

**RESEARCH QUESTION:
WHAT ARE THE MOTIVATIONAL DRIVERS
FOR CAREER PROGRESSION IN MANAGERS AGED OVER 50?**

Dianne Bown-Wilson

“There is little evidence ... that employers are cognizant of the need to develop different policies for different groups of older employees... it is essential for employers to get away from thinking of older employees as an homogeneous group.”

(Patrickson & Ranzijn, 2006)

BACKGROUND

- Few studies have investigated subjective psychological career mobility and the capacity for individual change which underlies it (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). What is known is that people judge their career and their position according to a wide range of individually significant variables, e.g. job satisfaction, influence, and peer recognition (Heslin, 2005).
- How these are affected by age-related factors and the extent to which particular variables are either relatively stable within the individual (e.g. personality, values, identity) or subject to change over time and in respect of context (e.g. motivation and attitudes) is largely unknown.



FINDINGS

- Preliminary findings show that intrinsic motivators become increasingly important but vary on an individual basis reflecting factors relating to career history, personal circumstances, health, and interests.

**Future career progression =
(drivers x influences) +
opportunities**

- Drivers: autonomy, interest, contribution, status
- Influences: money, recognition, balance, development

METHOD

Career motivation is “A multi-dimensional construct that applies motivation theory to understanding career plans, behaviours and decisions” (London, 1993).

**Career motivation =
career identity x career insight x career resilience**

- The most appropriate motivational theory for examining older managers’ careers is Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964). This explains the relative desirability of outcomes in terms of individual beliefs about those outcomes, the amount of effort needed to achieve them and the likelihood of success.
- Semi-structured interviews – incorporating timelines - are being conducted with 40 managers (male and female) aged 50 + to investigate individual perceptions about career progression.



dianne.bown-wilson@cranfield.ac.uk