

Chapter 1

The Evolution of Aging Conceptualization and Its Effect on the Workforce

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ABSTRACT

Increased life expectancy has resulted in improved health and quality of life, which has accelerated global demographic aging. This phenomenon is a significant source of concern for any country in the 21st century. Simultaneously, several policies have been implemented in a variety of areas, most notably the one advocated by the United Nations—Active Aging—which aims to maintain citizens’ active participation in their communities for an extended period, as well as lifelong learning, health, and safety, including in the workforce context. In this chapter, the authors employed a research methodology consisting of two distinct phases, namely scientometrics and web-scraping, to analyze the predefined keywords “aging”/“ageing” and “work” in the context of a business environment. The results presented indicate that the interest in this theme has grown substantially. On the other hand, the keywords investigated are interconnected with other sub-areas, demonstrating the wide dissemination of this study area.

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INTRODUCTION

The most outstanding achievement of humanity is population aging (WHO, 2005). Obtained through an increase in life years and an improvement in the health of the elderly population, regardless of how far from ideal such achievements are, reaching old age is a common goal, even in underdeveloped countries. Unfortunately, this achievement has evolved into one of the century's most significant challenges.

The concept of aging and attitudes toward older people have evolved as a result of new knowledge gained about human physiology and anatomy, as well as about cultural determinants and social relationships, as well as a result of the accumulation of knowledge over time. In these days and times, which are ours, it is encouraged to associate aging with health, security, and social participation. Most notably, in the face of an active aging population, work plays an increasingly significant and even crucial role in the human life cycle. Changes in demographics are causing problems in many nations, with effects at the population level and in the structure of the workforce and the availability of labor-skilled personnel (Pinto et al., 2015).

Today's organizations will encounter issues related to the aging of their workforce, and it will be required to consider and implement new strategies that take into consideration age management for individuals to contribute to society at various phases of their life. A considerable literature has been committed to this subject to establish pillars that will enable better adaptation to the trends resulting from increased longevity, a higher average life expectancy, and declining birth rates over time.

This chapter uses scientometric tools to examine the evolution of the keywords "aging"/"ageing" and "work" in the Scopus database from 1975 to 2022. Combining this bibliometric analysis with a thorough assessment of the literature to map the terms linked with the keywords chosen, as well as co-citations by authors and responses to exposures to new and popular themes in this emerging field of inquiry, will produce interesting results.

BACKGROUND

All individuals are affected by aging, which is a constant and complex process that occurs throughout life. Although it exhibits distinct characteristics in specific organs and systems, it corresponds to anatomical and physiological changes caused by molecular and cellular alterations in all types of cells throughout the body (Seeley et al., 2008; Bernardes & Pinheiro, 2014).

Global population growth will be significant, according to various official sources, both international and national. The world's population is estimated to be around 7.9 billion people in 2021. According to the United Nations, the world's population will reach 11.2 billion by the end of this century. It is easiest to visualize this massive global transformation by analyzing Figure 1 (Ritchie & Roser, 2019). In particular, demographic aging in the United States is slower than in other developed economies, probably due to a higher fertility rate (Ferreira, 2014).

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