is different for employees of different

ages. This knowledge can support organizations in undertaking suitable measures to create an environment that helps retain talent of all ages.

The paper is structured as follows: First, we outline the theoretical background and develop our hypotheses based on COR theory. Second, we describe the methodological design of our study conducted with a German sample and then present and discuss the results. Finally, we identify the study's limitations and point out the study's implications for theory, managerial practice, and future research.

## **Theoretical background**

### ***Perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment: A conservation of resources perspective***

This paper examines the relationship between employees' perceptions of age discrimination in an organization and affective organizational commitment. The literature often claims that age discrimination functions as a stressor (e.g., Hansson et al. 2001; Snape and Redman 2003; Redman and Snape 2006). Stressors are "any condition having the potential to arouse the adaptive machinery of the individual" (Pearlin 1999, p. 163). Previous research has shown relationships of perceived discrimination in general with stress responses such as physiological reactions or health reactions (Pascoe and Richman 2009). A study by Yuan (2007) also found that perceived age discrimination was associated with higher psychological distress.

Because perceived age discrimination is a stressor, we rely on the COR theory of stress (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001) to understand the nature of the relationship between perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment. According to COR theory, employees aim to obtain, retain, and protect resources. "Resources are defined as those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the

individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies” (Hobfoll 1989, p. 516). Stress results from an actual or threatening net loss of resources or from an imbalance between resource gain and resource investment.

When entering an organization, employees bring along certain needs that they hope will be satisfied by the organization in exchange for their investment of resources, for example, by providing a fair, supportive, and valuing work environment (Wright and Hobfoll 2004). If employees have to face age discrimination in their organization, they may perceive this as a loss of resources such as “feeling valuable to others”, “acknowledgement of my accomplishments”, “understanding from my employer/boss”, “support from co-workers”, “sense of pride in myself”, or “positive feeling about myself”, which were identified in Hobfoll's (1988) research as being among the relevant resources in Western countries (Hobfoll 2001).

COR theory posits that the psychological stress resulting from such a perceived loss of resources can be buffered if individuals perceive that they have the resources to cope with the stressor (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001). One way to cope with the stressor of perceived age discrimination and minimize the net loss of resources can be to reduce the level of affective commitment, which means to “withdraw the investment of resources into work” (Wright and Hobfoll 2004, p. 393). Reducing their commitment protects employees from getting too invested in the organization and helps them to conserve remaining resources. High affective commitment to the organization, in contrast, may be perceived as an overinvestment of their personal energies and resources when they face a lack of appreciation in their organization (Panaccio and Vandenberghe 2009; Lapointe, Vandenberghe and Panaccio 2011). Thus, we propose the following:

*Hypothesis 1:* Employees' perceived age discrimination is negatively related to their affective organizational commitment.

*Age as a moderator in the relationship between perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment*

Life span development theorists such as Baltes (1997) argue that, with increasing age, losses in resources predominate gains (see Freund and Riediger 2001). This is due to the following reasons (Baltes 1997): First, while evolutionary selection benefits are prevalent in early adulthood where people reproduce and have children, these benefits decrease with age and genetic factors and processes prevent high-level functioning. Consequently, older employees have to face resource losses by, for example, chronic health problems (Folkman, Lazarus, Pimley and Novacek 1987; Aldwin, Sutton, Chiara and Spiro 1996; Hobfoll and Wells 1998; Yeandle 2005) or late-life diseases such as Alzheimer's dementia (Baltes 1997). Second, to compensate for these resource losses, older people have an increased need for a supporting culture, i.e. "psychological, social, material, and symbolic (knowledge-based) resources" (Baltes 1997, p. 368). Nevertheless, because of biological restrictions, the effectiveness of such cultural resources decreases with age. For example, training opportunities may be less effective for older than for younger people because of cognitive limitations (see also Hobfoll and Wells 1998).

Moreover, besides these age-related biological changes, older people also have to face resource losses because of critical life events such as the loss of loved ones, as stress research shows (Folkman et al. 1987; Aldwin et al. 1996; Hobfoll and Wells 1998; Yeandle 2005). Additionally, older employees are confronted with workplace stressors (Hansson et al. 2001; Snape and Redman 2003; Redman and Snape 2006) such as age stereotypes (see Posthuma and Campion 2009) and age discrimination (e.g., Duncan and Loretto 2004; Bibby 2008) that are accompanied by feelings of decreasing self-efficacy (Kooij, de Lange, Jansen and Dijkers 2008), job anxiety (Warr 1992), or fear of failure (Rabl 2010), all indicating a loss of valued resources.

High-level functioning of older employees is impaired by these various resource losses that – according to COR theory (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001) – lead to psychological stress. Moreover, COR theory (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001) posits that people who lack resources are more vulnerable to additional losses of resources. That is, older employees who are already confronted with resource losses because of, for example, health problems, cognitive restrictions, or the loss of loved ones, are likely to be more prone to resource losses due to age discrimination (see Hobfoll and Wells 1998). Thus, it is argued that older employees may be more motivated to conserve resources instead of building up new resources to maintain their functioning (Staudinger, Marsiske and Baltes 1995; Baltes 1997; Hobfoll and Wells 1998; Freund and Riediger 2001; Hobfoll 2001). This is supported by the results of Heckhausen's (1997) study, which showed that at increasing age people focus more on goals related to loss avoidance than on goals related to gains. Consequently, when older employees face age discrimination, compared to their younger colleagues they should be more likely to apply resource conservation strategies such as reducing their affective commitment to the organization and withdrawing their investment of resources. Thus, we propose the following:

*Hypothesis 2:* Age moderates the relationship between employees' perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment such that the negative relationship is stronger for older than for younger employees.

## **Method**

### ***Setting***

To test our hypotheses, we used Germany as a setting. In 2006, the General Act on Equal Treatment (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, AGG) was introduced in Germany.

Besides other types of discrimination, it prohibits age discrimination against employees of all

ages in regard to selection, promotion, compensation, training, working conditions, and layoffs (Federal Ministry of Justice 2012).

### ***Sample and procedure***

Data for this paper were collected as part of a study on the work situation and the work attitudes of older employees (50 to 64 years) compared to younger employees (30 to 40 years) in six large German companies. The companies came from the sectors of automotive supply, electrical industry, insurance, IT service industry, trade, and waste management. Because of practical restrictions in conducting the survey in the companies, it was not possible to cover the whole age range. Thus, a selection of two specific age groups was necessary. As a control group to older employees, we chose a group of younger employees that have already settled down in professional life to avoid biases caused by the specific problems of job starters. We surveyed participants using a standardized questionnaire, which was provided online for white-collar employees and as a paper-pencil questionnaire for blue-collar employees.

In total, 1255 German employees participated in the study, which represents a 48% response rate. Six hundred thirty-one participants belonged to the group of older employees, while six hundred twenty-four participants were younger employees. The mean age was 45.11 years ( $SD = 9.86$ ;  $MIN = 30$ ,  $MAX = 64$ ), and mean job experience was 17.19 years ( $SD = 10.94$ ;  $MIN = 0$ ,  $MAX = 47$ ). In the sample, 44.10% of the participants were female. 63.75% of the participants were lower-level workers/employees, 21.35% belonged to lower management, and 14.90% to middle management. 79.4% of the participants had white-collar jobs.

### ***Measures***

To create adequate measures for the variables in this study, we selected suitable and reliable

items from US–American questionnaires, which were translated into German using a translation/back–translation procedure (Brislin, Lonner and Thorndike 1973) and tested in two pretests. We used a five–point Likert scale (1 = “does not apply at all” to 5 = “fully applies”) in which the participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement.

We measured the independent variable *perceived age discrimination* using a scale of six items ( $\alpha = .76$ ) selected from Hassell and Perrewé (1995), Garstka, Schmitt, Branscombe and Hummert (2004), and Kluge (2006). A sample item is “I have experienced age discrimination in my job.”

As a measure for the dependent variable *affective organizational commitment* served a scale of three items ( $\alpha = .76$ ) selected from Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) and Allen and Meyer (1990). A sample item is “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.”

We controlled for *tenure* and *sex*, while *age* served as the moderator variable. *Age* was measured as a continuous variable. It covered employees between 30 and 40 years as well as employees aged 50 to 64. *Tenure* was also assessed as a continuous variable. *Sex* was dummy–coded with men coded 0 and women coded 1.

Because COR theory (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001) presumes that people conserve resources in response to stressors, we measured perceived stress as a robustness check to ensure that perceived age discrimination and perceived stress are related. We assessed *perceived stress* using an eight–item scale ( $\alpha = .83$ ) from Parker and DeCotiis (1983) and Spence and Robbins (1992). A sample item is “I worry about all the work I have to do and whether I’ll get it all done.”

## ***Analysis***

To test our hypotheses, we used a moderated hierarchical multiple regression analysis following the procedure described in Cohen, Cohen, West and Aiken (2003). The control variables were entered in the first step, followed by the independent variable and the moderator variable in the second step. The two-way interaction term was added in the third step. All continuous predictor variables were centered.

## **Results**

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted in LISREL 8.80 to show the discriminant validity of the three measures described above. A three-factor solution (perceived age discrimination, perceived stress, affective organizational commitment) was an adequate fit for the data (Kline 2005; Byrne 2010) ( $\chi^2 = 869.09$ ,  $df = 116$ ;  $CFI = .93$ ;  $IFI = .93$ ;  $SRMR = .06$ ). A three-factor solution was a better fit than a two-factor solution in which perceived age discrimination and perceived stress were merged onto one factor ( $\chi^2 = 2142.38$ ,  $df = 118$ ;  $CFI = .82$ ;  $IFI = .82$ ;  $SRMR = .11$ ;  $\Delta \chi^2 = 1273.29$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .05$ ). A three-factor solution was also a better fit than a one-factor solution ( $\chi^2 = 3032.87$ ,  $df = 119$ ;  $CFI = .73$ ;  $IFI = .73$ ;  $SRMR = .13$ ;  $\Delta \chi^2 = 2163.78$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p < .05$ ), indicating the distinctiveness of the three variables.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics and correlations for all variables. The results show a statistically significant positive relationship between perceived age discrimination and perceived stress ( $r = .25$ ,  $p < .01$ ) justifying the treatment of perceived age discrimination as a stressor.

>> Insert Table 1 about here <<

Results of the moderated hierarchical regression analysis testing hypotheses 1 and 2 are shown in Table 2. The control variables *tenure* and *sex* as well as the moderator variable *age* were significantly and positively related to affective organizational commitment. The longer employees were working in their company, the more committed they were to their organization. Beyond this, older employees were more strongly committed to their organization than their younger colleagues were. Moreover, female employees showed higher affective organizational commitment than male employees.

The results provide statistical support for Hypothesis 1 that predicted a negative relationship between perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment. They also show a significant and negative moderating effect of age on the relationship between perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment. We plotted the two-way interaction effect for high and low levels of age, defining the low level as minus one standard deviation from the mean and the high level as plus one standard deviation from the mean (Aiken and West 1991). This plot (see Figure 1) indicates that the relationship between perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment was stronger for older employees (simple slope  $\beta = -.45$ ,  $t = -10.39$ ,  $p < .01$ ) than for younger employees (simple slope  $\beta = -.25$ ,  $t = -4.68$ ,  $p < .01$ ), therefore supporting Hypothesis 2.

>> Insert Table 2 about here <<

>> Insert Figure 1 about here <<

## **Discussion**

### ***Summary of results and theoretical implications***

The ability to retain talent of all ages is a crucial success factor for organizations in times of demographic change. Thus, the aim of this study was to examine the relationship between

employees' perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment as well as the moderating role of employees' age. We based our arguments on COR theory (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001). The use of a stress theory is justified because it is not only argued theoretically that perceived age discrimination functions as a stressor (e.g., Hansson et al. 2001; Snape and Redman 2003; Redman and Snape 2006), but our study – like Yuan's (2007) study – also found empirical support for the relationship between perceived age discrimination and perceived stress.

The present study supports and extends the theoretical assumptions of COR theory. Findings imply that perceived age discrimination may be perceived as a loss of resources (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001) which may be buffered by reducing affective commitment to the organization (Wright and Hobfoll 2004). COR theory maintains that employees try to protect their resources and minimize their resource losses in stressful situations (Hobfoll 1989). Our finding that perceived age discrimination is negatively related to employees' affective organizational commitment is consistent with previous research (Hassell and Perrewé 1993; Redman and Snape 2006) and suggests that perceived age discrimination is a stressor that motivates older employees to conserve resources. To our knowledge, this study is the first to explore age discrimination within the framework of COR theory.

Moreover, in order to be able to retain employees of all ages in the organization, it is important to know whether employees of different ages react differently to this loss of resources due to the age discrimination they perceive. As expected, we found a stronger negative relationship between perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment for older employees than for younger employees. This result provides support for arguments from stress research in combination with COR theory (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001). As older employees are confronted with various resource losses such as health problems (Folkman et al. 1987; Aldwin et al. 1996; Baltes 1997; Hobfoll and Wells 1998;

Yeandle 2005), cognitive restrictions (Baltes 1997; Hobfoll and Wells 1998), and loss of loved ones (Folkman et al. 1987; Aldwin et al. 1996; Hobfoll and Wells 1998; Yeandle 2005), they are more vulnerable to the stressor of perceived age discrimination (Hobfoll 1988, 1989, 2001; Hobfoll and Wells 1998) and more motivated to conserve resources by reducing their affective commitment to the organization (Staudinger et al. 1995; Baltes 1997; Heckhausen 1997; Hobfoll and Wells 1998; Freund and Riediger 2001; Hobfoll 2001).

Thus, our study successfully extends COR theory which has previously been mainly applied to stress and burnout in the workplace (Hobfoll 2001; Hobfoll and Shirom, 2001) to the area of age discrimination at the workplace. It gives insights into how perceived age discrimination as a stressor endangers resources and how people cope with this loss of resources. It thereby underlines the importance of considering person-related factors such as age when examining the effects of age discrimination on employees' attitudes.

### ***Managerial implications***

This study demonstrates the critical role of perceived age discrimination in regard to employees' organizational commitment. Because of the demographic change as well as the problem of labor shortages, it will be increasingly important for organizations to retain talent of all ages in the future. The results showed that both younger employees (30 to 40 years) and older employees (50 to 64 years) reacted negatively to perceived age discrimination, while older employees' reactions were even stronger. Older employees showed less affective commitment toward the company when faced with age discrimination than younger employees. Thus, it is necessary for organizations to undertake efforts to avoid age discrimination for all age groups.

Organizations' human resource management should aim for equal and fair treatment of both older and younger employees. This can be achieved by a number of measures such as

allowing equal access to training opportunities to employees of all age groups, giving fair performance feedback independent of age, assigning tasks based on abilities and not based on age, and offering promotion opportunities to employees of all ages.

Furthermore, it is important to fight common prejudices and stereotypes that especially older and very young employees are confronted with (see Duncan and Loretto 2004; Bibby 2008). Age diversity training may help employees familiarize themselves with these stereotypes (for an overview of age stereotypes, see Posthuma and Campion 2009), discuss the differences between stereotypes and reality, and emphasize the origins and problematic character of these stereotypes that often develop into age discrimination. Such training may also provide a place to promote effective and suitable coping strategies when confronted with age stereotypes or age discrimination. This may be of great importance to older employees who may lack the necessary coping resources because they are occupied by other stressors they face.

A positive age diversity climate emphasizing the fair treatment of all age groups and valuing the contributions and efforts of older employees (see also Grube and Hertel 2008) will help organizations to achieve and maintain high employee commitment. It will contribute to the retention of both younger and older employees as part of a robust and resilient organizational workforce that ensures the organizations' success in the future.

### ***Strengths, limitations, and implications for future research***

This study provides important insights into how perceived age discrimination relates to affective organizational commitment and how this relationship is moderated by employees' age. It contributes to existing literature by extending COR theory to the area of age discrimination in the workplace and by considering employees' age as an important contingency factor. The findings allow for generalizability because the study used a large

sample covering different organizational backgrounds, different occupations (both blue-collar and white-collar), different hierarchies, and different demographic backgrounds.

Nevertheless, the study has some limitations. Data for all variables were collected from the same source on a single survey, which may raise the issue of common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff 2003). Nevertheless, the following reasons allow us to have confidence in our findings: First, this study is interested in self-perceptions and attitudes of employees. Therefore, employees' perceptions provide valid measures so that the choice of employees as a source for measuring the relevant variables in our study is justified (Spector 1994). Second, significant interactions in moderated hierarchical linear regressions are unlikely to be created by correlated errors (Evans 1985; Schmitt 1994). Third, in order to avoid common method bias as much as possible, procedural methods recommended by Podsakoff and colleagues (2003) were employed: The order of items of independent and dependent variables was counterbalanced to separate the measurement of independent and dependent variables and avoid biases by question context or item embeddedness. Respondent anonymity and no judgments regarding the respondents' answers were assured to reduce evaluation apprehension. Fourth, the construct validation shows that a model incorporating only one factor is the worst fit. Nevertheless, future research should aim at replicating these results and testing their robustness by using time-lagged assessment of variables and integrating additional observations from colleagues or supervisors.

Furthermore, due to practical restrictions in the data collection within the companies, the sample included employees from the age groups 30 to 40 and 50 to 64. Future research should aim at covering the whole age range of employees in the workforce.

All participants in this study were German. As institutional factors that affect age discrimination issues differ across countries, country-specific investigations are useful

(Muller-Camen, Croucher, Flynn and Schröder 2011). To examine the degree to which the findings for a German sample presented in this study generalize to employees of other nationalities, the hypotheses should be re-tested with other country samples.

Based on this study's findings, an interesting avenue for future research would be to examine which other strategies besides reducing affective organizational commitment employees of different ages may choose to buffer the loss of resources that may be perceived due to age discrimination. For example, reducing job involvement or focusing on fields outside of work may be ways of preventing an overinvestment of resources in one's job. Detailed qualitative explorations may provide additional insight into why younger and older employees react differently to perceived age discrimination. Future studies may also aim at examining the role perceived age discrimination plays as a stressor for employees along the life span compared to other stressors such as high workload, time pressure, health problems, cognitive restrictions, or loss of loved ones.

## **Conclusion**

This study uses COR theory to shed light on the relationship between perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment. It thereby extends COR theory to the area of workplace age discrimination and highlights the importance of taking into account employees' age. It also has practical implications for organizations' retention management in times of demographic change.

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Moderator and Control</b>							
1. Age	45.11	9.86					
2. Sex	–	–	–.08**				
3. Tenure	17.19	0.50	.65**	–.09**			
<b>Independent</b>							
4. Perceived age discrimination	1.71	0.62	.19**	–.00	.13**		
<b>Post-hoc</b>							
5. Perceived stress	2.09	0.69	–.09**	–.05	–.03	.25**	
<b>Dependent</b>							
6. Affective organizational commitment	3.96	0.83	.13**	.06*	.15**	–.24**	–.15**

Note.  $N = 1255$ . Means and standard deviations are only reported for interval-scaled variables; correlation coefficients are calculated according to the respective scale levels.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 2. Hierarchical regression analysis to test the moderating effect of age on the relationship between perceived age discrimination and affective organizational commitment

<b>Affective organizational commitment</b>			
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 3</b>
<b>Control</b>			
Tenure	.16**	.12**	.12**
Sex	.08**	.08**	.09**
<b>Independent and Moderator</b>			
Perceived age discrimination		-.27**	-.26**
Age		.11**	.12**
<b>Two-way interaction</b>			
Perceived age discrimination x Age			-.07**
Total $R^2$	.03**	.10**	.11**
$\Delta R^2$		.07**	.01**

Note.  $N = 1255$ . Standardized betas are reported.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

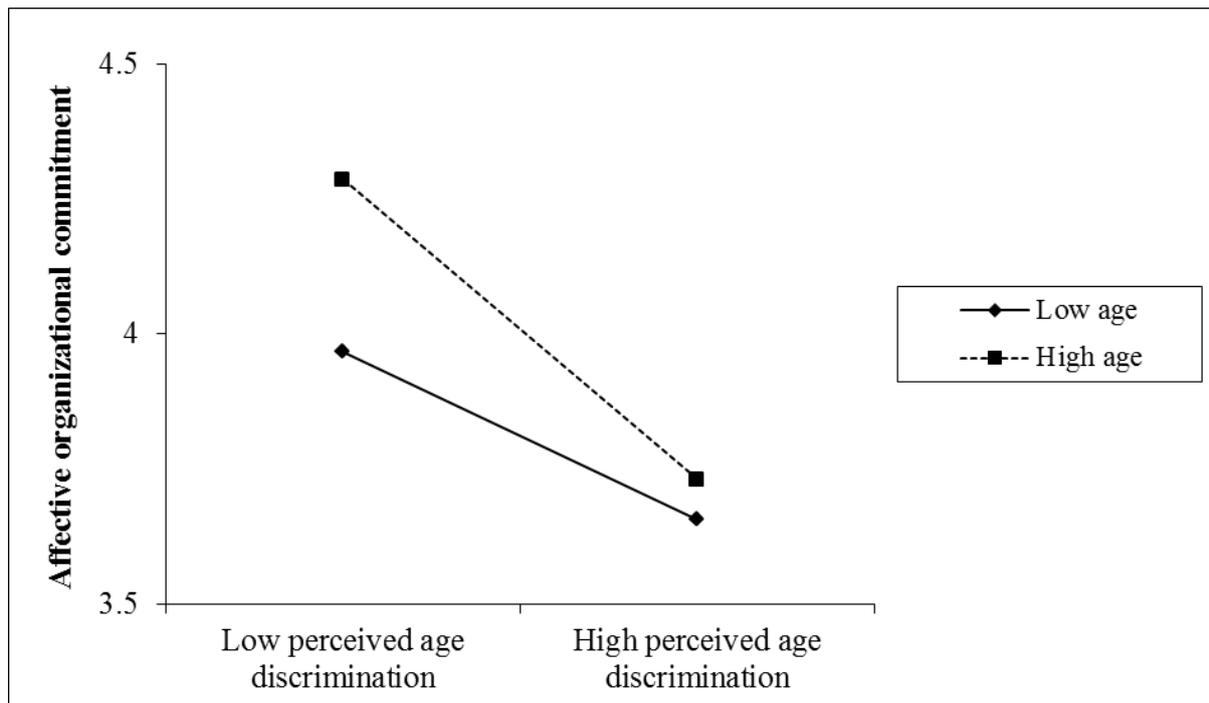


Figure 1. Two-way interaction of perceived age discrimination and age. Plotted using unstandardized regression coefficients. Low age = 1 *SD* below the mean (= 35 years). High age = 1 *SD* above the mean (= 55 years).