

HR PRACTICES AROUND WORKABILITY IN THE UK IN THE CONTEXT OF AN AGEING WORKFORCE

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Abstract

The concept of workability introduced by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, has been widely used in Nordic countries in terms of ageing workforce and extension of working lives. This PhD thesis aims to explore the role of workplace practices around workability in two organisations in the UK. The research aims of the thesis are to investigate the HR practices that are relevant to workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK. Additionally, it is explored how workability is understood/conceptualised in the UK context. Moreover, it is studied how HR practices impact on workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK. A mixed-methods design was adopted to address the research questions of the thesis providing an exploration of different perspectives. The first and the second research questions were addressed through a qualitative study which involves interviews with managers and focus groups with employees to identify the HR practices that are relevant to workability as well as the contextual factors that can affect the implementation and perception of HR practices in relation to workability as well as how workability is understood in the UK. The data were analysed using applied thematic analysis. The third research question is addressed through a quantitative study which involves the first wave of a two-wave survey of non-managerial

employees. To explore the existence of any causal relationship between perceived HR practices and workability, a second wave of survey was conducted involving a four-month time lag. These data were analysed using exploratory factor analysis and hierarchical regression analysis. The key findings from the qualitative study showed that there is a number of HR practices in relation workability such as flexible working options, performance appraisals, ergonomic adjustments etc. Also, the participant organisations offered several HR practices that were relevant to all participants including the older ones. The key findings from the quantitative study showed that there are two bundles of HR practices: the bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination and the bundle of Job Design. The findings from this research will benefit UK organisations, who are interested in making the most of their workforce and harness employees' potential at work as they age.

Declaration

This thesis comprises the candidate's own original work and it has not been submitted to this or any other University for a degree or comparable academic award. All interviews, focus groups and surveys as part of the thesis were designed and conducted by the candidate, and all analyses were carried out by the candidate.

Conference presentations (oral)

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The concept of workability relates to the employees' capacity to work given the work demands in relation to their own health and psychological resources (Ilmarinen, 2001). It was introduced by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, and it has been widely used in the Nordic context mainly in terms of ageing and extension of working lives (Coomer & Houdmont, 2013; Morelock, Mcnamara & James, 2017; Ilmarinen, 2001). The concept of workability has been used in many European countries to adapt work design and practices to the changing demographics (Buckle, 2015).

Workability considers the interaction of a number of factors (work and individual-related ones) that enable individuals to perform well at work (Ilmarinen, 2001; Maltby, 2010). It is illustrated as a hierarchical "four-floor house" conceptual framework (Ilmarinen, 2001; Ilmarinen et al., 2005; Gould et al., 2008). The first floor (ground floor) is concerned with an individual's health and functional capacity. The second floor covers competence including skills and knowledge that can impact on work performance, whilst the third floor involves attitudes / values towards work. The fourth floor is concerned with work-related factors such as work

environment / community, managerial practices, work organisation and work demands. Workability takes into account all the factors associated with individual resources (such as health, skills, motivation), the job demands and the working environment (Maltby, 2011; Ilmarinen et., al., 2015). Managers can have an impact on this balance through the adoption of workplace practices (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). For example, increased opportunities for learning and development, supervisory support, improved work organisation and promotion of employee wellbeing can be supportive of employees' workability (Tuomi, et al., 2004). Thus, workplace practices can play an important role in employees' workability. By facilitating appropriate HR practices, organisations could support employees' participation at work to achieve a healthy, motivated, and productive workforce (e.g., Tuomi et al., 2004).

Even though, workability has been mentioned in UK reports (Buckle, 2015; gov.uk, 2021a) it has not been embedded in employers' practices, still unknown why (Buckle, 2015). This may be attributed to a number of contextual differences between the UK and the Nordic countries including structural, social or institutional conditions (Payne & Keep, 2003). In order to identify the workplace practices that could promote workability in the UK, it is vital to understand workability in its specific context (Boström et

al., 2016). Context can affect the relationship between for example work design and employee outcomes such as workability and can explain variations in organisational practices (Morgeson, Dierdorff, & Hmurovic, 2010; Rousseau & Fried, 2001).

Nowadays, the UK is confronted with demographic and economic changes that have altered the structure of its workforce, leading to a growing proportion of older workers (ONS, 2021b). According to the UK national labour statistics, the labour force consists of an increasing number of workers aged over 50 (ONS, 2021b). The greater the presence of an ageing workforce, the greater the influence older workers can have through their knowledge, skills and employment experiences upon the overall workforce performance (Acas, 2011). Ageing, however, can change physical, health, mental resources and work demands that in turn may affect individual's work capacity (Ilmarinen, 2001). While the extension of working lives is seen as increasingly important for the UK economy, little attention has been paid to employee health and wellbeing while optimising performance within an ageing context (Maltby, 2011). Ageing, poor working conditions, and human resource management (HRM) can affect the employee's work capacity, which is pivotal to respond to job demands while ageing (Ilmarinen, 2001). Nevertheless, according to the Department for Work and Pensions, employers are often unprepared to deal with the ageing effect either because they ignore the consequences, or

because they do not know how to respond (DWP, 2017); thus, older workers may exit the labour market, leading to labour deficits (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009). The abolishment of retirement age in the UK has resulted in the extension of working lives (gov.uk, 2011). The extension of working lives may lead to HRM challenges regarding employee health, wellbeing at work, as well as work motivation, while there is a focus on increased productivity. While there is research that supports the associations between HR practices and attitudinal/behavioural employee outcomes, little is known on the relationship between HR practices and employee health outcomes such as workability (e.g., Kooij et al., 2014). This is important because of the growing interest in workplace health and wellbeing in the face of growing ageing population in the UK (gov.uk, 2019b).

As the UK workforce continues to age and in order to prevent older workers from exiting early from the labour market (due to health, redundancy or caring reasons), employers would need to transform the workplaces to support older workers' capacity to work in terms of work performance, motivation, health and wellbeing at work in the UK context (DWP, 2017). Workability offers a holistic approach towards ageing related challenges offering the potential to UK organisations to benefit from a multigenerational workforce.

It is therefore increasingly important to increase our understanding of the role that workplace practices can play for employees' work performance, motivation, health, and wellbeing at work. In the present thesis, the cut off point for defining an older worker is 50 years old (as stated in the UK reports) (DWP, 2017). The extension of working lives could be better achieved through the adoption of a holistic approach that takes into consideration the factors which could affect the individuals' capacity to work. In the face of challenges associated with ageing and the extension of working lives in the UK, it seems that a holistic approach from the workability perspective is missing (DWP, 2017).

Even though the role of context and its importance for promoting good workability have been acknowledged (e.g., Boström et al., 2016; Tengland, 2011), research has focused more on different age and occupational groups, than the national/sociocultural context. Thus, in responding to the call for further research on older workers and unlike previous research, this thesis recognises the importance of national, cultural, and sociodemographic context in framing workability and aims to develop an in-depth understanding on how workability is conceptualised in the UK and can be promoted through relevant workplace practices from HR, line managers and employees' perspective. This thesis offers the potential to provide sound evidence on the workplace practices

that could be relevant to workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK with the potential to benefit all workers as well as informing evidence-based solutions for employers and policymakers. The research findings presented here could contribute to UK employers' increased awareness of the conditions that are important for workability that can be vital in supporting employees' participation at work as they age.

1.2 Aim and objectives of the thesis

The main aim of this thesis is to understand the HR practices around workability in the UK in the context of an ageing workforce with reference to two organisations in the UK. More specifically, this research aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the HR practices that are relevant to workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK?
2. How is workability understood/conceptualised in the UK context?
3. How do HR practices impact on workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK?

In response to the above aims, the objectives of the thesis are to:

- 1) Examine the literature on sociodemographic, economic and cultural contextual differences and commonalities between the UK and the Nordic contexts;
- 2) Define the concept of workability and its underlying elements;
- 3) Review the literature on HR practices in relation to ageing and workability;
- 4) Identify and understand the HR practices that are relevant to older workers' workability; Understand how workability is understood/conceptualised in the UK context with reference to two organisations in the UK;
- 5) Examine the relationship between HR practices and older workers' workability;
- 6) Understand whether the organisational culture of the participant organisations is positively related to a collectivistic or individualistic type (selection criteria for the participant organisations) respectively based on the perceived HR practices.

The research aims and objectives of the thesis are achieved through a multimethod approach which involves:

1. Comprehensive literature reviews on the UK and Nordic contexts; on workability and its underlying values; and on

HR/workplace practices in relation to ageing and workability in terms of work performance, motivation, health, and wellbeing at work – see Appendix with regards to the literature search approach. The literature reviews included studies published in high peer-reviewed journals which are leading journals in HR and workability, such as the International Journal of Human Resource Management and the Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health (Objectives 1,2,3)

2. Interviews with managers and focus groups with employees in two organisations in the UK to identify and understand the HR practices that are relevant to older workers' workability and how workability is understood/conceptualised in the UK context. The researcher was provided with HR policy documents (in confidence) to understand the HR organisational context. (Objective 4)

3. A two-wave survey administered to non-managerial employees in the above-mentioned organisations in order to examine the relationship between HR practices and workability; the HR practices emerged from the interviews and focus groups. (Objective 5). Finally, to understand whether the organisational culture of Organisations A and B would be positively related to a collectivistic or individualistic type (selection criteria for the participant organisations which emerge from the first literature review on the UK and Nordic contexts) respectively based on the perceived HR practices. (Objective 6)

The comparison between UK and Nordic contexts was carried out by literature review only, whereas the experience of HR practices and workability in the UK was done via empirical data and with reference to two organisations in the UK. It is important to mention here that the data used to inform the empirical chapters in the present thesis were collected in 2017-2018, thus the COVID-19 pandemic had no effect on the research.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

In line with the stated aims and objectives identified above, the thesis commences with a comparative literature review on the differences and commonalities between the UK and Nordic contexts. This chapter aims to show how the Nordic approach towards work may differ from those in the UK, thus necessitating a consideration of how workability can be understood in a UK context. This chapter addresses the first thesis objective. The second chapter then delivers a literature review on workability and its underlying values to understand how this is conceptualised in different contexts. Despite the fact that workability has been defined in various ways and from different perspectives in research so far, the third chapter focuses on the Finnish Occupational Health perspective (workability house) which is relevant to this thesis.

Further to this, this chapter explores the dimensions of workability house (i.e., health, competence, motivation, and work) and how these are framed with reference to the UK and the Nordic contexts. The third chapter addresses the second thesis objective.

The fourth chapter follows which reviews the literature on HR practices in relation to ageing and aspects of workability in terms of work performance, motivation, health, and wellbeing at work. The chapter concludes that even though there has been extensive research regarding HR practices and older workers' work attitudes and behaviour, limited is the research so far on the relationship between HR practices and workability, and specifically in the UK context. But this is important because of the growing interest in workplace health and wellbeing in the face of growing ageing population in the UK (gov.uk, 2019b). The fourth chapter addresses the third thesis objective.

The fifth chapter present the methodology used in the thesis. The sixth chapter presents the first empirical component of the thesis. The first substantive empirical study of the thesis concerns a qualitative study in two UK organisations (Organisations A and B) The study involved interviews with managers and focus groups with employees as well as collection of organisational record data such as HR policy documents to help the researcher understand

the HR organisational policy context. The criteria for organisational selection derived from the contextual commonalities and differences between the UK and the Nordic contexts (first literature review). The results from thematic analysis showed that both organisations had in place several HR practices that are relevant to all workers including the older ones (policies were not aimed directly at older workers) even though there were mentioned a few. Also, this chapter shows how workability is conceptualised and the contextual factors that can affect the implementation/perception of HR practices in relation to workability. Finally, this chapter shows the links between the external/internal factors and the findings in relation to HR practices and workability in UK context via a multilevel perspective. This chapter addresses the fourth objective of the present thesis.

Finally, the seventh chapter presents the second substantive empirical study in relation to a survey of non-managerial employees of the two UK organisations regardless of age, job role, or gender; it focuses on identifying the HR practices that are relevant to workability. Based on social exchange (e.g., Blau, 1964) and signalling theory (e.g., Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) that suggest that employees' perceptions of organisational support through a number of actions (e.g. HR practices) can affect individual work outcomes, (e.g. Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009;

Bentley et al., 2019; Cook & Rice, 2006; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), the relationship between perceived HR practices and workability via the mediating effect of a number of factors is examined. These factors are work engagement, job satisfaction, organisational climate and leader-member exchange relationship. The sample for both organisations included 77 and 103 employees for Organisation A and B respectively. For the purposes of the study, exploratory factor analysis was performed for each of the organisations to identify relevant bundles of HR practices. Then hierarchical regression analyses were carried out to examine the relationship between the bundles of HR practices and workability through the mediating effect of work engagement, job satisfaction, organisational climate and leader-member exchange relationship. Simple linear regression analysis was then performed to explore the organisational culture of the participant organisations in relation to the perceived HR practices. The results from hierarchical regression showed that the HR bundle of Training/ development/ non-discrimination practices was relevant to all participants' workability in Organisation B (including the older ones). Also, it was supported that work engagement, job satisfaction and leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship mediated the relationship between those practices and workability. The HR bundle of Job Design practices was not relevant to workability neither in Organisation B nor A. This is likely owned to the small sample

hence, any results should be interpreted with caution. Finally, it was shown that the organisational culture of Organisations A and B were both positively related to the individualistic and collectivistic type of culture. This chapter addresses the fifth and sixth objective of the thesis.

Original contribution to knowledge:

Ultimately this thesis:

- Recognises the importance of national and sociocultural context in understanding workability;
- Develops an in-depth understanding on how workability could be conceptualised in the UK; how it can be promoted through relevant workplace practices;
- Offers evidence on the workplace practices that could be relevant to all workers' participation at work in the UK context as well as informing evidence-based solutions for employers and policymakers;
- Contributes to UK employers' increased awareness of the conditions and factors that are important for workability that can be vital in supporting employees' participation at work as they age through the use of relevant workplace practices and via the mechanism of job satisfaction, work engagement and relationship between manager and employee. The findings

from this research will benefit UK organisations, who are interested in making the most of the ageing workforce and harness employees' potential as they age.

2 A comparative overview of the contexts in the UK and the Nordic countries

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on identifying the differences and commonalities between the UK and the Nordic contexts; it offers a coherent comparative analysis with regards to the factors that have shaped the UK and Nordic contexts in relation to workability. A number of databases were used to identify relevant references to inform this chapter (see Appendix). It unpacks relevant evidence as to whether such contextual differences and commonalities between the UK and Nordic countries can influence the applicability of the Finnish concept of workability in the UK. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to show and critically evaluate these differences and commonalities in relation to workability. These are demographic, economic, social, and cultural ones. Due to the complexity of these factors, the present review takes a more evaluative than descriptive approach. To allow in-depth understanding of the impact of these factors across the Nordic and UK contexts, these are classified at micro, meso and macro level. The micro level captures the individuals, groups and actors, the meso level the organisations and regional groups, and the macro level the state and the market (Evetts, 2003). These levels reflect the interrelated

and hierarchical nature of these contextual factors that would enable the provision of rich information as to the factors that have formulated the UK and Nordic contexts (Tomoaia-Cotisel et al., 2013) as far as workability is concerned.

2.2 The Nordic countries

2.2.1 Macro level

Demography and geography

The Nordic countries consist of Scandinavia i.e., Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, together with Finland and Iceland, also including three autonomous regions Åland, Faroe Islands and Greenland. Norway and Iceland (along with Faroe Isles and Greenland) are not members of the European Union whilst Denmark, Sweden and Finland are. But Norway and Iceland belong to the wider European Economic Area (Plant, 2003). The Nordic countries form a blend (Hansen, Rasmussen, & Roto, 2011) of common but not identical cultures exhibiting high degree of ethnic homogeneity, even though it is believed that their population has become more diverse and multinational (Huset, 2007; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2011; Plant, 2003). International immigration seems to be a great challenge to the Nordic countries especially in

the urban regions; in order to cover the demands in labour-intensive industries, the large number of unskilled people immigrating in the Nordic countries, have gradually resulted in “ghettoisation” and segregation of these groups of immigrants, which has challenged the socio-economic structure of these countries (Hansen et al., 2011). The large number of migration specifically in the building industry in Norway has changed the work organisation in terms of workforce strategies and balance in the relationships between management and employees (Haakestad & Friberg, 2020). Policymakers have been focusing on attracting the highly educated international migrants as they appear to be seen more as an investment to the human capital rather than as a challenge (Hansen et al., 2011). A recent study reveals that immigrants could be seen as a threat to Nordic welfare state and culture, thus they are less empowered in terms of taking control of their health and lives (Dahl et al., 2021).

The Nordic countries are considered to have a growing ageing population (Jørgensen et al., 2019; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2018); they were the first group of countries that experienced population ageing (Korkman, Söderström, & Vartiainen, 2007). Drivers of the ageing population are considered to be: longevity, declining birth rate and out-migration (Korkman et al., 2007). Although the ratio of older people (over 65 years old) to the

working age group (15-64) is expected to increase from 25% to 40% from 2010 to 2050, the population in Nordic countries will still be young according to European criteria (Kettunen, Kuhnle, & Ren, 2014). The demographic ageing has greatly affected and subsequently informed accordingly the policy agendas in the Nordic countries e.g. postponing retirement and providing better employment terms to motivate people to work longer hours as well (Kettunen et al., 2014). In the face of growing number of older workers, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health introduced the workability concept which since 1990s it has been really popular in many countries and has been embedded in the occupational health practice in Finland (Ilmarinen, 2001; Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2021). The workability concept will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Economy

In the start of the financial crisis (2008) the GDP growth was negative in all Nordic countries in the period 2008-2009, but started experiencing growth in 2009-2010 with the exception of the Iceland's economy (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2011). The economy of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden greatly benefited from the constant and large excess exports in recent years; Norway's economic growth was favoured by the significant

amount of oil revenue (Olofsson & Wandensjo, 2012). Despite the crisis, there were great fiscal initiatives to support the business and finance sectors as well as high social expenses giving rise to public consumption rates (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2011). This may explain the greater allocation of resources on social security, welfare spending, and unemployment benefits than in the rest of Europe (Olofsson & Wandensjo, 2012) which shaped the welfare state policy priorities. While the above-mentioned state initiatives were initially determined by economic reasons, policy issues around work-life balance and welfare became a stepping stone for promoting equality and social solidarity (Leitner & Wroblewski, 2006).

In the Nordic countries the labour market, unemployment conditions and wages are regulated by collective agreements between social partners and government, which have a positive impact on productivity (Olofsson & Wandensjo, 2012). Despite periods of economic turbulence in early 1990s in Sweden and Finland, the Nordic countries managed to integrate high taxes and low socioeconomic inequality and achieve long term economic growth, by adapting the welfare state to economic and demographic challenges; research findings showed that in periods of economic crisis, the Nordic welfare states have managed to protect the psychological wellbeing of disadvantaged groups (Kunst

et al., 2005). However, there is the notion that in the face of the demographic and economic changes the universalistic form of the Nordic welfare tends to be under pressure (Kvist & Greve, 2011).

Society

The Nordic countries are considered to exhibit high social trust characteristics (i.e. "ethnic homogeneity, protestant religious traditions, good government, wealth and income equality") (Delhey & Newton, 2005. p. 311) qualifying them as "Social Democratic Welfare Models" (Kvist & Greeve, 2011, p. 147; Rubenson, 2006). They place a lot of emphasis on the provision of universal benefits, commitment to full employment, income protection, relatively high degree of gender equality and equal social distribution (social inclusion and solidarity) (Kautto, Fritzell, Hvinden, Kvist, & Uusitalo, 2001; Korkman et al., 2007; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2011; Silventoinen & Lahelma, 2002; Vanhala, 1995). Family schemes were always indispensable part of the welfare policy which were quite generous in comparison to other countries (Alestalo, Hort, & Kuhnle, 2009). There is the notion that the universalistic and equality-focused roots of the Nordic welfare model were shaped in the period when poorer parties were prevailing in the Nordic states (Alestalo et al., 2009).

Despite the fact that the Nordic countries are characterised as egalitarian (Silventoinen & Lahelma, 2002), there are social and health inequalities (BBC, 2019; Lister, 2009), for example, in Norway (Dahl, Elstad, Hofoss, & Martin-Mollard, 2006). Research has shown that even though the Nordic countries have similar social and health policies, the past post-war poor economic conditions (e.g. in Finland) can affect the socioeconomic inequalities in health across these countries (Silventoinen & Lahelma, 2002). The degree of occupational segregation and unequal pay in the Nordic countries seem to contradict the notion about the social democratic and egalitarian societies (BBC, 2019; Lister, 2009). Research has shown that in the Nordic countries income relates to educational and occupational inequalities in health (Huijts, Eikemo, & Skalická, 2010). Thus, it is suggested that both material (e.g. income) and non-material (e.g. education) resources across lower socioeconomic groups should be improved in order to address socioeconomic inequalities in health (Huijts et al., 2010). Further to the above, Denmark, Norway and Sweden do not have systematically the smallest health inequalities (Bambra, 2011; Huijts & Eikemo, 2009; Mackenbach et al., 2003). According to Eikemo et al (2008), this may be attributed to relative deprivation, class-related health behaviours and social exclusion. The latter lies on the diversity in population that emerged from the massive wave of immigrants the last decade; immigrants appear to

be socially excluded from the equal distribution of welfare benefits (Eikemo et al, 2008).

Culture

To better understand the cultural context more broadly in the Nordic countries in the first place, national culture taxonomy is used (Hofstede, 1984). This taxonomy has been used to compare national cultures, having nurtured a wide range of studies in the management practice (Papalexandris & Panayotopoulou, 2004). The national cultures across different European countries exhibit wide variations (Brewster, 1995). Research has shown that differences in the national cultures relate to the aspects of organisational culture and practices (Dastmalchian, Lee, & Ng, 2000). The organisational practice has shown that the national culture plays an important role in defining and determining the accepted behaviours and practices and can shape the workplace practices (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). That means that the organisational practices and processes can be affected by cultural norms and regulations (Dastmalchian et al., 2000; Newman & Nollen, 1996). Thus, employees' understanding of work and their approach towards it as well as the way they expect to be treated very much depends on the national culture and context (Raghuram, London, & Larsen, 2001). With reference to Hofstede's

model of conceptualisation of national cultures, four dimensions have been identified that national culture can be measured across. These are: “*power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance,*” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 8).

The first dimension is power distance; as a culture characteristic is the extent to which the less powerful people within society accept inequality in power (Hofstede, 2011). According to Hofstede (1984) “inequality exists within any culture, but the degree of it that is tolerated varies between one culture and another” (p. 390). In the organisational setting, power distance can affect employee participation, leadership style and centralisation (Raghuram et al, 2001). Research has shown that Sweden, Norway and Denmark exhibit low power distance (Hofstede, 1991 in Raghuram et al, 2001) characterised by decentralised organisations (Kvist & Greve, 2011), active citizenship and active employee participation (Payne & Keep, 2003).

The second dimension is individualism/collectivism. Individualism relates to the fact that in a society the individual is very much concerned with taking care of himself/herself and his/her immediate family exhibiting loose bonds with other individuals. On the contrary, collectivism applies when individuals from birth are

integrated in groups, where their interests are taken care of within these groups throughout their lives in turn for undiminishing loyalty (Hofstede, 1984). With regards to the Nordic countries, Finland for example, is considered to exhibit high collectivism (Hofstede, 1991 in Raghuram et al, 2001) which may be associated with social solidarity. The Nordic countries appear to exhibit characteristics of collectivistic cultures where “moralistic/family-like” relationships with employer prevail (Raghuram et al., 2001, p.741). Robert & Wasti (2002), argue that individualism and collectivism are important parts at organisational level and culture. Organisational culture is defined as the shared values and beliefs which characterise an organisation (Hatch, 1993) and influences organisational behaviour (Schein, 2010). Additionally, the dimensions of individualism and collectivism have been used for understanding the relationship between employee behaviours and workplace/managerial practices (Chatman & Barsade, 1995; Robert & Wasti, 2002).

The third dimension of the model is the masculinity/femininity. Masculinity is associated with the cultures that place emphasis on the role of men expecting them to reflect power, be competitive and success-driven (Hofstede, 1984). Masculine societies expect women to serve for their children and the weak (Hofstede, 1984). On the other hand, feminine cultures expect that both women and

men may strive for the quality of life that is non-material driven without being competitive and antagonistic (Hofstede, 1984). In masculine cultures values such as recognition, career advancement and extrinsic rewards are of great importance (Hofstede, 1984).

The fourth dimension of Hofstede's model is uncertainty avoidance. This is a culture characteristic, where people within the culture feel uncomfortable and nervous towards unpredictable circumstances (Raghuram et al, 2001). These cultures are very much certainty-seeking. In the organisational context, this can be demonstrated through the adoption of numerous organisational processes (for example recruitment) that are interwoven within the organisational culture (Raghuram et al, 2001). Denmark and Sweden are low in uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1991 in Raghuram et al, 2001); this means that the employers tend to be more flexible towards, for example, the working patterns.

An alternative measure to Hofstede's model is the GLOBE model (Hofstede, 2006). It derived from the Hofstede's model but it differed in various ways. Among others the main differences were the following: the GLOBE model used new data from local organisations whereas the Hofstede's model used on an existing data; the respondents in the GLOBE were managers but in Hofstede's model included a range of employees from different

occupational backgrounds; the GLOBE was theory driven but the Hofstede's model was action driven; GLOBE identified nine cultural dimensions in comparison to Hofstede; in the GLOBE the scores with regards to societal and organisational culture were strongly associated (Hofstede, 2006).

Schwartz (2013) in his article offers a different concept of culture that is affected by the individual's values. Since the individuals are different this in turn can affect societal culture; but the societal institutions can mediate the impact of culture on the individuals (Schwartz, 2013). However, Hofstede's model has been extensively used in research and provides a well-balanced approach when it comes to culture description (Schwartz, 2013). Next, the factors that have shaped the Nordic context on meso level are explored.

2.2.2 Meso level

Demography

At meso level changes in the Nordic countries' demographics have emerged from the increase in net-out migration rates from the sparsely populated rural areas which appears to challenge the social sustainability (Hansen et al., 2011). As a result of this trend, there is the fear that these areas will be deprived of many people at their productive age and left with retirees who tend to move to these regions (Hansen et al, 2011). Part of the demographic challenges in the Nordic countries is the growing mismatch in the labour market. This mismatch is, on the one hand, concerned with an increasing trend of young people who move to urban regions to pursue university degrees, which does not match the demands of the sparsely populated areas, and on the other hand, there is a growing need for skills that are absent locally (Hansen et al, 2011). The integration of the changes emerging from the internal migration is smooth and not very complicated in the Nordic countries. Additionally, many businesses due to the burden of cost move away from the urban areas to suburban ones to achieve cost effective solutions for the business operation (Hansen et al, 2011).

Economy

There is no evidence to suggest economic factors that have shaped the Nordic context on meso level.

Society

There is no evidence to suggest societal factors that have shaped the Nordic context on meso level.

Culture

One of the main characteristics of the Nordic countries' context is the Nordic model, which has been transformed into a conclusive model with policies and regulations addressing (in addition to health and safety issues), psychosocial matters linked to issues around the quality of work (Frick, 2013). The formulation of the Nordic model since the beginning of 20th century was gradually moving away from the *Tayloristic* model of work (Gustavsen, 2011) characterised by workers' specialisation in task performance (Lindbeck & Snower, 2000). Research on the effects of Taylorism on employee, facilitated and established movements towards new or alternative ways of work that would promote what is called "good work" (Gustavsen, 2011, p. 463). Good work is concerned

with the nature and organisation of work, where individual's wellbeing and social solidarity converge; qualities of good work include variety, opportunities for learning, active participation in decision-making and ability to take initiatives in relation to task/job performance (Gustavsen, 2011; Gallie, 2003). One of the points raised as a critique to Taylorism was its one-side work nature and the heavy specialisation, which could result in emerging psychological issues as well as marginalising a number of employee's abilities that were in the first place irrelevant to his/her job task (Gustavsen, 2011). Other issues were the employee's isolation, passive attitude towards instability in the wage development (Gustavsen, 2011).

In the Nordic countries the good work was gradually institutionalised and acted as a reference point for individuals as to what the good work is considered to be (Gustavsen, 2011). The Nordic model consists of social partnership and trust and is associated with the nature of the Nordic societies including size of population, location, and ethnic homogeneity (Gustavsen, 2011). The Nordic countries exhibit a number of constitutive characteristics i.e., equality of opportunities, high state responsibility, social dialogue, decentralised organisation and high quality in public services; these characteristics which are common traits of collectivistic cultures, have nurtured a spirit of harmony

and collaboration, despite the fact that historically the Nordic countries have shown signs of conflict (Gustavsen, 2011). "The Nordic model is the result of processes of social construction not the outcome of the historically given national characteristics" (Gustavsen, 2011, p. 465). There is the notion that it lies in people's capability of being liberated from the chains of history and decide and determine their future; this attitude appears to have influenced the evolvement of work organisation and processes within the workplace, where participation and collaboration prevail (Gustavsen, 2011). The Nordic countries are believed to have managed to realise the good work which is "the common denominator for all aspects of life, from economy to health" (Gustavsen, 2011, p. 479).

Research on the Nordic management style showed that it is employee-orientated (Lindell & Arvonen, 1996) welcoming of dialogue with unions, on the grounds that management authority and autonomy is not undermined (Rogaczewska et al., 2004 in Sippola, 2009). It is important to highlight that the extent of trade union participation can vary across the Nordic countries due to the individual national differences in, for example, regulation (Svalund et al., 2013) and historical differences with regards to the extent of state intervention or income policy (Elvander, 2002). Despite these limitations, there is a consensus in providing space for social and

open dialogue among social partners under circumstances of trust and collaboration (Frick, 2013).

A study on Swedish companies showed that employee representatives adopt a highly active attitude in areas such as employee issues, work environment and reorganisation issues, employee representatives (Levinson, 2001). This has been also supported by Frick (2013) highlighting that work-health related issues are of common interest for both employers and unions, who are both involved in discussions to enhance work conditions. Corporate leaders and employee representatives in the majority of Swedish companies work collaboratively; they both support that employee participation can be of great contribution in the decision-making process for the joint resolution of management issues (Levinson, 2001). In Denmark the unions collaborate with employers and organisations in the name of "widespread codetermination/democracy in working life" (Lind, 2000 in Greene, Kirton & Wrench, 2005, p. 184).

According to Gustavsen (2011), what differentiates the Nordic model from other countries not only lies on what and how work environment is defined, but also how work risks are managed. This falls into to the existing general debates about the how to achieve good work (Gustavsen, 2011). The workers, their unions and the

employers are working collaboratively at sector and national level on the introduction and implementation of work environment policies and regulations through the establishment of social partnership and open dialogue, nonetheless under the state's umbrella (Frick, 2013; Gustavsen, 2011). An example of high state responsibility is that in Finland the employers are obliged by relevant regulation to provide occupational health service to all employees (Kvist & Greve, 2011; Nicholson, 2004; Ilmarinen, 2009). Even though state and national government often act as a regulator to the discussions between the social partners, this is merely to further encourage the voluntary consent of employers via setting a norm rather than to punish the employers and organisations that do not comply (Frick 2013). Next the factor of culture that has shaped the Nordic context on micro level is explored.

2.2.3 Micro level

Demography

There is no evidence to suggest demographic factors that have shaped the Nordic context on micro level.

Economy

There is no evidence to suggest economic factors that have shaped the Nordic context on micro level.

Society

There is no evidence to suggest societal factors that have shaped the Nordic context on micro level.

Culture

On micro level and with reference to Hofstede's study, in the Nordic countries the employees appear to exhibit a greater degree of autonomy having direct control over their work. For example, in Norway workers' autonomy is concerned with skills-orientated control over work organisation (Kalleberg, Nesheim, & Olsen, 2009). Also, the Nordic countries exhibit low individualism, which can be demonstrated through, for example, teamwork, less bureaucracy and hierarchy (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979) and "friendly" relationship between employee and employers (Raghuram et al., 2001). Also, values such as employment security and the establishment of good working relationships with supervisors prevail (Raghuram et al, 2001).

So far, the factors on macro, meso and micro level that have shaped the Nordic context in relation to work attitudes and workability have been explored. Next, the factors that have shaped the UK context are explored and presented.

2.3 United Kingdom

2.3.1 Macro level

Demography - Economy

Demographically, the United Kingdom (UK) comprises of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The most recent figures of immigration rates showed that between 2016 and 2019 international immigration remained stable (ONS, 2021b). The increase in population over the last decade due to natural changes has contributed to the changing demography (i.e. birth and death rates)(ONS, 2015). Since the Brexit vote in 2016 there has been a decrease in the net migration mainly due to EU citizens (fewer people are coming to live in the UK and large number of EU citizens leaving the UK) (ONS, 2017). The effect of the changing demography has led to the growing population of older people resulting in an increasing ageing population (ONS, 2021b). Before

the pandemic COVID-19, a third of workers in the UK were over 50 years old (ONS, 2021a).

Culture

There is no evidence to suggest culture-related factors that appear to have shaped the UK context on macro level.

Social

The advent of the Industrial Revolution in 1760s brought major changes in the British context. Not only did it affect the economy and the mode of production, but also changed the political, cultural, and social context of Britain. While the Industrial Revolution led to mechanisation, homogenisation and centralisation of work, mass production of goods, this also led to changes in the social hierarchy, creation of classes and political affiliations (Hudson, 1992). While Justman and Gradstein (1999) suggested that industrialisation initialised democratisation that gradually led to the reduction of income inequality, Dickens (2000) talks about “a massive rise in wage inequality” (Dickens, 2000, p. 27). Further to this, Williams (2013) demonstrated that the increase in wage inequality was mostly based between occupations. Interestingly,

he found that the rise in wage inequality may strengthen the British big-class structure.

With regards to employee involvement in the UK, this had a clear focus on stabilising the industrial relations and the improvement of efficiency (Elliot, 1978 in Payne & Keep, 2003). It is believed that employers and trade unions did not share common interests with regards to issues such as work organisation, Job Design and quality of working life, which have undermined the roots for the establishment of industrial democracy (Bullock, 1977 in Payne & Keep, 2003). Even though the focus of this section is not to analyse the consequences of the Industrial Revolution, but to develop an understanding how this shaped the UK context in relation to work attitudes and thus workability, it is worth mentioning that the impact this had on Nordic countries is different with regards to the development of industrial relations. It is argued that this may be attributed to the "different timing and structure" of the Industrial Revolution across different countries (Elvander, 2002, p. 118).

Britain has been characterised both historically and contemporarily as a highly class-based society determined by a mix of differences in occupational, educational, lifestyle and financial status. An analysis of the BBC's Great British Class Survey data through the

use of economic, social and cultural capital as variables revealed the existence of seven social classes and has demonstrated the polarisation of social inequality and the further fragmentation of middle and working classes (Savage et al., 2013). This has resulted in persistent levels of inequality between different social classes and ethnic groups – with the gap between the richest 1% compared to the rest returning to pre-World War One levels since the 2000s (Dorling, 2019). The Social Mobility Commission (2019) identified that inequality remained entrenched within British society from birth to work – and was a major barrier to attaining greater levels of social mobility within the UK.

While in the early 1980s there was a strong relationship between social class and inclination to a particular political party, in the last few years this seems not to be the case (Heath, Savage, & Senior, 2012). However, the class cleavages based on the socioeconomic situation seem to be leading to diversification and inequalities in terms of educational and health status (Heath et al., 2012). Major changes in the British social context in the last 30 years included the growing proportion of ethnic minorities and the changes in the household structure (Heath et al., 2012). The analysis of the BBC's Great British Class Survey data through the use of economic, social and cultural capital as variables, has revealed the existence of seven social classes and has demonstrated the polarisation of

social inequality and the further fragmentation of middle and working classes (Savage et al., 2013).

From the welfare perspective, UK is an example of liberal welfare state (Lewis & Cambell, 2007). The liberal welfare model “minimises the decommodification effects of the welfare state and a stark division exists between those, largely the poor, who rely on state aid and those who are able to afford private provision” (Bambra, 2011, p. 17). UK state’s provision of welfare is not very generous and benefits often subject to strict eligibility criteria (Eikemo et al. 2008; Eikemo et al. 2008; Espring-Andersen, 1990). However, this does not mean that policy measures such as active promotion of employment and gender equality as well as childcare provision, are missing from the political agenda of most European countries (including UK), despite the different scope adopted, for example, by the Nordic countries (Kautto & Kvist, 2002).

In terms of promotion of active ageing, even though it has been in the UK policy agenda since 2015 (DWP, 2015a), there is a history of a state-encouraging early retirement culture (Flynn, Schröder, Higo, & Yamada, 2014). Moreover, research findings have shown that the Anglo-Saxon welfare states had the largest income-related health inequalities for both females and males in relation to Scandinavian, Bismarckian, Southern and Eastern ones (Eikemo et

al. 2008). UK is also characterised by regulatory structures (Eurofound, 2012). This has been also demonstrated in the context of dealing with the challenges of the increasing ageing workforce through the introduction of widely revised regulatory structures in managing old-age employment (Eurofound, 2012). In 2011, the default retirement age in the UK was abolished (gov.uk, 2011). In the face of ageing-related challenges, the UK promotes an age-inclusive approach for supporting older workers' recruitment, retention, retraining and workability (gov.uk, 2021a). Next the factors that have shaped the UK context on meso level are explored.

2.3.2 Meso level

Demography

There is no evidence to suggest demographic factors that have shaped the UK context on meso level.

Economy

The impact of the recession in 2008 had a major effect in the UK economy and specifically the businesses. The cuts in the UK's public finances have generated a number of problems that may

have a long-term effect. These are identified as an increase in the corporate taxation, rise in individual taxation, which could decrease the demand levels for goods and services, decline in public sector acquisition and the high levels of redundancy in public sector that may diminish the consumer trust (Lowth, Prowle, & Zhang, 2010). This could possibly give a sign of the levels of economic welfare on macro level and explain the policy focus in Britain. Last but not least, the impact of Brexit on the UK economy is still inconclusive as the effect of the coronavirus pandemic had made the assessment of economic situation in the UK difficult post Brexit (Financial Times, 2021).

Culture

Policy frameworks in the UK have a greater focus on work with benefits for the society, the economy, the individual and the state, and less so on the quality of work (Maltby, 2011). Working long hours is a pattern most frequent in private and non-unionised organisations (Cully, Oreilly, & Dix, 1999). Characterised by long-hours culture, this pattern in the UK appears to be on detriment of the achievement of work-life balance (Fagan & Burchell, 2002; Fagan, Hegewisch, & Pillinger, 2006). Research suggests that flexible working can have a positive effect on work-life balance and levels of stress e.g., Dunham, Pierce, & Castaneda (1987) although

this is much more concerned with the reduction in working hours than in the adoption of flexible working arrangements (Gottlieb, Kelloway & Barham, 1998 in Sparks, Faragher & Cooper, 2001). Even though there is not much evidence to support higher levels of job satisfaction from flexible working systems than the traditional ones, flexible work hours have a positive effect on it (e.g., McGuire & Liro, 1987). The UK organisations place more emphasis on the accomplishment of work tasks e.g., rule/procedure-orientated work systems (Dobby & Boychuk, 1999 in Olsen, Kalleberg & Nesheim, 2010) frequently at the expense of employee needs such as work-life balance or quality of work (Hofstede, 1984; Raghuram et al, 2001). This may be due to the fact that many UK organisations adopt Neo-Fordistic and Tayloristic forms of work that focus on cost-effective and mass production strategies (Payne & Keep, 2003). In the recent months and owing to the pandemic restrictions, the UK government urges businesses to adopt flexible working as a permanent working practice (Thomas & Pickard, 2021; Wall, 2021).

In terms of industrial relations, British employment relations during the post-war period are dominated by "liberal collectivism" (Rose, 2008). In this context this is associated with state's limited interference role towards legislation; "collectivism" is concerned with workers' legally established right to form groups for

negotiating agreements (Rose, 2008, p. 32). In the 1980s and 1990s, the characteristics of "liberal individualism" appeared with the advent of Conservative governments bringing great change in industrial relations policy (Gospel & Palmer, 1993 in Rose, 2008). This term is concerned with "a society of individuals who are capable, without state and other interference, of pursuing their best interests by freely entering into contracts with others." (Rose, 2008, p. 38). Since then and by 2007, trade unions were faced with mistrust and disbelief and were seen as an obstacle to the realisation of state initiatives and objectives; therefore the bargaining power of trade unions tend to decline (Rose, 2008).

According to the national statistics on the trade union membership figures (2020), the proportion of employees in the UK who were members in trade unions accounted for 23.7% (slight increase in comparison to 23.5% in 2019) (Department for Business, 2020). In contrast to, for example, the Danish government who supported the trade unions' power, the British governments between 1979 and 1997 did not advocate unions' involvement exhibiting weaker presence (Greene, Kirton, & Wrench, 2005). In the UK, organisations where workers' representatives exist, workplace issues and practices seem to be non-negotiable (Cully et al, 1999). There is a deeply-seated belief that management authority/power is quite important when it comes to cost efficiency issues and

shareholders' interests; this seems to have undermined the potential for collaboration between employers, employees and their representatives (Payne & Keep, 2003).

The changes in the labour market during the last decades had a knock-on effect on the formulation of industrial relations. For example, the transition from long-established industries e.g., engineering to newer sectors of British industry, gradually resulted in the decline in the trade union presence and membership. Further to this, according to Atkinson (1988) in Rose (2008) the diminishing power of trade unions along with technological changes have resulted in more adaptable organisations in terms of decreasing labour cost and increased productivity. In summary, the changing structure of the British labour the last 25 years have greatly weakened the power of trade unions in terms of promotion and protection of workers' rights in terms of jobs and conditions of work (Franham and Pilot, 1995 in Rose, 2008). From a political perspective, the incoherent set of positions of interventionist state from 1964 till 2014 on a range of issues such as equality and health and safety, have resulted in political fragmentation with regards to workers' rights and this in turn in how the industrial relations have been shaped (Lucio, 2015). Consequently, the changes in the labour structure and production mode as well as the political action have contributed to how the industrial relations and

workplace in Britain have been formulated (Thompson & Ackroyd, 1995).

Society

There is no evidence to suggest societal factors that have shaped the UK context on meso level. Next the factors that have shaped the UK context on micro level are explored.

2.3.3 Micro level

Demography

There is no evidence to suggest demographic factors that have shaped the UK context on micro level.

Economy

On micro level, the recession in 2008 had adversely affected households as well in terms of income and debt levels (Self, Thomas, & Randall, 2012). Almost 42.5% of the UK households reported that were in worse financial situation than a year ago (Eurofound, 2012). Nevertheless, for the period 2009/2010, 1 in 8 people in the UK were struggling financially (Eurofound, 2012).

The coronavirus pandemic seems to have an impact on the households in the UK employment-wise. Even though the recent statistics show recovery signs for the UK workforce, unemployment will be on the rise in the months to come (BBC, 2021; Powell & Francis-Devine, 2021).

Society

While skills development and productivity have been the drivers for the revival of economy after the recession in 2008, a Eurofound survey (2012) showed that the number of people that feel stress in the UK due to the work-life balance is twice as the number of people in the Nordic countries. Also, employees in the UK admitted that there was a lot of tension between them and their managers (Eurofound, 2012). A policy focus on skills development may explain why the UK government is promoting a business success approach to persuade employers to retain older workers in terms of increased productivity and employee retention (Flynn et al., 2014) in the face of an ageing workforce.

Culture

In the UK the working patterns are characterised by “individual flexibility” as determined by the individual relations between employees and employers (Bishop, 2004, p. 114). Culture may also play an important role in determining the working patterns in the sense that the family care work would be more appropriate to be undertaken by the family members than by public means of care provision (Bishop, 2004). This may explain why there is strong preference for part-time work by mothers in the UK (Cousins & Tang, 2004). With reference to Hofstede’s (1984) and Raghuram et al.’s (2001) research, the UK exhibit high degree of individualism which can be demonstrated through contractual relationship with work or employer. This may also explain the hesitation for the adoption of quite flexible practices.

The UK which is characterised by skills-orientated approach towards work, may also exhibit “competitive presenteeism” (Simpson, 1998, p. 37) under circumstances of management pressure for increased output. According to Simpson (1989) “competitive presenteeism” occurs when “managers compete over who stays longest at the office” (p. 37). This means that employees may work longer hours in order to be eligible for promotion (Bishop, 2004). Interestingly, the workers in the UK are

more likely to accept working longer hours if this qualifies them for earning twice their current salary (Cousins & Tang, 2004). The demographic, economic, social, and cultural factors that have shaped the Nordic and UK contexts on micro, meso and macro level are presented at Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Demographic, economic, social, and cultural factors in the Nordic and UK contexts on micro, meso and macro level

Nordic countries			
Factors	Micro	Meso	Macro
Demographic	There is no evidence to suggest demographic factors have shaped the Nordic context on micro level	Increase in internal net-out migration rates from the sparsely populated rural areas Growing mismatch on the labour market	High degree of ethnic homogeneity growing ageing population
Economic	There is no evidence to suggest economic factors have shaped the Nordic context on micro level	There is no evidence to suggest economic factors have shaped the Nordic context on meso level	GPD experiencing growth in 2009-2010 Large excess exports in recent years Labour-intensive industries Norway's economic growth Labour market and unemployment conditions, wages are regulated by collective agreements Greater allocation of resources on social security, welfare spending, and

			unemployment benefits
Social	There is no evidence to suggest social factors have shaped the Nordic context on micro level	There is no evidence to suggest social factors have shaped the Nordic context on meso level	<p>Social Democratic Welfare Model</p> <p>The Nordic welfare states managed to protect the psychological wellbeing from disadvantaged groups</p> <p>Exhibit high social trust characteristics</p> <p>Social conditions are relatively equitable</p> <p>Income relates to educational and occupational inequalities in health</p>
Cultural	<p>The employees appear to exhibit a greater degree of autonomy, discretion</p> <p>Teamwork and "moralistic/family-like" relationship between employee and employers</p> <p>Establishment of good working relationships with supervisors prevail</p>	<p>High levels of social partnership, unionism</p> <p>Skills-orientated work systems</p> <p>Emphasis on the quality of work and "good work"</p> <p>Decentralised organisations</p> <p>Employers are obliged by</p>	There is no evidence to suggest cultural factors have shaped the Nordic context on macro level

		<p>relevant regulation to provide occupational health service to all employees</p> <p>Employers tend to be more flexible towards the working patterns</p>	
UK			
Factors			
Demographic	There is no evidence to suggest demographic factors have shaped the UK context on micro level	There is no evidence to suggest demographic factors have shaped the UK context on meso level	<p>Immigration rates remained stable between 2016-2019</p> <p>Increase in population over the last decade due to natural changes (i.e., birth and death rates)</p> <p>The UK population is consistently ageing.</p>
Economic	<p>The recession in 2008 has adversely affected households in terms of income and debt levels</p> <p>In 2009/2010 1 in 8 people in the UK were struggling financially</p>	Economic recession in 2008 has severely affected businesses in the UK	National budgeting was severely affected by the economic crisis
Social	The proportion of UK people that feel stress due to work-life balance is twice as big as in the Nordic countries	There is no evidence to suggest social factors have shaped the UK context on meso level	<p>Liberal welfare state</p> <p>Large income related health inequalities for both females</p>

	The proportion of employees in the UK admit that there is a lot of tension between them, and the managers is almost twice as big as in the Nordic countries		and males UK has been characterised by regulatory structures Social class division
Cultural	Contractual relationship with employer and work UK workers are more likely to accept working longer hours in anticipation for earning twice their current salary	Weak presence of unions and social partnership Rule/procedure-orientated work systems Long-hours culture More emphasis is placed on the accomplishment of tasks often at the expense of quality of work Tayloristic approach towards work organisation	There is no evidence to suggest cultural factors have shaped the UK context on macro level

2.4 Discussion

The macro level analysis showed that the main characteristic of the Nordic context is the aim to achieve social equality and solidarity through the Social Democratic regime. While the welfare state policy priorities were initially driven by economic reasons, this gradually formulated the focus on promoting equality qualifying the Nordic countries as Social Democratic Welfare Models (e.g., Rubenson, 2006). At meso level analysis, the establishment of social partnership amongst employers, employees and trade unions is important part of the Nordic work culture; under circumstances of open dialogue, employers, employees, and their representatives are working together for the improvement of workplace conditions and quality of work, which characterises the employment relations in the Nordic countries. The existence of collective agreements among employers and trade unions is considered as a meaningful process when it comes to labour market regulation (Jensen, 2015). The above set of factors appear to have greatly influenced the workplace development in the Nordic countries and are mainly identified in the macro and meso level of the present analysis, but they do extend on micro level as well. It is indicated that the encouragement of the wider workforce participation in a shared climate of trust and commitment along with the active role of public policy in this area have greatly contributed to how work

organisation and workplace partnerships have been formulated (Payne and Keep, 2003).

However, there are still questions to be raised as to whether the Nordic model can be sustainable (Midttun et al., 2011), or it is in the process of undergoing fundamental changes (Kvist & Greve, 2011). The advent of a massive wave of immigrants have already made stronger anti-immigrant political parties in the Nordic countries on the grounds that the national culture and their welfare system are jeopardised (Midttun et al., 2011).

While the jury is still out, scenarios of increased economic inequality and privatisation in education, pensions and healthcare are becoming increasingly popular among the sceptics, who believe that such developments will gradually lead away from the universalistic and social form of the Nordic model (University of Oslo, 2011). Kvist and Greeve (2011) highlighted that the Nordic model is gradually getting transformed. While the core characteristics of the universal and egalitarian welfare state are maintained, in the presence of the impact of the demographic and economic changes in terms for example, changes in the public schemes, a call for changes in the Nordic welfare state in the near future is possible; the "transformed" model may ultimately not

exhibit the core and pure characteristics of the Nordic one as already known (Kvist & Greve, 2011).

Compared now to the Nordic countries, the UK context has been much influenced by the Industrial relations and political ideologies (macro level analysis), with organisations trapped into Tayloristic and Neo-Fordist models of work with a greater focus on mass production and cost-effective strategies than the quality of work itself (meso level analysis). The advent of Conservative governments after 1979 brought in massive change in industrial relations policy often expressed as "liberal individualism" casting a doubt over the power of collective bargaining (Gospel & Palmer, 1993 in Rose, 2008). Since then and by 2007, there was no real variation in terms of employment relations policies, with the trade unions' presence remaining quite weakened (Rose, 2008). This may explain why the social-partnership approach can be quite difficult to establish in the context of workplace development in the UK (Payne & Keep, 2003). Taking into consideration the fact that the business objectives in the UK have been primarily rested on pursuing high productivity and cost-effective strategies for high profitability and optimisation of shareholders' interests, it is highly unlikely that such an approach towards high-quality working life through shared trust and commitment on all sides might be adopted (Payne & Keep, 2003; Keep, 1999). Such a deeply rooted

approach towards work which characterises the UK at multilevel analysis (macro, meso and micro) might be difficult to challenge and change for an alternative one (Payne & Keep, 2003). Moreover, considering how the recent demographic and economic changes are urging for reforms in the Nordic model, it might be understood why such a turn might be missing from the UK political agendas.

Ultimately, the differences between the UK and the Nordic countries may lie on the timing (different starting point, and the way (speed, intensity) any structural, economic, technological, and social transformations were absorbed within each country due to the different institutional context and/or state policies and governmental priorities (Kautto & Kvist, 2002; Kvist, 2002). In other words, due to the fact that each country has been differently historically shaped due to institutional legacies and political classes, it is expected each country to respond differently to any external or internal changes (Kautto & Kvist, 2002; Esping-Andersen, 1999 in Kautto & Kvist, 2002). An example of this, is the development of the different welfare regimes due to different historical, economic, and political reasons that reflect and link to the social functioning and structure (e.g., labour market, workforce structure) including challenges emerging from the growing ageing population, changes in employment and family patterns (Kautto &

Kvist, 2002). Subsequently any adjustment is tailored by the national tradition, context and institutions (Ferrera, Hemereijck, & Rhodes, 2000). This applies among the Nordic countries themselves, which even though are addressed as a group of countries that exhibit similarities in terms of high degree of equality, common labour market, high degree of cross-national harmonisation, distribution of welfare etc., they have significant differences in terms of policy adaptation or patterns for example, in health inequalities (Hatland, 2001; Kautto & Kvist, 2002). The national policies can indirectly shape and formulate actors' behaviours (e.g. organisations, individuals) having a great influence upon the formulation of values and norms if consistently adopted and integrated (Leitner & Wroblewski, 2006). However, it is possible that the desired socio-political path may have been greatly influenced by country-based cultural characteristics and economic ideas (Leitner & Wroblewski, 2006). These in turn can affect the economy, politics, culture and work in different contexts (Leitner & Wroblewski, 2006), but may be moderated by the current specific institutional context (Sjöberg, 2004).

While there might be some signs of convergence in terms of policy and government agendas in the UK (as in other European countries) and Nordic countries, for example, as far as the active promotion of employment, gender equality, childcare provision is

concerned, the size and the scope of “universalism” is different in the UK (Kautto & Kvist, 2002, p. 202). Despite the persistence of similar pressures of, for example, the demographic and economic challenges (e.g., the growing proportion of ageing population, recession etc,) there is a different approach in terms of policy adoption for accommodating these changes, even though there is evidence, which may suggest otherwise e.g., (Kvist and Greeve, 2011). According to Achterberg and Yerkes (2009) the social democratic side tend to the liberal one and the liberal countries tend to social democratic ones. Though it may be difficult to talk safely about commonalities just only because some reforms in the social public policy tend to move towards the same direction (Kautto & Kvist, 2002), or converging somewhere in the middle (Achterberg & Yerkes, 2009). Thus, the jury is still out whether convergence is just around the corner.

Overall, the contextual differences between the UK and Nordic countries could possibly explain and mirror the different attitudes towards work and therefore workability and its subsequent applicability in the UK. For example, in terms of workplace development it might be quite difficult to replicate Nordic-based approaches towards work and health, since there are some differences between the UK and Nordic contexts that appear to be of major constrains (Payne & Keep, 2003). These include the

establishment of social partnership, strong presence of trade unions, different social policy regimes, work culture, and culture in terms of active employee participation (Payne & Keep, 2003). However, it is open to question and discussion whether there are still areas for development that each country could learn from each other in the face of upcoming external and/or internal changes.

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion this chapter has demonstrated the differences and commonalities between the UK and Nordic contexts in relation to workability. The present overview of the contextual characteristics at macro, meso and micro level went beyond the mere reference to different cultures and values, but it offered a comparative analysis through a multilevel approach. Narrowing the contextual differences down, it could be ultimately inferred that the Nordic approach towards work may differ from the UK one. This approach towards work in both countries has been shaped by a number of demographic, economic, cultural and societal factors for many years now. The potential attitude towards work might be different, thus affecting the adoption and applicability of workplace programmes and practices such as the Finnish concept of workability and how it could be put in a different context and in this case the UK one. The purpose of this chapter was to identify

and understand the differences and commonalities between the UK and Nordic contexts that could have shaped the introduction and applicability of the concept of workability. The next chapter will look at the concept of workability and its dimensions in different contexts.

3 The concept of workability

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the contextual differences and commonalities between the UK and the Nordic contexts that could have an effect in attitudes towards work and thus affect the conceptualisation of the Finnish concept of workability in the UK context. The present chapter aims to talk about the workability concept and its dimensions in different contexts. A number of databases were used to identify relevant references to inform this chapter (see Appendix). There is limited research on workability and how this is experienced with a few exceptions (Boström et al., 2016; Stigmar, Ekdahl, & Grahn, 2012; Kjerstin Stigmar, Grahn, & Ekdahl, 2010). Even though the role of context for promoting good workability has been recognised (e.g., Boström et al., 2016; Tengland, 2011), research so far has been focused more on different age and occupational groups, than the national and sociocultural context, which the current research is looking into more in-depth and detail.

According to Gould et al., (2008), the definition of workability is changing following the changes in the society. There is no sole and unanimous definition of workability that all professionals would

agree to (Gould et al., 2008). That explains the existence of different models as shown further below. The concept of workability is a multifaceted one. It can be defined in various ways and from different perspectives. What workability can and should mean varies across different contexts and has been defined from a different perspective e.g. medicine and law (Boström, Holmgren, Sluiter, Hagberg, & Grimby-Ekman, 2016; Tengland, 2011). Workability can be defined depending on the point of view that is studied/considered such as occupational health (Ilmarinen, 2009), rehabilitation (Tengland, 2011). The more the workability and its dimensions are studied, the more its multidimensionality is revealed (Gould et al., 2008). As mentioned further above the definition of workability varies and it is based on the perspective that workability is studied such as unemployment, rehabilitation, occupational health care and others (Gould et al., 2008). According to Gould et al., (2008): "Workability is undeniably associated with almost all the factors that describe individual resources and worklife..." (p.15). This thesis draws on the holistic model of workability, which was developed in the context of occupational health and wellbeing and in an ageing context (Ilmarinen, 2001; Gould et al., 2008). Thus, it makes it more relevant to the focus of the thesis. This definition is concerned with worker's work performance during his/her lifetime taking into account the individual resources together with work demands (Ilmarinen et al.,

2015). The holistic model of workability is presented in more detail further in the sections below.

3.2 Workability

Several models have been proposed to understand the concept of workability:

3.2.1 Balance model

According to Gould et al., (2008) there are several models of workability. From the medical perspective workability is described by the balance model (Gould et al., 2008). The balance model is based on the strain-stress model of Rohmert & Rutenfranz (1983) in Gould et al., (2008) and focuses on achieving a balance between work strains and health, or coping at work. In other words, this model expresses the balance between the individual health resources and the work demands (Gerhardsson & Hagberg, 2014). According to Gould et al., (2008), an imbalance can be created by work-related factors, diseases and a number of different biomedical, physiological, psychosomatic factors. The level of an individual's strain can be either positive, or negative. It becomes positive, when the person's strain maintains and develops the individual's resources and negative, when it is responsible for the decline in individual's ability and wellbeing (Gould et al., 2008).

The balance model is quite popular among professionals in framing occupational workability or disability (Gould et al., 2008).

3.2.2 Multidimensional model of workability

One of the multidimensional models of workability in the context of rehabilitation has been introduced by the Rehabilitation Foundation in Finland (Järvikoski et al., 2001 in Gould et al., 2008). Rehabilitation is concerned with the improvement of workability and functional capacity (Kuoppala & Lamminpää, 2008). This model consists of "coping at work, having control over one's work and participating in the work community", as important dimensions of workability (three-dimension model) Gould et al., (2008, p.16). Similarly, to the balance model of workability, the dimensions are concerned with the relationship between personal and work resources. However, it takes into account the contexts in which the decisions about work, work organisation and equipment are taking place. The dimensions of this model are concerned with physical and mental ability to endure work demands, several occupational and general skills in work-life. The way the workability is defined here is concerned with individuals' work, functional environment and work community (Gould et al., 2008). The above mentioned three dimensions of workability (coping, control and participation) are in constant interaction; that means that any problems

associated with coping at work may be seen as problems in controlling work processes or strong need for participation (Gould et al., 2008). According to Gould et al., (2008), "The multidimensional model attempts to emphasise a broad interpretation of coping and surviving at work and takes into consideration the potentials of the work organization in solving individuals' problems" (p. 18).

3.2.3 The holistic multidimensional model of workability

The holistic model of workability was introduced by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health in an ageing context (Ilmarinen, 2001). Its initial definition is concerned with worker's work performance during his/her lifetime taking into account the individual health and mental resources together with work demands (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). Even though this definition is widely accepted, it does not explicitly reflect the underlying dimensions of workability (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). Similarly, the present model aims to balance the individual resources with work demands during the working life. The individual resources include the health and functional capacities, competence, values/motivation/attitudes to work and the work factor including work demands, work community and management and work environment) (Ilmarinen, 2001). However, the holistic model of

workability considers any external to the work factors such as relatives, family, and the wider external environment i.e., national policies and regulations that may have an impact on individual's work capacity (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). Workability aims ultimately to enhance the quality of work through better physical and mental health through the improvement in the working and home environment for achieving enhanced productivity and quality of working life (Maltby, 2011).

Workability is often illustrated/visualised as a "four-floor house" in constant interaction with the social external environment (e.g., family, relatives, social infrastructure such as occupational health policies) (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). This is the model that is well-established in the relevant research and considers the multidimensionality (underlying dimensions) of the workability concept (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). The first floor represents the health resources as its foundation which means that the better the health, the better the workability. The second floor represents the competence including knowledge and skills and their continuous improvement through life-long learning and development. The third floor is concerned with the values/attitudes/motivation towards work that very much lies on the living experiences at work; when these are good it is highly likely the individual to have positive attitude to work. Finally, the fourth floor represents all

aspects of work (e.g., work community, work environment). The fourth floor is considered to be the heaviest one; if the individual resources are in balance with the work floor then the workability is good (Ilmarinen, Ilmarinen, Huuhtanen, Louhevaara, & Näsman, 2015). Workability helps the employers to adjust work as well as improving their health, skills, and knowledge for performing at work (e.g., Tuomi, Vanhala, Nykyri & Janhonen, 2004).

The workability model is a dynamic process which subjects to changes (both positive and negatives) during the individual's working life (Ilmarinen, 2001). An example of these changes is the ageing-related ones. Workability tends to decline with age because of the difficulties in adjusting the changes in the work to the changes in individual resources (Ilmarinen, 2012; van den Berg, Elders, de Zwart, & Burdorf, 2009). This may lie on the fact that the ageing process does not follow the same pattern as the working life (Ilmarinen, 2012).

The starting point to understand how the workability concept is framed is to go through its core dimensions and how these are defined: 1) health and functional capacities, 2) competence, 3) motivation/attitudes and 4) work context (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). This thesis draws on the holistic model of workability, which was developed in the context of occupational health and wellbeing and

in an ageing context (Ilmarinen, 2001; Gould et al., 2008). Thus, it makes it more relevant to the focus of the thesis. Detailed description why Ilmarinen's framework is best suited for this research is explicitly presented in section 3.5.

3.2.4 Health and functional capacities

Health and functional capacities as mentioned above are the foundation of the workability model (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). Even though health is not in general considered sufficient to have workability, it is important to have some degree of it in order to perform at work; the degree very much depends on the occupational context and type of job (Tengland, 2011). Furthermore, it has been shown that even though the workability estimate was strongly related to perceived health, this is not the same thing. Common chronic diseases (e.g. cardiovascular ones) and mental disorders are associated with reduced workability (Koskinen, Martelin, Päivi, & Gould, 2008). Good health is believed to be supported by personal lifestyles (including regular physical exercise, body mass index, alcohol consumption, smoking) but also good practice of occupational health services (Public Health Agency, 2017). Since ageing is associated with changes in health and functional capacities (Ilmarinen, 2001), health adjustments to work appear to be of growing interest and concern.

Health and wellbeing can be defined by physical, mental, psychological and emotional perspective (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Employees' health and wellbeing status can have an impact on individual performance and productivity. There is a number of factors that could affect employees' health and wellbeing ranging from the physiological (e.g., ergonomics) to psychological and emotional (e.g. due to the bad relationship with subordinates and supervisors) (Cooper & Catwright, 1994 in Danna & Griffin, 1999). However, not only work-related factors (e.g. work stress) can influence the employees' health and wellbeing status but also non-work ones (e.g. everyday stress due to financial, family status etc.)(Danna & Griffin, 1999). It is believed that there is an overlap between work and non-work factors that can severely affect the quality of working life as well as the work-life balance moving towards both directions (Kilitzman, House, Israel, & Mero, 1990). Health on the other hand, is considered as a component of the overall wellbeing and is concerned with mental, psychological, physical health (Danna & Griffin, 1999). It is concerned with the physiological and psychological factors as originally defined in the medical context; thus, it is understood that these can be conceptualised in a similar way in the organisational context as well (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Thus, wellbeing takes into account not only the physiological and psychological factors of *health*, but

also other aspects of work-life experiences (Danna & Griffin, 1999). The antecedents of health and wellbeing at work lie on 1) work-setting (i.e., health and safety hazards), 2) personality traits (e.g. locus of control), and 3) organisational stress (e.g. factors intrinsic to the job, role in the organisation, relationships at work) (Danna & Griffin, 1999). These factors are believed to be associated with interrelated consequences on individual and organisational level; for example, factors that can affect employee health and wellbeing may result in increased levels of absenteeism and reduced productivity (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Thus, it is understood that health and wellbeing as individual resources are vital and with consequences for both employees and organisations.

3.2.5 Competence

Another dimension of workability is the competence, or in other words skills and knowledge. It goes beyond the basic abilities and may need training and education to acquire it (Tengland, 2011). Nowadays, developing competence at work is becoming quite important (Sandberg, 2000) and relates to individual's ability to perform at work or work performance for meeting the employment standards (Knasel & Meed, 1994 in Le Deist & Winterton, 2005).

Competence has been based initially on the dimensions of the rationalistic research tradition (“work-oriented, worker-oriented and multimethod oriented”) (Sandberg, 1994 in Sandberg, 2000, p.10). In the worker-oriented approach, competence is part of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal traits (Veres et al., 1990 in Sandberg, 2000). In the work-oriented approach, competence is seen as part of set of attributes that are important for meeting the demands of work tasks; in this approach identifying these attributes comes first to be ultimately embodied with the individual personal traits (Sandberg, 2000). On the other hand, the multimethod oriented approach can be seen as a combination of the above two, as a way to address any weaknesses that might be raised of the adoption of either of the work and worker-orientated approaches (Sandberg, 2000). As a response to the rationalistic approach towards competence, the interpretive approach considers competence as part of where worker and work are seen as one entity (e.g., Sandberg, 2000). The term competence or competency when referred to occupational competence is an individual characteristic that is concerned with high job performance (Boam & Sparrow, 1992; Smith, 1993). To date there have been several interpretations and understandings of the competence term e.g. (Mansfield, 2004). The understanding and definition of competence may differ across different cultural as well as workplace contexts (Cseh, 2003).

In the context of occupational competence, Tengland (2011) stresses that it is equally important not only to know how to do the job, but also to have the skill or the dexterity to do the job. Thus, he concludes that competence is necessary in order to have workability. Specifically, in information intense jobs, knowledge and expertise are important part of workability and can have a significant effect on it (Sainio, Koskinen, Martelin, & Gould, 2008). Research has shown that good expertise is related to good workability and is quite important when there are not any negative effects caused by diseases (Sainio, Koskinen et al., 2008). However, while the meanings of knowledge, expertise and competence are interrelated, competence tends to be used more often on the organisational context (Lindgren & Stenmark, 2002).

3.2.6 Motivation/attitudes towards work

According to Ilmarinen (2001), motivation is important for having workability. Based on the workability house, the motivation and attitudes towards work play an important role in the way work is experienced and perceived, while functional capacities and competence are an indispensable part of them (Gould & Polvinen, 2008). Research has shown that workability and attitudes towards work are related for example, to burnout, but also to work

engagement (Gould & Polvinen, 2008). Positive attitudes towards work/motivation may indicate willingness to extend working life (Wainwright et al., 2019).

There is inconclusive research evidence though as to what motivates people to work (Amabile, 1997; Sternberg & Lubart, 1998). Studies have shown that active encouragement; job control; provision of learning opportunities; career development with job rotation and supportive climate among co-workers are among the beneficial effects of intrinsic motivation (Zhou, Zhang, & Montoro-Sánchez, 2011).

In an ageing context more specifically research has shown that motivation also changes with age (Kooij et al., 2008), which subsequently may affect individual's workability. Studies have shown that employees place value at work for several reasons such as intrinsic interest, ability to use their knowledge and skills, but also on financial needs and security (Matthew Flynn & McNair, 2005; Smeaton, Vegeris, & Sahin-Dikmen, 2009), although older workers may not be as greatly motivated by money as other things (Maltby, 2011). In addition to this, it has been suggested that intrinsic motivation can explain why older workers may not consider certain work demands as stressful as their younger colleagues resulting in better psychological wellbeing (Kooij, De

Lange, Jansen, Kanfer, & Dikkers, 2011). Factors such as the opportunities for training and development, meaningful work and sense of influence can reduce workers' intention to retire (Ilmarinen, Tuomi, & Seitsamo, 2005).

3.2.7 Work context

Work is concerned with work environment, working conditions, organisation of work (e.g., work demands and resources), work community, and workplace/management practices as well as the work culture that can affect individual's workability (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). The work environment encompasses the organisational, physical (e.g. ergonomics, physically demanding work tasks) and psychosocial aspects of work where the person performs at work (Voss, Floderus, & Diderichsen, 2001). Workplace psychosocial work factors may include social support and job control that have been shown to relate to employee health (Dorman & Zapf, 1999; Kivimaki et al., 1997; Piko, 2003).

In relation to environmental physical factors and work demands, research has shown that poor work postures, dissatisfaction with tools and rooms, tense work environment, poor work conditions are associated with poor workability (Tuomi, Huuhtanen, Nykyri, & Ilmarinen, 2001). When the work demands are perceived as a

challenging task, this can positively affect employees' wellbeing; on the other hand, when they are negatively perceived can result in lower job satisfaction and increased rates of turnover (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling, & Boudreau, 2000). With regards to work organisation and work community, factors such as uninspiring and monotonous work, poor management, lack of freedom, degree of job autonomy, dissatisfaction with the work system, job role ambiguity are associated with poor workability (e.g., Tuomi et al, 2001). Ultimately, work dimension is concerned with the design and creation of supportive workplaces that can enable employees to perform at work in a productive and meaningful way, but also with supportive HR management practices and leadership in developing and organising work according to workers' needs.

Leaders can play an important role in the work-related health of their employees by for example easing the influence of job-related demands such as work load, physical and emotional demands (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005). Research has shown that the perceived behaviour of supervisors can influence employee psychological wellbeing (Gilbreath & Benson, 2004), health (e.g. Stout, 1984 in Gilbreath and Benson) and workability (Söderbacka, Nyholm & Fagerström, 2020). While, workability is affected by the multifaceted influence of the individual, organisational and societal

factors that can have an impact on employees' health, leadership may have a determining role in controlling factors that are beyond individual's control (Shain & Kramer, 2004). Thus, it is understood that managers and leaders can play a vital role in organising and synthesising the "fourth floor" in turn affecting employees' workability (Ilmarinen, 2005; Kaija Tuomi, Ilmarinen, Martikainen, Aalto, & Klockars, 1997) through the adoption and implementation of a number of supportive workplace practices.

3.3 Assessment/measurement of workability

The quantitative assessment and measurement of workability is conducted through a self-assessment tool the Workability Index (WAI) which has been validated across different populations over long periods of time (e.g. 30 years) (Maltby, 2010). The WAI has been used to predict future levels of mental wellbeing, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion (Ilmarinen, 2005). However, it is noteworthy to say that the diversity in defining workability as seen far above may be of a challenge in terms of its measurement and evaluation. Despite this, the WAI is considered to be a reliable and validated measure that has reliably predicted disability, retirement and mortality (Ilmarinen, Tuomi & Past, 2004 in Ilmarinen, 2007). Workability score (WAS) has been also used in research as a single item of workability measure, exhibiting high

convergent validity with the rest of WAI items (Ahlstrom, Grimby-Ekman, Hagberg, & Dellve, 2010; Fassi et al., 2013).

Ilmarinen et al., (2015) introduced the WA-PR (Workability-Personal Radar) as an approach to self-assess the subjective experiences of individual resources and work demands based on the multidimensionality of workability house. This tool aims to address the challenges emerging from the overemphasis of health-related factors at WAI at the expense of other ones (Ilmarinen et al., 2015).

On the other hand, Tengland (2012) introduced a qualitative questionnaire following analytical and deductive methods to assess individual workability to map the reasons why the person cannot work and reach possible measures to help him/her to return to work. However, the questionnaire is theoretically based and empirical work to test still needed (Tengland, 2012).

3.4 Workability in different contexts

Having defined the dimensions of workability, it is understood that it is not only concerned with the need for the development of healthy and safe workplaces, but also with organising work to promote health, productivity and employees' wellbeing taking into

account employee's motivation and work competence. But, as mentioned above workability varies when looking from different countries/contexts. This is explored further below with reference to UK and Nordic contexts.

Health

United Kingdom

From the UK perspective, while the concept of workability is referenced in the UK government reports as seen earlier it seems that it has not been integrated in the UK occupational health and management practice. Specifically, issues about health and wellbeing in the UK are considered more as personal ones than up to the employer's responsibility and discretion; this is not the case in the Nordic countries (Maltby, 2010).

Nordic Countries

In Finland and Norway specifically on the other hand, workability is part of occupational health legislation adopting a "social model" based upon meaningful working lives (Maltby, 2011; Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2021), going beyond the traditional medical aspect of occupational health as applied in the UK under

specific conditions (Maltby, 2010). In the Nordic context for example occupational health is synonymous with the promotion and safeguarding of employee's workability as part of employer's responsibility (Foldspang et al., 2011). In the Nordic countries, health and wellbeing can lead to increased labour performance and supply through lower rates of absenteeism and later retirement (Foldspang et al., 2011). Specifically, work wellbeing appears to be associated with healthy workplaces and synonymous with the promotion of workability (in Finland) (Foldspang et al., 2011)

Competence

United Kingdom

In terms of competence, in the UK the definition of occupational competence has been much more concerned with the functional aspect of it and specifically the ability to address the job requirements in the workplace and *work performance* (Knasel & Meed, 1994 in Winterton, 2009). According to the definition of the Manpower Services Commission (1986) in Le Deist & Winterton (2005), competence was defined as the ability to address the requirements of a job in accordance with the employment standards. The competency framework used and applied in the UK has become wider emphasising more on knowledge and behaviours

than on functional aspect of occupation (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005).

Nordic countries

As seen further above, when exploring the dimensions of workability model, competence is concerned with skills and knowledge and is often related to training and education required to perform the job. The UK competence-based approach has influenced other countries as well such as Finland (Winterton, 2009). Even though this has been the case and the last few years the role of competence and skills is becoming increasingly important in the UK, Payne and Keep (2003) suggest that there are lessons to be learnt from the workplace development in the Nordic countries (Payne & Keep, 2003).

Work attitudes

UK and the Nordic countries exhibit contextual differences on economic, sociodemographic, and cultural level that have influenced the attitudes towards work. The main differences as emerged from the differences in timing and the way UK and the Nordic countries responded to social, technological, political, and structural changes over the time are mainly found in terms of the

role of trade unions, social partnership, different policy regimes, different work culture and employee participation (Payne and Keep, 2003).

United Kingdom

Specifically, in the UK work is a priority (Maltby, 2010) and valued as economically good for individuals, state, and society (Maltby, 2011). Further to this, evidence has shown that the employees in the UK might be more motivated to work longer hours when it comes to a financial bonus or promotion (Cousins & Tang, 2004) even though they experience higher levels of stress than the employees in the Nordic countries (Eurofound, 2012).

Nordic countries

in the Nordic countries health and wellbeing are synonymous with quality of work as well as employee performance and productivity (Maltby, 2011). In the Nordic countries, there is a lot of emphasis in employees' health and wellbeing; the employers are obliged by relevant regulation to provide occupational health service to all employees (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2021).

Work context

United Kingdom

In terms of work and work culture, the UK is characterised by high degree of individualism and a more contractual relationship between employee and employer. This has been discussed in Chapter 2.

Nordic countries

The Nordic countries adopt a more collective approach than the UK, including a mix of workplace norms and attitudes as well as social processes that take place in the work environment and influence employees' perceptions and experiences of work (Sakvik et al., 2013). The term of workplace norms involves shared patterns of behaviours, attitudes and values that are embedded in the way employees interact and operate at work in the workplace (Sakvik et al., 2013). They are considered to play an important role in determining the work and organisational context; this in turn is difficult to measure and consider due to its multifaceted nature, but it can influence organisational behaviour (Johns, 2006). The social processes and relations that go beyond the social support, are believed to greatly influence employees' psychological

adaptation to the job and work requirements (Saksvik, Hammer, & Nytrø, 2013).

Taking into account the contextual differences between the Nordic countries and the UK that may have an impact on the attitudes towards work, it is suggested that this may affect the way the concept of workability could be understood in the UK. Thus, it is important to acknowledge possible limitations when workability is examined in a different country and context. It is open to question whether and how this can be understood in a context with different characteristics such as labour market, approach towards work etc. It is important to mention that workability and how it is measured has received some critique. In terms of, for example, the use of WAI for monitoring and measuring workability this differs even between the Nordic countries despite the Nordic origin of workability concept. This is attributed to a number of contextual reasons. In Norway for example, "several of the more high-profiled researchers in the field of ageing studies critique the questions in WAI for having an age bias. This is one reason many researchers avoid this instrument (confidential correspondence). Another reason is more political. The Norwegian Centre for Senior Policy is central in the field of active ageing. They support research, commission research and spread information about active ageing with the support of the government and social partners. Their

perspective on active ageing focuses on the resources of older workers (competence, experience, maturity), not their deficiencies (confidential correspondence). The more “diagnostic” and deficiency perspective of the WAI is seen as confirming negative stereotypes of older workers... As they oppose this perspective, they have not supported research on workability using the WAI” (confidential correspondence). Permission to use information from this email correspondence anonymously has been granted by the relevant correspondent. This has been also supported (Salomon, 2012), who stressed the fact that despite the positive intention of Ilmarinen as far as the workability and WAI are concerned, the underlying assumption that older workers’ work capacity is reduced is considered to be problematic. The Norwegian perspective tends to disagree with Ilmarinen’s thinking considering older workers more as an asset and resource (Salomon, 2012). Even though workability has been applied in different contexts (Chung et al., 2015; Zaniboni, 2015) offering research evidence as to its potential benefits, it is open to question whether the research output can be affected by the contextual differences.

3.5 The conceptual framework of the holistic model of workability and this research

As mentioned further above the current thesis draws on the holistic model of workability (“four-floor house”) owing to its relevance to occupational health and ageing workforce context. The thesis aims to 1) identify the HR practices around workability (first research question) 2) understand how workability is conceptualised in the UK (second research question); 3) How HR practices impact on workability (third research question). The first and the second research questions are addressed through the qualitative study (interviews with managers and focus groups with employees). The third research question is addressed through the quantitative study (two-wave survey administered to employees in the same organisations in the UK). In line with the holistic model of workability and for the purposes of the studies in this thesis, workability is explored in terms of work performance, health, and wellbeing (first and second floor) and motivation at work (third floor) and the HR practices that reflect the fourth floor in the workability house.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to develop an understanding the concept of workability. This research is focusing on the Finnish Occupational Health perspective which is relevant to the thesis. Further to this, the present chapter explored the dimensions of workability house (i.e., health, competence, motivation, and work) and how these are framed. These were explored context-wise with reference to the UK and the Nordic countries. As seen in Chapter 2, the attitudes towards work and thus workability have been shaped by a combination of contextual factors for many years now. How workability could be achieved, understood, and conceptualised may differ based on the context. Workplace practices are seen as increasingly important for achieving good workability in the face of ageing-related challenges and the extension of working lives (Pak et. al, 2020). The next chapter will review the literature on HR practices in relation to workability and ageing.

4 Workability, ageing and HR practices

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter aims to review the literature on HR practices in relation to workability and ageing. As seen in the previous chapter workability tends to be affected by age because of the difficulties in adjusting the changes in the work to the changes in individual resources (Ilmarinen, 2012). Through the use of appropriate HR practices, the organisations can support employees' workability in the face of ageing related challenges. A number of databases were used to identify relevant references to inform this chapter (see Appendix).

4.2 Older worker

There is no consensus as to the definition of an *older worker* (Mccarthy, Heraty, Cross, & Cleveland, 2014). According to Ilmarinen (2001), the ages of 45-50 have been set as cut-off points for older workers when major changes in their functional capacity are noticed. From workability perspective the cut-off point has been set at 55 years old due to the low participation rates of workers 55 and over and their early exit from the labour market (Ilmarinen, 2005). Schultz and Adams (2007) have suggested age

needs to be addressed as a factor that is continuously changing; this would help to focus on the ageing as a continuous process (in Peeter & Van Emmerik, 2008). In the UK, the cut-off point for defining an older worker is 50 years of age and over (gov.uk, 2021a). In the context of this thesis, an older worker is defined somebody that is at their 50s and over (as framed in the UK government reports).

4.3 Definition of ageing

There are scholars who have talked about several definition of ageing. Sterns & Doverspike (1989) in Kooij et al., (2008) talked about five conceptualisations of age aiming to contribute to the development of an understanding of age-related factors that may influence older workers' motivation at work.

Five conceptualisations of age:

1. Chronological age: This refers to the calendar age.
2. Functional or performance-based age. This refers to worker's performance recognising that different individuals have different and abilities at different ages. As an individual ages, changes in his health, physical and mental capacity can affect his/her job performance.

3. Psychosocial or subjective age. As mentioned above subjective age refers to individual's self-perception of age and is concerned with how old a person feels or to which age groups classifies himself/herself regardless of the calendar age (Barrett, 2005). Positive self-perception of ageing can have a subsequent positive impact on improving self-esteem, wellbeing as well as biological and physiological capacity (Kleinspehn-Ammerlahn, Kotter-Grühn, & Smith, 2008).
4. Organisational age. "This refers to the aging of individuals in jobs and organisations." (Kooij et al., 2008, p. 366). This type of age is concerned with organisational tenure but also may refer to career stages, skills, and age norms within the organisation (Kooij, Lange, Jansen, & Dikkers, 2008).
5. Lifespan concept of age. This type of age borrows from the above types but is also concerned with the possibility of behavioural change (e.g. life or career changes) during the life course emerging from career or life stages (De Lange et al., 2006).

There are also additional conceptualisations of age that have been mentioned in the literature. Kastenbaum et al., (1972) also talked about social, or interpersonal age which refers to individual's age as rated by others on one-time, situational or for extended period of time basis (Kastenbaum, Derbin, Sabatini, & Artt, 1972).

Another conceptualisation of age is the perceived relative age which refers to the individual's age in comparison to the group (Lawrence, 1984). Cleveland & Shore (1992) suggested the person-orientated age measures which are related to perceptions of self and include chronological, subjective and functional age; and the context-orientated age measures which are related to comparison with other individuals within the group and immediate context and include organisational age and social age (Cleveland & Shore, 1992).

Despite the fact that different conceptualisations of age have been suggested it is still not certain who is an older worker (Peeters & Van Emmerik, 2008). This is because aging is a multifaceted process which is difficult to measure and capture with a single chronological scale (Cleveland & Lim, 2007 in Peeters & Van Emmerik, 2008). People with the same calendar age may differ in biological, psychological, and social functioning (Cleveland & Lim, 2007 in Peeters & Van Emmerik, 2008). Examining the moderating role of age in the context of career stage, it was found that the association between training and affective commitment was stronger for over workers over 41 (Conway, 2004). Finegold, Mohrman & Spreitzer (2002) operationalised age in the context of life stage; they found that job security was more important to older workers, whereas salary and opportunities for development

were more important to younger workers (Finegold, Mohrman, Spreitzer, 2002). Kooij et al., (2010), operationalised age as a continuous variable to develop an understanding how the associations between HR practices, affective commitment and job satisfaction change with age. They suggested the use of specific HR practices for older workers. However, “there seems to be more variation within rather than between age groups in perceptions of ageing...” (Gkiontsi & Karanika-Murray, 2016, p.28). That means that the extent to which older and younger workers may differ when it comes to work motives might have been overemphasised; thus, having tailored HR practices based on the sole distinction between younger and older workers based on their chronological age might not be relevant in practice (Gkiontsi & Karanika-Murray, 2016). Hence, in this thesis it is suggested taking an inclusive approach when it comes to age (also see section 4.3).

4.4 Changes with ageing

Health and its associated changes with ageing are often discussed in terms of physical, mental, biological, psychological and social functioning across an individual’s life course (Ilmarinen, 2001; Settersten & Mayer, 1997; Sterns & Miklos, 1995). As Sterns & Miklos (1995) stated, biological age is defined as “an individual’s position relative to his/her potential life span” (p. 248). On the

other hand, psychological age could be defined as an individual's ability to adapt his/her behaviour according to the changes in the environment whereas, social age is concerned with the norms attributed to an individual with reference to the culture or society (Sterns & Miklos, 1995). Physical is associated with individual's physical capacity, and it can be looked after through for example exercise and healthy eating habits (NHS, 2021). According to World Health Organisation (WHO), "mental health is a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community"(gov.uk, 2019a).

Next the major developmental changes in individual's health in terms of physical and mental capacity will be discussed; these are strongly associated to individuals' workability (Gamperiene, Nygård, Sandanger, Lau, & Bruusgaard, 2008).

4.5 Physical capacity

Physical capacity is concerned with aerobic capacity or muscle strength and can be influenced by factors such as anthropometrics, flexibility and neural function (Savinainen, Nygard, & Ilmarinen, 2004). Genetic-related factors or medical conditions can have an

impact on individual's physical ability (Peeter & Van Emmerik, 2008). Physical ability can also decline with age (Ilmarinen, 2001). Dimensions of physical ability that tend to be affected with age are the sensory function, motor and cardiorespiratory function (Robertson & Tracy, 1998). The sensory function includes the auditory and visual senses which tend to decline as individual ages; the motor function is concerned with function of muscle movement and actions (Coates & Kirkby, 1982 in Robertson & Tracy, 1998). As far as cardiorespiratory function is concerned, this is considered to work as an indication of physiological fitness (Robertson & Tracy, 1998). Ageing has been associated with breathing problems and decline in heart rate (Jex et al., 2007 in Peeters & Van Emmerik, 2008), which can have an accumulated effect on the individual's physical capacity as the participant grows older.

The above-mentioned changes in individual's physical capacity with age become increasingly important in the context of the workplace in terms of older workers' health and performance at work and subsequently in terms of work organisation and Job Design. According to Ilmarinen (2001), the changes in physical capacity with ageing are not easily distinguishable because both work and living conditions can affect these changes. In the workplace context, the findings of a longitudinal study on studying changes in

musculoskeletal and cardiovascular capacity among older employees in relation to workload and demands showed that employees with low work demands had better physical ability than the employees with high work demands (Savinainen et al., 2004). On the other hand, jobs that are designed with an emphasis on social and cognitive skills/characteristics of the individual are less affected by a decline in physical ability (Peeter & van Emmerik, 2008). That means that cognitive work will be affected by cognitive declines, whereas manual work will be affected by decline in physical ability. However, according to Sterns & Miklos (1995), in the context of ageing and physical capacity, it is important to bear in mind the variations and differences in individuals' ability and the characteristics of the job tasks.

4.6 Mental capacity

As with physical capacities, there is a decline in cognitive/mental capacities as an individual ages (Tranel, Benton, & Olson, 1997). The term of mental capacity is associated with cognitive and intellectual abilities such as learning and perception as well as the tasks that require mental effort or are related to aspects of mental health (Ilmarinen, 2001). There are two types of cognitive abilities (e.g., Salthouse, 1985 in Mazzonna & Peracchi, 2012); the first type involves the "fluid intelligence" and is mainly concerned with

abilities of processing information and the second type involves “crystallised intelligence” which is concerned with knowledge acquired through education and life experiences (Mazzonna & Peracchi, 2012, p. 691). Fluid intelligence tends to decrease with age, whereas, crystallised intelligence tends to be maintained with age (Mazzonna & Peracchi, 2012). Further to this, while there is not strong age-related decline in some mental functions such as general knowledge and numerical skills, there are cognitive abilities such as processing speed and reasoning that are influenced as age increases (Deary et al., 2009). This has been supported by the meta-analysis of Verhaegen and Salthouse (1997), who concluded that cognitive abilities such as reasoning, speed, episodic memory decline significantly after the age of 50 (however, sizable relations were apparent in age groups under and over 50s)(Verhaeghen & Salthouse, 1997). These are important for carrying out daily activities (Deary et al., 2009). On the other hand, it has been shown that some individuals that have been classified as “older” (65 years old and over) exhibited good levels of mental function such as perception, decision-making, language and intellect (Tranel et al., 1997). The study of Salthouse (2009) indicated that age-related decline may be evident on healthy adults of 20s and 30s. Thus, the jury is still out about when the decline in cognitive ability begins (Salthouse, 2009). As Mazzonna & Peracchi (2009) argued, the cognitive ageing is quite complex and not very

well understood yet. Moreover, it has been argued that cognitive performance can be subject to a number of factors genetic-related (Deary, Wright, Harris, Whalley, & Starr, 2004) and life experiences; these factors can affect the impact and the rate of the age-related decline (Stern, 2002).

In the work context, it is understood that the changes in mental/cognitive capacity associated with ageing can affect older workers' work performance, health, and wellbeing for certain types of work tasks (e.g., Truxillo et al., 2012). However, according to Ilmarinen (2001) the high levels of motivation and work/job experience of ageing workers can compensate for a possible loss/decline in the cognitive abilities. Similarly, age is not the best criterion in determining an individual's cognitive ability for a specific job task and any assessment of it, needs to be job-specific (Sterns & Miklos, 1995).

Owing to the issues associated with ageing (with regards to the physical and mental capacity) it is expected that older workers are more likely to have health issues at work. However, it is possible factors other than age may be responsible for the differences between younger and older workers (Pransky, Benjamin, Savageau, Currivan, & Fletcher, 2005). For example, factors such as job satisfaction, severity of work-related injury or injury

employer response may have a greater impact on one's capacity to work after a work-related injury than the individual's age (Pransky et al., 2005). Other factors that can impact on one's capacity to work other than age are: heavy lifting, psychosocial factors (such as low control and autonomy over the pace of work) and safety norms and culture (Hanvold et al., 2019). A study showed that young workers were more likely to report sickness absence even though their health was reported as better than the older ones that were engaged in physical work (Taimela et al., 2007). Also, the findings of Breslin's & Smith's (2005) study acknowledging the difference in job types, showed that workers below 35 years old (especially males) noted higher risk of work injury than those that were 35-64 years old (as studied in a population based sample of Canadian workers) (Breslin & Smith, 2005). Further to the latter study, it was found that younger workers have more traumatic injuries and not as many musculoskeletal injuries as the older ones (Breslin & Smith, 2005). Thus, individuals' physical and mental capacity to perform at work could be influenced by several contextual factors other than the age itself.

4.7 Work-related factors

Studies have shown that apart from the physical and mental capacity and health there are other psychosocial factors that can

impact on individuals' workability as the participant ages such (Gamperiene et al., 2008). These could include factors such as Job Design (e.g. Truxillo et al., 2012) and the psychosocial work environment (Smyer & Pitt-Catsouphes, 2007). Job Design is a multifaceted factor that is concerned with several aspects of work (e.g. job satisfaction, work engagement, job performance) that can shape employees' experience in the workplace (Truxillo, Cadiz, Rineer, Zaniboni, & Fraccaroli, 2012). Research has shown that meaningful jobs as well as social characteristics of work (e.g. social support) tend to be beneficial for workers as they age (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004; Truxillo et al., 2012). Further to this, work-related factors such as autonomy, job satisfaction, social support and physical demands of the job can have an impact on productivity outcomes (Geuskens, Hengel, Koppes, & Ybema, 2012; Hoogendoorn et al., 2002; Johansson & Lundberg, 2004; van den Berg et al., 2009) as well as on workability (e.g. Alavinia et al., 2007, Tuomi et al., 1997; 2001). More recently, research showed that lower autonomy and higher job demands tend to increase the relationship between a number of chronic health problems (e.g. musculoskeletal, psychological problems) and sickness absence (Leijten et al., 2013).

Another factor that can have an impact on older workers is linked to leadership behaviour. Researchers have highlighted the

importance of leaders' role in motivating, engaging older workers (Stanley, 2010) as well as preventing them from getting an early retirement (van den Berg, Robroek, Plat, Koopmanschap, & Burdorf, 2011). On the other hand, poor leadership appears to be one of the major factors caused for early retirement (Näsman, 2011 in Arshadi & Zare, 2015).

In the context of demographic changes in the workforce structure due to the increasingly ageing population, research has shown that this has brought a reversal in the roles in the workplace contradicting some of the established age norms i.e. the managers are traditionally older than the subordinates (Collins, Hair, & Rocco, 2009); relevant studies showed that this could potentially affect the relationship between managers and subordinates with a subsequent impact on the performance of both of them (e.g. Eden, 1984 in Collins, Hair & Rocco, 2009).

4.8 Changes in goals and motives

This is a very important age-related change. Further to the above, research has been focusing on how needs (including psychological and social needs), goals and motives can change with age (e.g., Kooij et al., 2013). Additionally, as workability is strongly affected by motivation and attitudes towards work it is worth discussing

how motives and goals in the workplace can change with age. Ebner, Freund and Baltes (2006) in their study found that older adults reported a stronger orientation towards maintenance and loss prevention in contrast to the younger adults who reported primary growth orientation in their goals; overall, the results of their study supported differences in goals orientation across different age groups as well as age-related differences in associations of goal orientation and satisfaction with the goal achievement (Ebner, Freund, & Baltes, 2006).

In the context of work, Rhodes (1983) introduced possible associations between age and work related motives and since then studies have focused on older workers' needs and motives in the general context of the psychology of ageing (Bal & Kooij, 2011; Innocenti, Profili, & Sammarra, 2013; Zacher & Kooij, 2014). Specifically, Kooij et al, (2011) in their meta-analysis found a significant positive association between age and intrinsic motives and on the other hand a significant negative relationship between age and strength of growth and extrinsic motives. Accumulated working experience may play an important role in the way work related needs and motivation are determined (Bonnet-Belfais, Cholat, Bouchard, & Goulfier, 2014).

4.9 HR practices and older workers' workability

Workplace or HR practices include those work practices that refer to how work is organised as well as to employment practices such recruitment, training and development of employees etc. (Boxall & Macky, 2009). HR policies refer to officially documented guidelines that may differ from the actual practices (Kooij et al., 2014). Owing to the age-related changes and the factors (as mentioned above) that could have an impact on older workers' work performance, motivation, health, and wellbeing and thus, workability, research has focused on identifying relevant to older workers HR practices as a response to the challenges generated in the context of managing the ageing workforce. Scholars have suggested the need for age-inclusive or age-diversity workplace practices, taking into account individuals' changes through the lifespan (Gkiontsi & Karanika-Murray, 2016; Sousa, Ramos & Carvalho, 2019). Based on the developmental perspective, the distinction between older and younger workers is not clear enough (Gkiontsi & Karanika-Murray, 2016). Having specific HR practices can raise questions as to their usability. HR management decisions that are based only on chronological criteria may introduce a sense of bias and inequality (Gkiontsi & Karanika-Murray, 2016). Though, a number of researchers (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011; Rau & Adams, 2005) have raised doubts as to whether universally

applied HR/workplace practices for managing and retaining older workers could be relevant to them. Further to this, many scholars have supported that as the individuals age, the more diverse they become; this is because of the differences in personalities, needs, motives and work-related behaviours (Bal & Jansen, 2015; Kooij, Jansen, Dijkers, & De Lange, 2014; Peeters & van Emmerik, 2008) suggesting a need for specific HR practices to older workers. However, evidence on HR practices that are tailored to older workers have given mixed results (Herrbach, Mignonac, Vandenberghe, & Negrini, 2009; Kooij et al., 2008; Kooij et al., 2014). Further to this, in the UK context an age-inclusive/aware culture is promoted for addressing the challenges associated with an increasing number of older workers (gov.uk, 2021). UK government provides guidance to employers as to what steps could be taken to support older workers' participation at work through workplace adjustments that have the potential to benefit all workers. By having specific policies and practices to older workers would be considered discrimination based on the Equality Act in the UK context (2010)(gov.uk, 2015b).

Next, published literature on HR practices and older workers' workability in terms of work performance, motivation, health, and wellbeing at work is reviewed.

Hedge (2008) using the term of "Alternative Work Arrangements" (p. 114) (such as flexible work scheduling, phased retirement, job transfer and special assignments, training, pay and benefits, investing in the older worker, career progression and career management) suggested that these could act as effective strategies to inform organisational structures, practices and policies that would be supportive of older workers' performance, work attitudes, motivation, and wellbeing at work (which are all important aspects of workability). In terms of job performance, the research of Hennekam & Herrbach (2013) found that the perceived HR practices such as Job Design, recognition and respect were positively associated with older workers' affective commitment to the organisation and perceived HR practices of respect and recognition were positively associated with performance at work (Hennekam & Herrbach, 2013). Studies on human resource management have shown a positive influence of HR practices on organisational performance and productivity (Huselid, 1995; Wright, Gardner, Moynihan, & Allen, 2005). For example, through a number of HR practices from recruitment to training, mentoring and acquisition of new skills can advance employees' performance and motivation resulting in enhanced organisational performance (Huselid, 1995). However, the focus has turned towards the processes that this could be achieved and specifically on the impact that HR practices can have on employee related

attitudes/behaviours and outcomes (Gardner, Moynihan, Park, & Wright, 2001; Tuomi, Vanhala, Nykyri, & Janhonen, 2004; Wright & Nishii, 2007).

In the context of what motivates older workers to remain active in the workplace and based on the five conceptualisations of age, Kooij et al., (2008) suggested that practices such as career development, Job Design and ergonomic adjustments could motivate older workers to work. Further to this, employees' perceptions of HR practices such as participation, flexible working, performance management, which are known as high commitment or high performance practices, are positively associated with work outcomes (Kooij, Jansen, Dikkers, & De Lange, 2010). High performance or high commitment HR practices are those that ensure that the employees have the abilities, the motivation to work and the opportunity to participate (Kehoe & Wright, 2013) and aim at generating increased commitment towards the organisation (Wood & Menezes, 1998). Further to this and based on later findings that work motives change with age (Kooij et al., 2011), and life span and self-regulation theories, Kooij et al., (2013) distinguished two bundles of HR practices: the development ones (training and development) and the maintenance ones (e.g., job security and flexible work hours). The development HR practices are those that help workers to function at high level,

whereas the maintenance practices are those that help workers to maintain current levels of performing at work. They found that the associations between development practices and wellbeing, and between maintenance practices and wellbeing become stronger as an individual ages (Kooij et al., 2013). Additionally, the links between development practices and employee performance become stronger with age. Further to their previous research findings, Kooij et al., (2014) distinguished two more additional bundles of practices: the utilisation HR practices (such as task enrichment) that help older workers to get back to previous functional capacity (utilise already existing individual resources); and the accommodative practices that help older workers to work at lower levels of job demands when recovery or maintenance are not possible. Further to the research on what motivates older workers at work, it was found that demographic factors such as gender, age and marital status can predict the extrinsic motive for continuing to work (Templer, Armstrong-Stassen, & Cattaneo, 2010). These findings offer theoretical and managerial implications in the management of older workers recognising on the one hand, individual differences among older workers and on the other, work factors relevant to older workers. However, there are multilevel contextual factors deriving from social, organisational and direct work environment that can impact on older workers' motivation to work and on HR policies/practices for older workers' retention

(Claes & Heymans, 2008). These factors could involve national context and legislation, labour market, industrial relations system, societal attitudes towards older workers, organisational culture (including values and norms) as well as organisational structure/governance. It was also suggested that older workers' motivation may change in a more multilevel way rather than age-related only (Stamov-Roßnagel & Hertel, 2010). For example, the task type might moderate the relationship between age and motivation in a way that a decline in individual resources of older workers for specific types of tasks, where older workers exhibit mastery and expertise, might not necessarily result in decline on their motivation levels (Stamov-Roßnagel & Hertel, 2010). Armstrong-Stassen (2008) examined the role of seven HR strategies (such as flexible working options, training, and development opportunities) in terms of how influential these are for older workers' decision to remain, or to return to the workforce. Her findings showed that recognition and respect, fair performance evaluation were most important for older workers' retention (Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2008). Additionally, HR practices such as employee appraisal, career management, new roles, communication, rewards, flexible working condition and retirement conditions, may reduce older workers' desire to retire early when their expectations of acquiring new skills and working in a pleasant environment are met (Saba & Guerin, 2005). Armstrong-Stassen's

& Ursel's (2009) examined training and development opportunities and flexible work options due to their significance for older workers and concluded that by providing challenging job tasks and training and development opportunities can contribute to the retention of older workers (through the mediating factors of perceived organisational support and career satisfaction). However, it was shown that the training and development practices are equally important for both older and younger workers (Pinto, Ramos, & Nunes, 2015). On the other hand, previous research has shown that access to training opportunities decreases as the employee ages (Lazazzara, Karpinska, & Henkens, 2013) and older workers may benefit more from flexible work arrangements than their younger counterparts (Pitt-Catsouphes & Matz-Costa, 2008). Furthermore, other scholars suggested that older workers may respond in different way to HR practices in comparison to younger workers. An example of this is the research of Innocenti et., (2013), who examined whether the effect of development HR practices on job satisfaction and affective commitment is moderated by age in the Italian organisational context; their findings showed that the development HR practices are associated with lower job satisfaction and affective commitment for the older workers.

As seen further above and in the ageing workforce context, the majority of the studies have focused on the relationship between HR practices and older workers' motivation, work performance (which are important aspects of workability) (e.g., Kooij et al., 2013; Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009), but less so on employee health outcomes and workability itself (with the exceptions of Tuomi et al., 2004; Pak et al., 2020). The latter is important taking into account the increasing interest in workplace health and wellbeing (gov.uk, 2021). Kooij et al., (2015) argued that it is inconclusive whether HR practices can positively affect older workers' motivation, health, and performance. Also, limited and inconsistent is the research on the role of age in the relationship between HR practices and employee health outcomes despite the fact that age is assumed to strengthen this relationship (Kooij et al., 2015).

Even though the Job Demands Resources (JDR) model of (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) for example, can offer the theoretical foundation in understanding the role of HR practices on influencing job demands (e.g. physical workload) and job resources (job autonomy and control) on employee health (it has been also used as equilibrium model to workability in the context of occupational health, Ilmarinen et al., 2015) the role of age in this relationship is still unexplored. According to this model,

job demands refer to tasks that can have an adverse impact on health, whereas the job resources are linked to motivational activity (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011); this model has been shown to predict burnout and work engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001).

In line with JDR model, research has shown that a job which is physically demanding can result in occupational injuries which is major risk for older workers who can experience losses in the physical abilities (Zwerling et al., 1996). Furthermore, the longitudinal study of Tuomi et al, (2004) showed that changes in organisational practices and work demands (physical and mental ones) can indeed affect employee wellbeing and workability. Hence HR practices can play a vital role in influencing positively workability.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter defined ageing at work, discussed the changes in individuals' capacities and changes as they get older and reviewed the literature on HR/workplace practices in relation to ageing and aspects of workability. It is argued that there is not much research on the role of HR practices for workability itself. The next chapter discusses the methodology used in this thesis.

5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an evaluation and a justification of the research methodology used in this thesis to address the research questions. A mixed-methods design was adopted for this thesis. The qualitative study includes focus groups with employees from two organisations in the UK and face-to-face interviews with managers employed at the same two organisations. The quantitative study includes a two-wave survey to employees of non-managerial position of the same two organisations in the UK at the same time. This method allows the exploration of different perspectives based on a combination of research approaches (qualitative, quantitative) (Johnson et al., 2007).

5.2 Research questions

The main aim of this thesis is to understand the HR practices around workability in the UK in the context of an ageing workforce with reference to two organisations in the UK. More specifically, this research aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are the HR practices that are relevant to workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK?

2. How is workability understood/conceptualised in the UK context?
3. How do HR practices impact on workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK?

To identify and understand the HR practices that are relevant to workability and how workability is understood/conceptualised in the UK context interviews with managers and focus groups with employees in two organisations in the UK were conducted. To examine the relationship between HR practices and workability in an ageing context, a two-wave survey administered to non-managerial employees in the above-mentioned organisations.

5.3 Epistemological framework

The research methodology defines the approach, the design, the procedure and analysis of a research study and is underpinned by the epistemological approach (Bryman, 2006). Epistemology is concerned with the theories of knowledge (Ejnavarzala 2019). According to Howe (1992), there are two main epistemological approaches: "positivism" which is the preferable paradigm for quantitative studies and "interpretivism" for qualitative studies. Even though these are viewed as different epistemological approaches, they can be both used by researchers complementing

each other (Newman & Benz, 1998). In the present thesis the research methodology was based on these approaches.

5.4 Ontological framework

Ontology refers to the essence and existence of the real world (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012) in various contexts such as political, cultural etc. (Ejnavarzala 2019). In terms of measurement, this can be done through qualitative and quantitative approach. In the qualitative approach, questions about the characteristics and attributes of the concept and its meaning are asked whereas, in the quantitative approach the focus lies on the “operationalisation” of the concept through numerical data (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012). According to Bollen (1989), the link between the concept and its characteristics is word related in the qualitative approach and it is more explanatory.

5.5 Mixed-methods research design

The main purpose of utilising and combining qualitative and quantitative research methods is to further support the research findings and conclusions (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Greene et al., (1989) has offered a list of reasons with regards to the use of mixed-methods design. These are: triangulation (i.e.,

interpretation via multiple perspectives); complementarity (i.e., supporting each other); development (i.e., how one approach contributes to the development of the other one); initiation (i.e., identifies contradictions or inconsistencies between the methods); expansion (i.e., widening the scope of the research). In addition to these Bryman (2006) has also provided the following: credibility (i.e., reliability of the research findings); context (i.e., provision of contextual understanding), illustration (i.e., qualitative method exemplifying quantitative findings); utility (i.e., strengthening the usefulness of research findings); confirm and discover (i.e., using quantitative research methods to test hypotheses that have been formulated through qualitative research methods); diversity of views (i.e., providing different perspectives). The mixed-methods design can take a concurrent or sequential approach (Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). In the sequential design, the researcher needs to evaluate which method needs to be conducted first, considering how and when as well as the combination of the research findings in order to address the research questions and objectives (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). In the present thesis, the researcher used mixed methods of qualitative research followed by survey. The sequential approach was used where the qualitative data were collected first to identify and understand the HR practices that are relevant to workability and how workability is understood/conceptualised in the UK context and then quantitative

data were collected to examine the relationship between HR practices and workability in an ageing context. A survey was used to collect data from employees in the two organisations in the UK. This methodology was important in order to provide statistical evidence for the tested hypotheses through the participation of a large number of employees at a specific time (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003).

5.6 Qualitative research method

The data for the qualitative study were collected via individual semi-structured interviews with HR, senior and line managers and focus groups with employees from two organisations in the UK. The semi-structure interviews were selected based on the reason that they are widely accepted as type of interviews in qualitative research (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Individual interviews enable the researcher to explore in-depth experiences and perceptions of the individual (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007). Semi-structured interviews allow some extent of flexibility in the discussion developed between the interviewee and the researcher (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Wengraf, 2001). The focus groups are used because they allow interaction and elicit discussions among group members (Powell & Single, 1996).

The selection of participant Organisations (A) and (B) was based on the organisational selection criteria as emerged from the literature review on the contextual differences between the UK and Nordic countries (Chapter 2). The non-for-profit community benefit type of organisation seemed to fit very well the Nordic model (collectivism); the Nordic model is characterised by democratic processes, less hierarchy and decentralised organisational structure, and strong participation. Community benefit organisations “generally operate under the principles of open and voluntary membership, and one member, one vote. These combine to ensure “democratic community control” (gov.uk, 2015a). Thus, one organisation would be community benefit type and the second any organisation in the UK that would fit the criteria for the UK model (individualism). The criteria for the latter one includes hierarchical organisation, weak participation and centralised organisational culture. The higher education institutions in the UK have adopted a hierarchical structure, a centralised organisational culture, providing less autonomy to the departments (Martin, 2016). Thus, a higher education institution is a good fit for the UK model as described above and fits the purposes of the study. Also, according to the Department for Work and Pensions (2015b), public sector organisations including the education industry have the highest numbers in ageing workers. This organisational selection lies on developing an understanding on workplace

practices that are relevant to older workers' workability based on two different types of organisations in the UK context that would bear the characteristics of the Nordic and UK model respectively.

5.7 Procedure and participants

The two organisations which were targeted and agreed to the project were a charitable organisation (A) that delivers cultural and learning services and higher education institution (B) in the UK. The selection criteria for those organisations are explicitly explained in section 5.6. Both the organisations were formally invited to take part in the project in March 2017. Following-up Organisation's A interest to be one of the participant organisations, a meeting was arranged with the workforce development (HR) manager to discuss the different stages of data collection and the relevant timetable. In addition, organisational documents were provided to the researcher by HR managers from both organisations in strict confidence as evidence of workplace policies (have not been used for the purposes of analyses). These included a detailed list of HR policies that were used from the organisations at the time of the research. This helped the researcher to develop an understanding of the HR policy context of the participant organisations.

In Organisation A the potential participants were invited to take part in the study via an invitation email sent by the gatekeeper, the HR manager. The invitation email included information about the research - (information sheets about the terms and conditions of employees' participation). In contact with the researcher, the focus groups and interviews were arranged to take place within a specified time framework between June-September 2017 at the organisation's premises. The initial plan as agreed between the HR manager and the researcher included 6 interviews with managers, 1 interview with 1 HR manager and 3 focus groups with 4-5 employees each to capture the diversity of perspectives of people working across different parts within the organisation. Due to unforeseen organisational circumstances such as staff unavailability, the initial time framework and arrangements had to change. The invitation email included information about the purpose of the study and how to participate. The interviews and the focus groups were carried out at the organisation's premises on a mutually agreed date and time. They were audio-recorded and lasted no more than an hour.

Similar protocol was implemented at Organisation B. The organisation confirmed its participation to the project in September 2017, following-up their discussions with the researcher and her supervisory team since May 2017. The potential participants were

invited to take part in the study via an invitation email sent by the researcher upon gatekeeper's agreement (member of senior management). The invitation email was of a similar content to the Organisation A. The individual interviews and focus groups took place on a mutually agreed date and time at the organisation's premises. The total number of 4 HR managers, 6 senior managers and 7 line managers were interviewed. The total number of focus groups conducted were 8, ranging from 2-5 employees each, including 27 employees in total working in a non-managerial post regardless of gender, age, or job role. No specific age demographic information was collected at this stage. The focus group participants included catering, academic and estates staff. The interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded and lasted no more than an hour. The focus groups in both organisations included a range of workers to make sure that all workplace practices that are offered to ageing workers are identified (Kooij et al., 2014).

5.8 Method of qualitative data analysis

In this thesis, thematic analysis was used to analyse the data from the qualitative study. Thematic analysis is concerned with identifying themes; it is largely used in qualitative research because it can capture complex meanings within the extracted

text; it can be used on exploring social and cultural situations, not limited to individual experiences (Guest, et. al., 2012). This method is suitable for identifying patterns within the transcript (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Workability has been characterised as a complex concept since it may vary across different contexts (Boström et al., 2016). The thematic analysis aims to capture aspects of the concept for understanding and promoting workability in the UK. This analytical method is considered to be very effective because it offers the benefits of a systematic analysis process of the content analysis, the analysis of frequency of codes as well as capturing subtle meanings within the text (Marks & Yardley, 2004). In contrast to content analysis which aims to examine the frequency and patterns of words used, thematic analysis aims to identify themes through a reflexive approach (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006). For all the above-mentioned reasons, thematic analysis is the appropriate method of analysis for the qualitative study in this thesis.

The interview recordings were transcribed either by the researcher or a transcription organisation which was recommended by the researcher's supervisor (in this case a confidentiality agreement was signed). Firstly, all responses were extracted to identify the workplace practices that are relevant to workability in an ageing

context in the UK and secondly to understand the conceptualisation of workability by applying thematic analysis and adopting an exploratory approach to the data. The themes were analysed at both semantic (what has been explicitly said by the participants) and latent level (underlying meanings) (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The transcriptions were read several times and an initial set of codes was developed to cluster words and meanings. This technique would prevent the researcher from ignoring subtle themes that would not be indicated or identified just by one to two words (e.g., HR practice) (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). A limitation of that is the various interpretations that could be given to code-meaning; this could compromise the reliability of the analysis. In order to address this, it is important to keep the codes as descriptive as possible (Guest et al., 2012); for example, things/practices/policies that organisations/managers do/use/have in place to support/affect workability. The thematic analysis was performed to the combined qualitative data from both organisations to identify the HR practices that are relevant to workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK from managers and employees' perspective. Also, to understand how employee workability is overall understood and conceptualised in the UK context.

5.9 Method of quantitative data analysis

Quantitative research methods can provide generalisable findings at studying large groups of individuals (Richard, Swanson & Holton, 2005). This thesis used correlational design which aims to investigate the associations and relationships between perceived HR practices and workability (Howitt & Cramer, 2017). In this thesis exploratory factor analysis was used to configure and explore the structure of the bundles of HR practices who were initially identified through the qualitative study. Exploratory factor analysis is a technique that is used to explore the dimensionality of a scale (de Winter, Dodou, & Wieringa, 2009). For the purposes of the study, exploratory factor analysis was performed for each of the organisations separately. The reason for keeping the data from the two organisations separate in this study lies on the subsequent quantitative assessment of organisational culture (individualistic/collectivistic) for each of the organisations which is based on the HR practices. The organisational culture for Organisation A and B (collectivistic and individualistic respectively as per initial assumption in this thesis), significantly relates to the HR practices used in each of the organisations (Robert & Wastii, 2002); thus, it is important to study them separately. Then hierarchical regression analyses were carried out to examine the relationship between the bundles of HR practices and workability

through the mediating effect of work engagement, job satisfaction, organisational climate and leader-member exchange relationship (e.g. Boon et al., 2011). Simple linear regression analysis was then performed to explore the organisational culture of the participant organisations in relation to the perceived HR practices.

5.10 Sample

For the qualitative study, a total number of face-to-face individual interviews with 1 HR manager, 8 managers and 1 focus group with 5 employees working in a non-managerial post (including administrative and teaching staff) regardless of gender, age or job role were carried out by the researcher between July and November 2017. Age demographic information was not collected at this stage. This is because the researcher was interested in the views of all workers based on their availability as to the HR practices used with their organisations (in line with Kooij et al., 2014). The potential participants (regardless of age, gender and job role) were invited to take part in the study via an invitation email written by the researcher and sent by the organisation's gatekeeper (HR manager).

Participants for the quantitative study were employees working at the two organisations in non-managerial post regardless of gender

or age to collect data as to their perceptions of HR practices. Employees' perceptions of HR practices were found to drive and affect employee outcomes (Wright & Nishii, 2007). The sample for both organisations comprised of 77 and 103 employees for Organisations A and B respectively representing 12% and 7% response rate. The low response rate is expected in organisational research and could be explained by reasons such as that the participants were busy, have previously completed other questionnaires or felt that the survey was irrelevant to them (Weiner & Dalessio, 2006; Fenton-O'Creevy, 1996 in Baruch & Holtom, 2008). Further demographic information will be provided in Chapter 7.

5.11 Measures

Qualitative study

The questions included in the interview schedule were developed based on the main objectives of the study regarding workplace practices, ageing and workability; and after reading studies on experiences of workability (Boström et al., 2016), HR practices and older workers (Kooij et al., 2014). An interview guide including similar set of questions for managers and employees was used for consistency purposes.

A pilot study was initially conducted with three people known to the researcher, who agreed to help with testing the flow of the discussion. The participants were informed in advance of the purpose of the interview that no data were being collected from them at this stage. This was useful to check and reflect on the flow of interview questions and discussion (Boström et al., 2016). No significant amendment to the flow of the interview schedule was made. A participant said that was unfamiliar (could not relate to) with the terms of workability and older workers. Workability is not a widely known term in the UK (Coomer & Houdmont, 2013). Thus, the researcher provided a brief introduction of these terms for the purposes of focus groups and interviews that would follow. Workability was discussed in terms of work performance, motivation, health, and wellbeing (reflecting the elements of workability).

Quantitative study

As mentioned further above the bundles of HR practices (that emerged from the qualitative study) were configured through exploratory factor analysis. Also, a number of externally validated measures were used to examine the relationship between the

bundles of HR practices and workability in an ageing context. Further details of the measures used are provided in Chapter 7.

5.12 Ethics

Both qualitative and quantitative studies were reviewed and approved by Research Ethics Committee of the College of Business, Law, and Social Sciences at Nottingham Trent University following the submission of two different applications. In line with the British Psychological Society's code of conduct and ethics (British Psychological Society, 2018), all participants prior to their participation were given information sheets explaining the aims of the study and what taking part in the study involves. There were no incentives given for their participation which was on voluntary basis. It was clearly communicated to them that they could withdraw anytime from the study without given a reason for. All participants were informed how their data will be used, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. With regards to the qualitative study, the focus groups participants were asked to sign non-disclosure forms to protect the anonymity of their views and participation; at the end of the focus group, the participants were debriefed. The focus group participants were advised to contact their GP, 111 NHS service or their organisation's counselling service if they felt distressed by taking part in the study. Finally,

contact details of the researcher and her research supervisors were provided in accordance to British Psychological Society guidance (British Psychological Society, 2018). As far as the quantitative study is concerned the participants were asked to provide the two digits of the month they were born and the last three digits of the primary phone which would be used to match their responses from the first wave of the survey to the second (unique code), without any other personal information collected. The participants were then asked to indicate whether they agree to take part in the study.

5.13 Conclusion

This thesis uses a mixed-methods approach to address its aims and objectives. The qualitative research method provides in-depth information on the perceptions of employees and managers with regards to HR practices that are relevant to workability in an ageing context as well as how workability is understood in the UK. The quantitative research method offers statistical evidence as to the relationship between HR bundles of practices and workability through the mediating role of job satisfaction, organisational climate, member exchange relationship.

6 Workability, HR practices and older workers in the UK context

6.1 Introduction

This empirical chapter aims to identify the HR practices that are relevant to workability in an ageing context as implemented/used by managers and perceived by employees in two organisations in the UK. Also, the present chapter aims to understand how workability is conceptualised in the UK drawing on qualitative data collected from two organisations in the UK. The study also shows the contextual factors that affect the implementation/perception of HR practices in relation to workability. Qualitative data were collected via semi-structured one-to-one interviews with HR, senior and line managers and via focus groups with employees. The thematic analysis was performed to qualitative data from both organisations to identify the HR practices that are relevant to workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK from managers and employees' perspective. Also, to understand how employee workability is overall understood and conceptualised in the UK context.

Interviews with managers

Before the interview the aims of the study were explained, and the manager/participant was asked if there were any questions and was thanked for agreeing to participate in the study; then the participant was asked to sign the consent form.

Then, the participant was asked to provide a short description of job role and asked about the experiences working with older workers. The interview was conducted more as a discussion so as the participant could be open when responding (Ussher & Perz, 2013). At the end of the interview the participant was thanked and was provided with information about ways of getting in touch if there was anything to be asked further about the study. Then, the participant was asked if for a follow-up discussion should there was a need to expand on some of their responses. Examples of questions for one-to-one interviews with managers are: "What experiences do you have working with older workers?"; "As a manager to what extent do you think you are affecting older workers' workability with your work practices/behaviour and in what way? Could you give me examples?" (see Appendix for the full guide).

Focus groups with employees

Before the interview the aims of the focus groups were explained, to the participants; they were asked if they have any questions; they were thanked for agreeing to participate and asked to sign the consent and the non-disclosure forms. Then the participants introduced themselves. At the end of the interview the participants were debriefed, thanked, and provided with information about how they could get in touch if there was anything they would like to ask or discuss further about the study. Similarly, the interview was conducted more as a discussion so as the participants could be open to their responses (Ussher & Perz, 2013). Examples of interview questions for focus groups participants are: "What does your organisation do to support your workability as you age?", "To what extent do you feel that your line manager can help/support your workability? Could you give me some examples?". The interview schedule was developed to encourage participants to share their views and experiences of how workability is understood, experienced, and supported/managed within their organisation (see Appendix for the full guide). In all cases no follow-up interviews were conducted.

6.2 Findings

As seen in the methodology chapter the thematic analysis was performed to qualitative data from both organisations to identify the HR practices that are relevant to workability in an ageing context in the UK from managers' and employees' perspective in line with the research from Kooij et al., (2014) on HR practices for ageing workers. The findings from the interviews with managers and employees are as follows:

HR practices for workers' workability in the UK emerges as the core theme which is the most important. The three subthemes that emerge are used/implemented practices; perceived practices; contextual factors/conditions affecting the implementation/perception of these practices in relation to workability. The used/implemented are those as stated by the managers. The perceived ones include those as experienced by the employees themselves. The used or perceived HR practices refer to a number of practices such as flexible working, career progression practices. These are presented in more detail in Table 6.2. The contextual factors include several factors as mentioned in interviews and focus groups in both organisations such as employee attitude, age of the manager and others which will be presented further below.

- used/implemented
- perceived
- contextual factors / conditions affecting the implementation / perception of these practices in relation to workability

The relevant evidence from the interviews with managers and focus groups (FG) with employees regarding the emerged themes are presented at Table 6.1, Table 6.2, and Table 6.3.

Table 6.1 Main theme and subthemes that emerge from interviews with managers and focus groups with employees

Main theme	Workplace practices for employees' work ability in the UK
Subthemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • used/implemented • perceived • contextual factors/conditions affecting the implementation/perception of these practices in relation to workability

Table 6.2 Evidence from interviews/FG regarding the used/implemented HR practices

Organisations	A	B	A	B
	Used		Perceived	
HR PRACTICES				
Flexible working options	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flexi-time system			✓	✓
Access to Occupational Health (OH)	✓	✓	✓	✓
OH assessments		✓		✓
Teamwork	✓	✓	✓	✓
Training and Development	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regular performance appraisals	✓	✓	✓	✓
Work planning adjustments	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ergonomic adjustments	✓	✓		✓
Flexible retirement options	✓	✓		✓
Mentor other workers	✓			
Equal and Fair treatment	✓	✓	✓	
Task rotation	✓		✓	
Work on own way	✓	✓	✓	✓
Present opinion on matters	✓			✓
Take part in decision-making	✓	✓		
Recruitment/selection	✓	✓		
Compassionate leave/Bereavement	✓	✓		✓
Sickness-pay	✓			
Urgent domestic business	✓			
Job movement/secondment		✓		✓
Career progression	✓	✓		✓
Challenging jobs/tasks	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health and safety training	✓	✓	✓	
Attractive benefits package	✓	✓		✓
Sickness absence		✓		✓
Performance-pay		✓		
Health checks		✓		

The practices identified in both organisations are in bold

The Table 6.2 includes all workplace practices that were mentioned by individual managers and focus groups employees/workers regardless of whether each of the workplace practices was mentioned by one or more individuals. This was important to identify all the practices that are offered in relation to ageing (Kooij et al, 2014) and workability in in the UK context.

Table 6.3 Evidence from interviews and focus groups regarding the contextual factors/conditions affecting the implementation of the workplace practices in relation to workability

Contextual factors/conditions affecting the implementation/perceptions of the practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of the manager • Attitude of the employee • Extension of working lives • Availability of resources (e.g., financial and staffing) • Business needs • Relationship between line manager and the employee • Extent of consistency between intended and implemented workplace practices
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The first two subthemes that emerged based on whether the HR practices are used/implemented by managers or perceived by employees are the following:

Theme 1- Used/implemented workplace practices

The first theme that emerged from the analysis revealed the workplace practices that are relevant to all workers’ workability within the two organisations, as raised by the managers. Examples

of these practices are flexible working options, access to occupational health, Job Design (e.g., challenging jobs, ergonomic adjustments), training and development, performance appraisals and participation (e.g., present opinion on matters, taking part in decision-making).

The participants mentioned that there are offered flexible working options for both younger and older workers:

"...if possible, to work flexibly, to cover em external needs, so for younger people it is usually around families, for older people it can include caring responsibilities for the relatives, so it's the ability to be flexible around that, the ability to support anybody's em health and well-being..." (Manager 4 – Organisation A)

Participants also mentioned that were offered access to Occupational Health to help maintain their attendance at work and work performance:

"...when we do have issues, we have access to occupational health and we do make referrals, so we get a picture from the occupational health units what we need to do to help people maintain their attendance in the workplace..." (Manager 3 – Organisation A)

For example, with regards to Job Design and specifically ergonomic adjustments managers proceed with ergonomic/desktop assessments yearly as there are aware of back problems and they employees may suffer from.

"...we do desktops assessment that people are fine with what they say so everybody in the office because we will we do with desktop assessment of the computers and make sure about that guidance, and everything is right the rise in the right level and we do once a year and signed off by me and that's quite needed downstairs because people suffer from bad backs and things..." (Manager 8 – Organisation A)

As far as the training and development is concerned, it was stated that this is offered to all employees regardless of age as the technology changes constantly and employees need to be updated as to their use.

"...don't think it's age-related at all I think it's much more about we recognise that everybody should do *training* even if you've been *working* 30 years you still need to engage in *relevant* practice technologies change constantly..." (Manager G – Organisation B)

As part of the training, organisation offer health and safety training including safeguarding and fire assessments so that employees can safely perform their work tasks:

"...we also got mandatory training like safeguarding and this fire risk assessments and things like..." (Manager 8 – Organisation A)

It was also stated by managers that the organisations offer flexible retirement options which appear to apply to older workers.

"...I suppose in terms of older people the ability to request to work flexibly, in terms of flexible retirement or changing working patterns" (Manager 4 – Organisation A)

Managers also recognise how valuable older workers' skills and experience is for the organisation in terms of mentoring younger workers:

"...I found with a lot of people that older is that they have got a fantastic range of experience that they can often bring that in to apply it to new situations and also encouraging mentoring younger people who maybe haven't found anything..." (Manager 4 – Organisation A)

It was stated that fair and equal treatment is really important and work opportunities are the same for everyone within the organisation. This also applies when it comes to the recruitment process:

"...suppose it's making sure that you are fair and transparent in your development practices I supposed to make the same opportunities..." (HR manager – Organisation B)

"...don't have a differential in that kind of way or we don't do it through recruitment either so when we recruit..." (HR Manager – Organisation A)

Managers also mentioned a number of practices that are implementing to keep their staff energised and motivated including task rotation and challenging work tasks:

"...just making sure that's their bit and we give staff breaks and have lunch breaks and task rotation..." (Manager 3 – Organisation A)

"...I will try to integrate new things into the department so that they've got new challenges rather than just doing the same things every day I keep taking on little extra things..." (Manager 1 – Organisation A)

It was also stated that older workers are offered the opportunity to present their opinions and matters and take part in the decision-making:

"...to provide an environment where we give older workers permission to just sometimes say I need more time, I need more space, I need more time just to..." (Manager 3 – Organisation A)

"...I think the most important here I would hate to make decisions about someone without involving that someone..." (Manager E – Organisation B)

Other supportive practices that were mentioned were the compassionate leave and sickness pay as well as the urgent domestic business which allows employees to take time off work to deal with urgent situations that may affect their personal life:

"...sickness absence policy so you know you have opportunity to talk to your manager if you are off sick for any particular reason..." (HR manager – Organisation B)

"...when it comes to supporting staff things like compassionate leave, sickness pay..." (Manager 1 – Organisation A)

"...urgent domestic business is what we call it so if you have to run home for an emergency..." (Manager 1 – Organisation A)

Managers stated that there are a number of career change or career progression opportunities to support their staff. Employees are offered the opportunity to either change job role or move to higher grades:

"...we'll look at other positions within the *organisation* to see if there is anything which they could do, which is very difficult for cleaning staff because there's not a lot more that they can fit into throughout the *organisation*." (Manager N – Organisation B)

"...you can recommend people that have done prolonged gone and done the extra stuff really that is almost above the expectation the job description that they can be moved up in grades..." (Manager H – Organisation B)

Managers highlighted that the employees are offered health checks within the organisation which tends to be really important especially for older workers who may not have the time to visit a GP:

"...then they do a lot of things to test your physical well-being you can have cholesterol test and various other different things that actually as an older worker I probably wouldn't make the time to go to a GP or to go somewhere to have some of these tests but when they're and they're made available in the workplace..." (HR manager – Organisation B)

Finally, the managers referred to performance pay either as a n additional pay or bonus and attractive benefit packages that are offered to employees:

"...to make sure that we offer benefits that are suitable across the whole cross section of our employees..." (HR Manager – Organisation B)

"...whatever so that those ratings will give you indication of your performance what your treachery is your career path you want to work on next year whether it's entitles you for any additional pay and bonus pack to that your performance appraisal..." (HR manager – Organisation B)

Theme 2- Perceived workplace practices

The second theme that emerged from the analysis revealed the workplace practices as perceived by the participants (regardless of age) that are relevant to their workability in terms of work performance, motivation, health, and wellbeing at work. These practices include flexi-time system, regular performance appraisals, teamwork, occupational health assessments, compassionate leave, autonomy. The full list is presented at Table 6.2.

Employees have stated that they are offered flexi-time system which allows employees to spread their working time across the week:

"... I am on a flexi-time system as long as I am working 37 hours a week, you know I am all right which I always do..." (FG – Organisation A)

It was also mentioned that there is a strong teamwork spirit and the employees work together well, helping each other when a colleague is off:

"We all pull together, and we all help each other because we don't always get extra help brought in when that other person's off." (FG3 – Organisation B)

Another HR practices that employees referred to was the regular performance appraisals:

"... we have those regular performance appraisal meetings..." (FG4 – Organisation B)

Employees also stated that they have the autonomy in managing the workload and tasks unless something comes through the manager's system:

"We're empowered to do our own, unless something comes through the manager's system" (FG8 – Organisation B)

Additionally, employees referred to compassionate leave as a very supportive practice which has given them the opportunity to deal with the loss of a family member:

"...I mean, my mother died a year ago and I was given time off because of bereavement and I think there's an HR policy on that and that was very good, and it was very helpful." (FG4 – Organisation B)

Table 6.4 presents quotes illustrating/reflecting the various workplace practices that emerged from the interviews and focus groups.

Table 6.4 Quotes illustrating the various workplace practices relevant to workability in both organisations

Flexible working options	"...if possible, to work flexibly, to cover em external needs, so for younger people it is usually around families, for older people it can include caring responsibilities for the relatives, so it's the ability to be flexible around that, the ability to support anybody's em health and well-being..." (Manager 4 – Organisation A)
Flexi-time system ¹	"... I am on a flexi-time system as long as I am working 37 hours a week, you know I am all right which I always do..." (FG – Organisation A)
Access to Occupational Health (OH)	"...when we do have issues, we have access to occupational health and we do make referrals, so we get a picture from the occupational health units what we need to do to help people maintain their attendance in the workplace..." (Manager 3 – Organisation A)
Occupational Health (OH) assessments	"I've also had the Occupational Health assessment and the person who did that was very good and wrote a concise report setting out what was making me stressed" (FG4 – Organisation B)
Teamwork	"We all pull together, and we all help each other because we don't always get extra help brought in when that other person's off." (FG3 – Organisation B)
Training and development	"...don't think it's age-related at all I think it's much more about we recognise that everybody should do <i>training</i> even if you've been <i>working</i> 30 years you still need to engage in <i>relevant</i> practice technologies change constantly..." (Manager G – Organisation B)
Regular performance appraisals	"... we have those regular performance appraisal meetings..." (FG4 – Organisation B)

¹ It is a separate policy from flexible working according to the HR policy documents

Work planning adjustments	"...because I've got more than one staff member you can just change the timetable slightly, so you know that member who can do that gets to do that more often than the one that struggling with it and you can make that change without them really noticing as well..." (Manager 1 – Organisation A)
Ergonomic adjustments	"...we do desktops assessment that people are fine with what they say so everybody in the office because we will we do with desktop assessment of the computers and make sure about that guidance, and everything is right the rise in the right level and we do once a year and signed off by me and that's quite needed downstairs because people suffer from bad backs and things..." (Manager 8 – Organisation A)
Flexible retirements options	"...I suppose in terms of older people the ability to request to work flexibly, in terms of flexible retirement or changing working patterns" (Manager 4 – Organisation A)
Mentor other workers	"...I found with a lot of people that older is that they have got a fantastic range of experience that they can often bring that in to apply it to new situations and also encouraging mentoring younger people who maybe haven't found anything..." (Manager 4 – Organisation A)
Equal and fair treatment	"...suppose it's making sure that you are fair and transparent in in your development practices I supposed to make the same opportunities..." (HR manager – Organisation B)
Task rotation	"...just making sure that's their bit and we give staff breaks and have lunch breaks and task rotation..." (Manager 3 – Organisation A)
Work on own way	"We're empowered to do our own, unless something comes through the manager's system" (FG8 – Organisation B)
Present opinion on matters	"...to provide an environment where we give older workers permission to just sometimes say I need more time, I need more space, I need more time just to..." (Manager 3 – Organisation A)

Take part in decision-making	"...I think the most important here I would hate to make decisions about someone without involving that someone..." (Manager E – Organisation B)
Equal opportunities when recruiting	"...don't have a differential in that kind of way er we don't do it through recruitment either so when we recruit..." (HR Manager – Organisation A)
Compassionate leave	"...I mean, my mother died a year ago and I was given time off because of bereavement and I think there's an HR policy on that and that was very good, and it was very helpful." (FG4 – Organisation B)
Sickness-pay	"...when it comes to supporting staff things like compassionate leave, sickness pay..." (Manager 1 – Organisation A)
Urgent domestic business	"...urgent domestic business is what we call it so if you have to run home for an emergency..." (Manager 1 – Organisation A)
Job movement/secondment	"...we'll look at other positions within the <i>organisation</i> to see if there is anything which they could do, which is very difficult for cleaning staff because there's not a lot more that they can fit into throughout the <i>organisation</i> ." (Manager N – Organisation B)
Career progression	you can recommend people that have done prolonged gone and done the extra stuff really that is almost above the expectation the job description that they can be moved up in grades..." (Manager H – Organisation B)
Challenging jobs/tasks	"...I will try to integrate new things into the department so that they've got new challenges rather than just doing the same things every day I keep taking on little extra things..." (Manager 1 – Organisation A)
Health and safety training	"...we also got mandatory training like safeguarding and this fire risk assessments and things like..." (Manager 8 – Organisation A)

Attractive benefits package	"...to make sure that we offer benefits that are suitable across the whole cross section of our employees..." (HR Manager – Organisation B)
Sickness absence	"...sickness absence policy so you know you have opportunity to talk to your manager if you are off sick for any particular reason..." (HR manager – Organisation B)
Performance-pay	"...whatever so that those ratings will give you indication of your performance what your trajectory is your career path you want to work on next year whether it's entitles you for any additional pay and bonus pack to that your performance appraisal..." (HR manager – Organisation B)
Health checks	"...then they do a lot of things to test your physical well-being you can have cholesterol test and various other different things that actually as an older worker I probably wouldn't make the time to go to a GP or to go somewhere to have some of these tests but when they're and they're made available in the workplace..." (HR manager – Organisation B)

As indicated by the participants, none of the organisations had specific HR policies/practices to older workers. The practices and policies were offered to all workers based on the individual regardless of age, even though there were mentioned a few by managers with regards to older workers e.g., mentor other workers, health-checks, flexible retirement options. This may be explained by inconsistency in terms of how HR policies are communicated to the employees, which also emerged from the interviews and focus groups. Previous research on workplace practices and the extension of working lives in UK organisations has highlighted a similar contradiction; this was attributed either to the fact that there were informal policies that managers and workers were not aware of them and/or these were offered on an individual basis (Wainwright et al., 2019). This is also consistent with Kooij et al's (2014) findings on bundles of HR practices for managing older workers. They found that the HR practices were offered in a reactive way i.e., only when a need occurred, or the older workers were not performing well at work.

Other practices that emerged from the interviews and focus groups involved training and development, flexible working options, regular performance appraisals and work planning adjustments. Previous research on older workers has shown that organisational practices such as flexible working arrangements, job transfer,

training and career progression could be supportive of older workers' work performance, motivation, physical and psychological wellbeing (Marks & Yardley, 2004). Additionally, relevant research highlighted that fair performance review as well as recognition and respect are mostly important for older workers (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009).

Theme 3 - Contextual factors/conditions affecting the implementation/perception of workplace practices in relation to workability

The third theme that emerged from the analysis revealed those contextual factors that can affect the implementation/perception of workplace practices in relation to workability in the two UK organisations. These factors are: age of the manager, extension of working lives, attitude of the employee, availability of organisational resources, business needs, relationship between the line manager and employee, extent of consistency between intended and implemented workplace practices (see Table 6.3).

Age of the manager

It has been stated that the age of the manager can affect the way the participant manages and works.

"...obviously I have a different way of working, I'm considerably younger than the last manager..." (Manager 1 – Organisation A)

Regarding the contextual factor of the manager's age, previous research on the interaction of supervisors' age with employees' age showed that this can affect the ratings of the supervisor (Gordon & Arvey, 2004). Also, Perry et al. (1999) suggested that subordinates, who need to report to a supervisor of younger age could respond in a negative way because for example of their perception that their supervisor is not capable of leading them adequately (Perry, Kulik, & Zhou, 1999). Another piece of research revealed that employee's age relative to manager's age can have an impact on work outcomes (Shore, Cleveland, & Goldberg, 2003). On the other hand, the study of van Der Heijden et al. (2010) found no support for the relationship between directional age differences (i.e. when the supervisor is older or younger than his employee) and the age-related stereotyping by supervisors regarding the ratings of employee performance (van Der Heijden et al., 2010). Based on the findings of the current research this is a factor that can impact on workability as an employee outcome.

Extension of working lives

It was also mentioned that the extension of working lives is changing things when it comes to performance expectations:

"... if we have people living longer and working longer, we know retirement age goes to 68 now we could in a few years' time so we have people in their 60s, 70s in working quite routinely than in those kind of areas we'll meet that we might have to revise things like our performance expectation of people ..." (HR Manager – Organisation A)

Factors such as the policy changes on national level can have an impact on the adoption of workplace practices. The extension of working lives amid the growing proportion of older workers in the UK has been important part of the policy agenda in the UK (Weyman, Wainwright, O'hara, Jones, & Buckingham, 2012; gov.uk, 2021a). Relevant research on the extension of working lives has shown that national level policies can affect the organisational practices, however, how to achieve this is up to the employer and the organisation (Conen, Henkens, & Scippers, 2014).

Availability of organisational resources

Participants have also mentioned the availability of resources that the organisation is able to provide when it comes to the adoption of HRM practices. This can affect the extent that an organisation is willing to adopt a specific HR practice with regards to employee workability

"...that's down to the number of resources that the organisation is to be able to provide because now things are getting, I'm looking, and things are getting tighter, allocation of time is getting tighter, people are always looking for ways to save money. So, with cost effectiveness comes stress, comes shortcuts which eventually leads to accidents, it leads to morale being lower, I can't see that in 10 years' time people will be where they are now, I can only see that being slightly less than where we are now if not significantly less."
(FG4 – Organisation B)

Business needs

A participant has also mentioned that while there is a level of flexibility when it comes to employee needs, business needs should be also taken into account:

"...staff of having caring responsibilities they can be a level of flexibility in terms of maybe what time of day then went to start however as well as you know obviously you try to be flexible with you have to take the business needs of the organisation into account, so you know if we said yes to everybody you didn't want to start at 9 o'clock..." (Manager D – Organisation B)

Availability of resources (including staffing and financial resources) and business needs can affect whether workplace practices should

be adopted or rejected by organisations (Subramony, 2006). According to Subramony (2006) there are four approaches that explain why organisations decide to either adopt or reject specific HR practices. The first approach is the economic approach. According to this approach, the organisations adopt HR practices that could be of economic benefit to them. In other words, the organisations assess the "return on investment" of the adoption of HR practices against the costs such as money, time and organisational resources associated with the implementation of these practices. The second approach relates to whether the adoption of the HR practices aligns to the organisational strategy. The third approach is about whether the decision-making processes are in line with the adoption of an HR practice. Finally, the last approach relates to whether an HR intervention has proven effective inside or outside the organisation (i.e. fads and fashions) (Subramony, 2006).

Attitude of the employee

Other factors that were mentioned by the participants when it comes to HRM and workability was the attitude of the employee in terms of whether the participant is willing to be managed. As seen in a previous chapter the attitudes and values of the employee can have an impact on their workability (e.g. Ilmarinen, 2001).

"...if you like it's a case of a manager has to manage and lead well, but an employee has got to want to be and be willing to be managed and led, and so if someone isn't willing er to play that role, then there's going to be a tension..." (HR Manager – Organisation A).

Relationship between the line manager and employee

The participants also mentioned about the relationship between employee and manager especially in terms of communication. It has been found to be important in explaining the relationship between HR practices and employee outcomes (Alfes et al., 2013; Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2012; Gilbert, de Winne, & Sels, 2011).

"...You got to have a good relationship with the staff that you manage open and honest communication, transparency structure in terms of how you manage people and what your expectations are clear goals and boundaries because that way everybody knows what's expected of them but they also know that if you do have a problem solved communication If you've not got that report and there's open communication lines then that is when things start to fall down ..." (Manager 9 – Organisation A)

Extent of consistency between intended and implemented workplace practices

Another contextual factor that was raised from the interviews and focus groups discussions was the extent of consistency in how HR practices are implemented by management across all levels and perceived by employees:

“Again, when you’re dealing with an organisation of this size, if those policies and practices aren’t properly codified, then there’ll be trouble, basically. As my colleague was saying, it’s not those per se that necessarily are the problem; it’s how they’re interpreted and implemented. If there are inconsistencies in the way those policies are implemented across the organisation, then inequities will undoubtedly result.” (FG2 – Organisation B)

The subjective understanding of the HR practices can have an effect on employee behaviours and attitudinal outcomes (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008). That means that the impact of HR practices on employees’ behaviour subject to how these are interpreted and perceived by the individuals. Their attitudes and behaviours are very much affected by the way the HR practices implemented mainly by line managers and direct supervisors, who have daily interaction with their staff (Kinnie, Hutchinson, Purcell, Rayton, & Swart, 2005). Poor and ineffective implementation of HR

practices by line managers can result in poor employee attitudes (Ferris et al., 1998). In addition to this, line management support and trust are important for the relationship between managers and employees as well as for employee wellbeing at work (Baptiste, 2008). Employees' attitudes are shaped by their perceptions of the implementation of the HR practices rather than the intended practices (Kinnie et al., 2005). Wright and Nishii (2004) in their model on HR practices aimed to show the linkages between the HR practices, employee attitudes and organisational performance (Wright & Nishii, 2005). Their model includes links between: "1) intended HR practices, 2) actual HR practices, 3) perceived HR practices, 4) employee reactions and 5) performance" (p. 10). In the context of for example, work-life balance practices, when the employees are not informed about the existence and availability of those practices, they will not be able to use them, thus it is unlikely to generate positive feelings towards the organisation (Sánchez-Vidal, Cegarra-Leiva, & Cegarra-Navarro, 2012).

6.3 Conceptualisation of workability in the UK context

Through this study, it was also revealed how workability is overall understood and conceptualised in the UK organisational context as emerged through interviews and focus groups (based on their perception of the term and the perceived factors that can affect

workability). An additional new set of themes emerged in relation to this. So far, limited is the knowledge on how workability may be experienced by employees in the UK. The findings overall support the multidimensionality of workability concept as originally framed in the Finnish context (see Chapter 3). For some participants workability in the UK appears to relate to:

1. Health and competence

"...it sounds as if it's a mixture of having the right skillset to perform a role, but also having the mental and physical energy to perform the role as well." (FG4 – Organisation B)

2. Psychological factors such as work enjoyment, feeling of contributing to work, work motivation

"...it's about happiness, motivation, happiness, pride, er...enjoyment, team player." (Manager 6 – Organisation A)

3. Work factors such as job demands/nature of the job/work environment and psychosocial factors (i.e., supervisory/organisational support, etc.)

"I suppose it depends on their current job on the job they are doing, the current role that people are doing..." (Manager 4 – Organisation A)

"...it's about how supportive your line manager is, so, how much autonomy does your line manager give you to set things like deadlines, how much time does the participant have to discuss problems with projects that you're working on." (FG4 – Organisation B)

Additionally, external factors such as caring responsibilities, technology and ageing can affect employees' workability in the UK e.g.,

"I think external factors clearly external factors could be anything that is happening at home and everything that is impacting when you have one thing after another...might have an issue with a child with an older child maybe or a partner or spouse who is undergoing treatment for cancer..." (Manager 3 – Organisation A)

"... so, I think for example of learning new technology of this member staff found it very difficult to learn the virtual learning environments and its accessibility from one screen to the next and I think the older members of staff got very frustrated that they

needed regular help and support with it..." (Manager W-Organisation B)

"The older you are the less support your body has..." (Manager 1 - Organisation A)

The way these factors were put under these categories in the current research, is based on the relevant literature exploring the framework/concept of workability e.g. (Ilmarinen, 2001; Ilmarinen et al., 2015). Ilmarinen et al. (2015) highlighted that the promotion of workability should consider its multidimensionality to identify the factors that are relevant or important for groups/areas each time. This study has showed several individual factors, external factors and work factors that can impact on workability however, it was not possible to assess the significance of each factor, which is beyond the scope of this study. As seen in Chapter 3, how workability is framed depends on the context. The Table 5.5 shows how workability is understood in the UK context (based on the collected data).

Table 6.5 Workability in the UK context

Workability as conceptualised in the UK	Factors of Workability concept
Health Competence Psychological factors	INDIVIDUAL FACTORS
Work/job-related factors/ psychosocial factors	WORK FACTORS
External factors	EXTERNAL FACTORS

However, for other participants workability was understood merely as work performance standards and ability to carry out work tasks in line with the job description.

“The definition of performance management I don't know but it kind of feels like that it's a gentle, gentle way of saying about managing performance” (Manager A – Organisation B)

“...well, able you know the ability to do the work, the ability to offer skills, to offer experience, to do a job, to follow the tasks in a job description being able to perform whatever whatever whatever level em fully...” (Manager 3 – Organisation A)

This is in line with the findings of Coomer & Houdmont (2013) who looked at how workability is understood in the UK and Finnish context among occupational health practitioners. It was shown that

workability is mainly understood as merely one's ability to perform at work rather than as wellbeing or health or work-balance outcome.

6.4 Discussion

This study aimed at identifying and understanding the workplace practices that are relevant to older workers' workability in two UK organisations. Through semi-structured interviews with managers and focus groups with employees at two UK organisations it was revealed that workplace practices such as training and development, flexible working are offered to all employees (including the older ones). The major theme that emerged was the workplace practices for workability and the three subthemes were the implemented practices by managers, the perceived practices by employees and the contextual factors that can affect the implementation/perception of the workplace practices in relation to workability. Through the interviews and focus group discussions it was found that there were HR practices offered to employees depending on the individual needs rather than on age even though there were mentioned a few with regards to older ones.

In line with HRM and leadership literature on the influence of intra-management processes on employee attitudes and behaviour at

work (Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Davey, 2002; van De Voorde & Beijer, 2015), this study looked at workplace practices that are relevant to workability from different perspectives (managers, employees). A reason why it is important to understand managers' and employees' perspective lies in the assumption that managers and employees may perceive the workplace practices differently (Kooij, et. al., 2014). Research suggests that there is a difference between the intended HR policies by senior managers, the actual implementation of HR practices by managers and those perceived by the employees that can have an impact on employees' performance and psychological health (Nishii & Wright, 2007; Kelloway et al., 2013) and thus, workability.

Jackson & Schuler (1995) consider several external and internal organisational factors that could affect the implementation of human resource practices, which in turn can have an impact on employee outcomes. External factors include economy, sociodemographic context, national culture etc. (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). Internal ones could be size, structure, type of the organisation, organisational strategy/objectives (Jackson and Schuler, 1995; Genc, 2014). Such organisational characteristics have been evaluated as factors that could potentially affect workers' performance at work, and thus workability (Varianou-Mikellidou et al., 2020). From a different perspective van

Veldhoven and Peccei (2015) name the wider organisational and societal context of workplace as distal work context. This can affect work, performance, wellbeing, and workability in an indirect way. At a lower level there are organisational factors that can affect how work is carried out such organisational policies and practices (van Veldhoven & Peccei, 2015; Boxall & Purcell, 2011). As seen in Chapter 2, workability can be shaped by a combination of several contextual factors (social, cultural, economic, and demographic factors). Based on the all above the Figure 6.1 shows from a multilevel perspective, the links between the external national context that shapes workability (see Chapter 2), the internal organisational context to the findings from the present chapter with regards to the HR practices in relation to workability (as presented above).

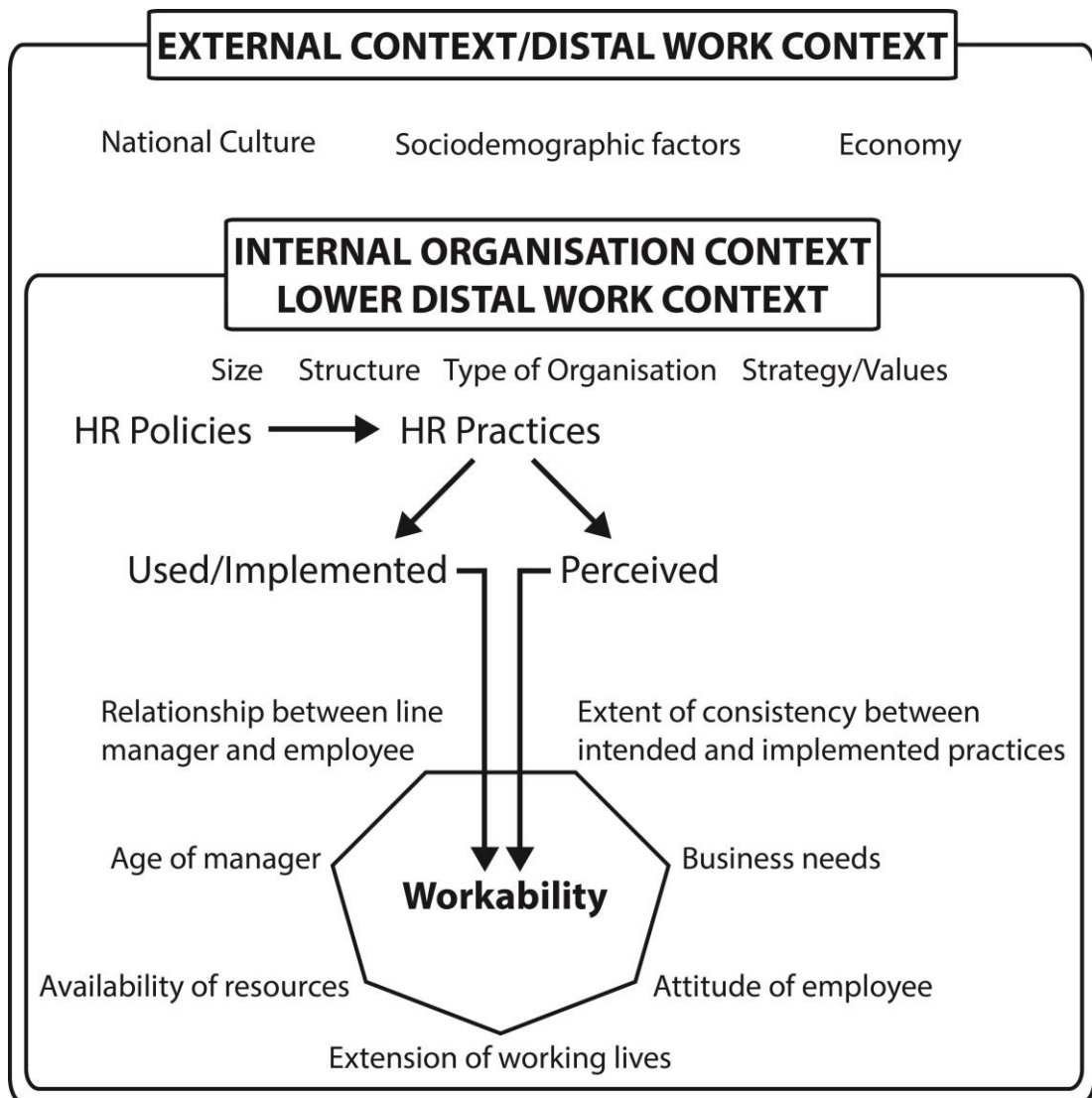


Figure 6.1 External and internal context, findings on HR practices and workability

6.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to develop an understanding the workplace practices that are relevant to older workers' workability and how workability is conceptualised with reference to two organisations in the UK. It was revealed that neither of the two UK

organisations have workplace policies and practices specifically aimed at older workers and that these were offered to everybody, regardless of age, even though there were mentioned a few. Several contextual factors that can affect the way the workplace practices are implemented by managers and perceived by the employees was revealed through this study. These were organised/presented as a framework which is linking the external and internal organisation context to workability and the factors that have been found to affect it (workability). The next chapter aims to provide quantitative evidence on the relationship between the identified workplace practices and workability from data collected from the two participant organisations.

7 The relationship between HR practices and workability in an ageing context

7.1 Introduction

This study reports on the first wave of a two-wave survey. These practices were identified via interviews and focus groups in the two organisations in the UK. Based on social exchange theory (Eisenberger & Huntington, 1986; Blau, 1964) and the signalling theory (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Casper & Harris, 2008), this study primarily aims to provide empirical statistical evidence on the relationship between workplace practices (such as training and development, participation, flexible working, ergonomic adjustments, adjusted work planning, benefits package, performance appraisals, health and safety training and career progression) and employees' workability in the context of an ageing workforce in two organisations in the UK. Secondly, to examine whether work engagement, job satisfaction, organisational climate and leader-member exchange relationship mediate the relationship between those HR practices and workability. Thirdly, to understand whether the organisational culture of Organisations A and B based on the perceived HR practices would be positively related to a collectivistic or

individualistic type of organisational culture respectively (referring to organisational selection criteria as seen in Chapter 5).

The research question that this study aims to address is:

1. How do HR practices impact on workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK?

7.2 Design and methods

To address the above research question, the thesis draws on data from the first wave of survey administered to non-managerial employees to two organisations in the UK (see methodology chapter). The data were collected via online and paper and pencil survey for Organisation B and online only for Organisation A (section 7.6). To analyse the data correlational design was used to examine the relationships between perceived HR practices and workability through a number of mediating factors (measures of organisational climate, job satisfaction, work engagement, LMX) (Howitt & Cramer, 2017) (see section 7.8 as to the type of measures used). Types of data used were continuous such as age, discreet such as workability and ordinal such as job satisfaction, health status, HR practices, work engagement, LMX and organisational climate (Marsh, 1988; Blalock, 1979). Also, in this thesis exploratory factor analysis was used to configure structure

of the dimensions (of the bundles) of HR practices that were initially identified through the qualitative study. Thus, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to examine factor item loadings that would determine the bundles of HR practices and inform the research hypotheses. G*Power was used to determine the sample size for the study (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). For linear regression, the minimum size that was required to perform the analysis was 114 [$\alpha=0.05$; power at 0.80; minimum effect size $f^2 = 0.15$] (Cohen, 1988) and 9 predictor variables (HR bundle of practices, job satisfaction, work engagement, LMX, organisational climate, lifestyle, age, job demands, work conditions). The samples were slightly below the recommended power analysis which means that the statistical tests were underpowered; this could explain any absence of statistically significant results. Based on the chronological age the sample of older workers (≥ 50) for Organisation B was 36 participants. For Organisation A the sample of older workers (≥ 50) was 40 participants. As the sample of older workers in both organisations was very small to perform regression analyses, the analyses were performed to all participants to identify the HR practices that are relevant to all workers including the older ones.

When it comes to the third aim of the study which was to explore whether Organisations A and B would be positively related to a

collectivistic or an individualistic type of organisational culture respectively based on the bundles of perceived HR practices - G*Power was used to determine the sample size for the study (Faul et al., 2007). For linear regression, the minimum size that was required to perform the analysis was 68 [$\alpha=0.05$; power at 0.80; minimum effect size $f^2 = 0.15$] (Cohen, 1988).

7.3 Configuration of the HR practices

Before proceeding into the formulation of the study's hypotheses and the analytical approach into more detail, it is important to configure the HR practices that emerged from the interviews with managers and focus groups with employees (see Chapter 5). These involve several HR practices such as training and development, participation, flexible working, flexible retirement options, teamwork, fair and equal treatment, recruitment, flexi-time options, bereavement, present opinion in matters, work on own way, challenging work tasks, ergonomic adjustments, adjusted work planning, benefits package, performance appraisals, health and safety training, access to occupational health service and career progression identified in the literature as high performance or high commitment practices (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberge, Arne, 2000; Boon, den Hartog, Boselie, & Paauwe,

2011; Kooij et al., 2010). These practices were identified in both organisations according to the findings from Chapter 6.

it is important to categorise these HR practices into meaningful bundles. Bundles of high performance HR practices rather than single ones could be most effective in understanding employee outcomes (Huselid, 1995). The reason for that is that the combination of HR practices explain better links between HRM and outcomes such as performance (Gooderham, Parry, & Ringdal, 2008; Huselid, 1995). Also, by considering a combination of HR practices can produce more interpretable insights than the single ones could possibly do (Rousseau & Fried, 2001).

An exploratory factor analysis on these HR practices was applied to understand how the items are loading to each factor for Organisation A and B respectively. Exploratory factor analysis is a technique that is used to explore the dimensionality of a scale (de Winter, Dodou, & Wieringa, 2009). For the exploratory factor analysis IBM SPSS version 26 was used. In line with the research of Boon et al., (2011) with regards to configuration of perceived HR practices, principal component analysis was used as the extraction method and Oblimin with Kaiser normalisation as the rotation method. As far as the factor loadings are concerned, Field (2017) recommends using a cut off of 0.4, which has been applied

in this research. Criteria for accepting items are in line with the assumptions of sufficient correlations and multicollinearity (Dancey & Reidy, 2007). In the case of cross-loadings, this was addressed with reference to the lifespan theory (Baltes et al., 1999) and previous research (e.g. Kooij et al., 2014). Detailed description of the key elements is presented further below.

The analysis was performed for each of the organisations separately to explore the relationship between these practices and workability in two different organisations in the UK. The reason for separating data from the two organisations lies on the subsequent quantitative assessment of organisational culture (individualistic/collectivistic) for each of the organisations which is based on the HR practices. According to Robert and Wastii (2002) the organisational culture is determined by the HR practices used in each of the organisations, thus, the data are kept separately for the purposes of this study.

Organisation A

The factor analysis indicated a solution with 4 factors having an eigenvalue more than 1. Though, the determinant was less than 0.00001, which is an indication for multicollinearity ($r \geq 0.8$). Nothing was removed at this stage. Then the variables that did not meet the assumptions for sufficient correlations ($r < 0.3$) were

removed. These were: access to occupational health services, bereavement, flexible retirement options, flexible working, flexi-time, teamwork. Following this the determinant was 0.001 which meets the assumptions.

The exploratory factor analysis was rerun; a solution with 2 factors was generated (see Table 7.1). This solution was also in line with the assumptions for multicollinearity and sufficient correlations. The scree plot did not provide conclusive results (clear break in eigenvalues). The solution with 2 factors was mostly in line with the previous research (Boon et al., 2011; Veth, Korzilius, van der Heijden, Emans, & De Lange, 2019). These two scales included a total of 13 HR practices that explained 55% of the variance in Organisation A. Cronbach's alpha for both the HR scales/bundles was 0.89. The results of factor analysis are presented at Table 7.1.

Organisation B

In the first place the factor analysis indicated a solution with 4 factors having an eigenvalue more than 1. However, the determinant was less than 0.00001 which is an indication for multicollinearity. The next step was to remove any of the variables that correlate highly to each other ($r \geq 0.8$). The flexi-time and flexible working practices were highly correlated; thus, they were removed. The next stage was to remove variables that did not

meet the assumptions for sufficient correlations ($r < 0.3$) were removed. Thus, the variables of access to occupational health services, bereavement, flexible retirement options, teamwork were removed because they did not meet the criteria for sufficient correlations ($r < 0.3$).

The factor analysis was rerun; it generated a solution with 2 factors. This solution was also in line with the assumptions for multicollinearity and sufficient correlations. The scree plot did not provide conclusive results (clear break in eigenvalues). The solution leading to 2 factors was mostly in line with the previous research (Boon et al., 2011; Veth, Korzilius, van der Heijden, Emans, & De Lange, 2019). These two scales included 13 HR practices and explained the 56% of the variance in Organisation B. Cronbach's alpha for both scales were 0.90. The results of factor analysis with two factors are shown at Table 7.2.

Even though the purpose of the research is not to compare the organisations per se but to explore relationship between workplace practices (training and development, health and safety training, career progression, equal treatment, recruitment, participation, present opinion in matters, work own way, ergonomic adjustments, adjusted work planning, challenging work tasks, performance appraisals, benefits package) and workability in two

different organisations in the UK, it is important to note that the factor analysis generated the same HR bundles/scales for both organisations (same HR practices loaded into the same HR bundles even though they may mean different things for each of the participant organisations) due to the differences in the organisational contexts.

Two types of HR bundles were distinguished for the two organisations: the (1) Training/Development/Non-discrimination one and the (2) Job Design one. The Training/Development/Non-discrimination one included the following HR practices: training and development, career progression, health and safety training, appraisals, recruitment, equal treatment. The Job Design one included: participation, challenging tasks, benefits, ergonomic adjustments, adjusted work planning, work on own way, present opinion on matters (Table 7.1 and 7.2). In research the HR practice of appraisals can contribute to the maintenance of current work performance (e.g., Kooij et. al, 2010); however, it could be also considered as an opportunity for exploring training and development as well as career progression opportunities (Nickols, 2007). Thus, it is loaded under the Training/Development/Non-discrimination bundle of HR practices. Also, the practice of non-discrimination appears to be highly relevant to different stages of employment including recruitment, training and promotion (Wood,

Hales, Purdon, Sejersen, & Hayllar, 2009); this can explain the reason why it is loaded in factor 2. Finally, for Organisation A the item of "...offers me an attractive benefits package" exhibits similar loadings for factor 1 and 2. This item was kept as it is in line with the lifespan theory (Baltes et al., 1999) and previous research (e.g. Kooij et al., 2014) and it can contribute to the maintenance of current work performance as part of the wider Job Design.

Therefore, two factors have emerged for each of the organisations: HR bundles of Training/Development/Non-discrimination and Job Design. The HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination include six items and the HR bundle of Job Design seven items which are the same for both organisations (see Tables 7.1 & 7.2). This means that the same HR practices loaded into the same HR bundles (even though they may mean different things for each of the participant organisations) due to the differences in the organisational contexts as mentioned further above. These HR bundles will be used in further analysis to examine the relationship between HR practices and employees' workability in the ageing context in these two organisations in the UK.

Table 7.1 Factor analysis of the HR practices for Organisation A

HR PRACTICES	FACTOR LOADINGS	
	1	2
Item		
My organisation...		
Provides me with opportunities for training and development	.07	.78
Offers me health and safety training	-.09	.72
Offers me the opportunity for career progression	.06	.66
Treats me fairly and no less favourably, specific to my needs	-.01	.72
Offers equal opportunities when recruiting new employees	.10	.74
Conducts regular performance appraisals	-.01	.58
Offers me the opportunity to take part in the decision-making processes	.79	-.03
Offers me the possibility to present my opinion on matters	.65	.25
Offers me the opportunity to do my work on my own way	.66	.13
Makes ergonomic workplace adjustments to support me at work if necessary (e.g., adjustments to my workstation etc.)	.54	.06
Offers me the possibility of adjusted work planning/arrangements if necessary (e.g., around timetabling, work tasks etc.)	.89	-.20
Offers me the opportunity to work on challenging and diverse work tasks	.81	.05
Offers me an attractive benefits package	.48	.37
Cronbach's alpha	.89	.89

N = 77. The extraction method was Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor loadings above .40 are in bold

Table 7.2 Factor analysis of the HR practices for Organisation B

HR PRACTICES	FACTOR LOADINGS	
	1	2
Item		
My organisation...		
Provides me with opportunities for training and development	.09	.73
Offers me health and safety training	-.14	.85
Offers me the opportunity for career progression	.24	.46
Treats me fairly and no less favourably, specific to my needs	.15	.67
Offers equal opportunities when recruiting new employees	-.08	.87
Conducts regular performance appraisals	.08	.55
Offers me the opportunity to take part in the decision-making processes	.70	.11
Offers me the possibility to present my opinion on matters	.76	.01
Offers me the opportunity to do my work on my own way	.80	.01
Makes ergonomic workplace adjustments to support me at work if necessary (e.g., adjustments to my workstation etc.)	.81	-.05
Offers me the possibility of adjusted work planning/arrangements if necessary (e.g., around timetabling, work tasks etc.)	.89	-.04
Offers me the opportunity to work on challenging and diverse work tasks	.56	.19
Offers me an attractive benefits package	.65	-.03
Cronbach's alpha	.90	.90

N = 103. The extraction method was Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

Factor loadings above .40 are in bold

7.4 The relationship between HR practices and workability - The mediating role of work engagement, job satisfaction, organisational climate, and leader member exchange relationship

As the research on the effect of HR practices on older workers' outcomes is growing (Kooij, et al., 2010; Kooij et al., 2011; Leisink & Knies, 2011; Rau & Adams, 2005; Sousa, Ramos & Carvalho, 2019), limited are the studies on workability. This is important as there is a growing focus on workplace health and wellbeing (gov.uk, 2021). Previous research has shown that HR practices such as teamwork, recruitment and selection, training and development, participation, flexible working, ergonomic adjustments, adjusted work planning, benefits package, performance appraisals, health and safety training and career progression known as high performance/high commitment practices (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Boon et al., 2011) can lead to enhanced employee health (Ogbonnaya, Daniels, Connolly, & van Veldhoven, 2017). High performance or high commitment HR practices are those that ensure that the employees have the abilities, the motivation to work and the opportunity to participate (Kehoe & Wright, 2013; Kuvaas, 2008). Based on social exchange (Eisenberger & Huntington, 1986; Blau, 1964) and signalling

theory (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Casper & Harris, 2008) these HR practices by communicating organisation's positive intentions towards them and the extent to which the organisation values its employees can have a positive impact on employee health and wellbeing (van De Voorde & Beijer, 2015) and thus workability (Tuomi et al., 2004). Hence, it is expected that the HR bundles of Training/Development/Non-discrimination and Job Design will be positively related to workability respectively.

Also, high performance HR practices have been associated with positive employee attitudinal and behavioural work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction (e.g. Kooij, Jansen, Dijkers, & De Lange, 2010), and work engagement (Kooij, Tims, & Akkermans, 2017). These HR practices aim to affect employees' behaviours and actions as required by their organisation; thus, positive employee attitudinal outcomes are anticipated (Truss, 2001) such as increased work engagement levels (Marescaux, de Winne, & Sels, 2012). In line with the Job Demands-Resources model HR practices as job resources are associated with work engagement (Kooij et al., 2013) leading to positive employee health outcomes (Garg & Singh, 2020; Voorde, Veld, & van Veldhoven, 2016). Additionally, it has been shown that work engagement (Boström, Holmgren, Sluiter, Hagberg, & Grimby-Ekman, 2016b; Rongen, Robroek, Schaufeli, & Burdorf, 2014) and

job satisfaction are positively associated with workability (Arshadi & Zare, 2015; Kjellstrand & Gard, 2014). Further to the above, workability could be considered as health-related resource that fosters work engagement and in turn positively affecting future workability (Airila et al., 2014). Based on the above, HR practices can lead to work engagement and job satisfaction, which in turn can positively affect workability. Hence, it could be implied that the effects of HR practices such as training and development, performance appraisals etc. on workability can happen via work engagement and job satisfaction. Hence, it is expected that work engagement and job satisfaction may work as mediators in the relationship between the HR bundles of Training/Development/Non-discrimination - Job Design practices and workability respectively.

Employees' attitudes towards work are influenced by a number of workplace characteristics and social relationships (Churchill, Ford, & Walker, 1976). Employees' perceptions of their organisation and its purposes are defined as organisational climate (Payne & Mansfield, 1973). In line with the social exchange theory, HR practices and the organisational climate in which the practices operate, demonstrate the extent to which organisations value their employees' contributions (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Gould-Williams & Davies, 2005).

In order to understand the way the employees perceive organisational climate, it is important to understand their perceptions of their workplace as well as their relationship with their colleagues (Churchil et al, 1976). Organisational climate can have an impact on employees' wellbeing and motivation at work (Permarupan, Saufi, Kasim, & Balakrishnan, 2013). It has been recognised for its mediating effects on a number of employee outcomes such as motivation, commitment and job satisfaction (Gardner et al., 2001 in Cafferkey, Razak, Lumpur, & Dundon, 2015). According to Bowen and Ostroff (2004, p. 213), the HR practices through the "social influence" that is enacted by the organisational climate, can facilitate "uniform" expectations within the organisation affecting individuals' behaviour and attitudes. High performance HR practices have been shown to be positively associated with employee outcomes through the influence of organisational climate (Tang & Tang, 2012). In order to understand the impact of HR practices on individual outcomes such as workability, researchers have recognised organisational climate as an explanatory variable (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) which links individual to organisational behaviours (multilevel approach) (Moran & Volkwein, 1992). As seen in Chapter 3 motivation is an important aspect of workability thus, employees' perceptions of their workplace can affect their workability. Also, Boström et al., (2016) in their study suggest that work climate can reduce or

increase workability. Based on the above it is expected that with the use of the HR bundles of Training/Development/Non-discrimination and Job Design practices, organisations will be able to positively affect employee workability through the mediating influence of organisational climate. Hence, it is expected that organisational climate may work as a mediating variable between these HR bundles and workability.

Line managers through the implementation of HR practices can affect employee attitudes and behaviours contributing to the development of social exchange relationships with the organisation (Alfes, Shantz, Truss, & Soane, 2013; Gilbert, De Winne, & Sels, 2011). Researchers have recognised the role of line managers' leadership behaviour and effectiveness (beyond the management component) on employees' attitudes at work (Purcell & Kinnie, 2009). Within the framework of social exchange theory (e.g. Blau, 1964), leader-member exchange (LMX) theory can describe the perceived quality of the relationship between line manager and employee (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) and it has been found to be important in explaining the relationship between HR practices and employee outcomes such as employee engagement and affective commitment e.g. (Alfes et al., 2013; Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2012; Gilbert, de Winne, & Sels, 2011). Kuvaas and Dysvik (2010) found that the leader-member exchange relationship is important in

explaining the relationship between HR practices and employee outcomes; LMX is in an interactive relationship between managers and employees; HR practices can result in a number of employee outcomes such as performance and employee engagement (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & van den Heuvel, 2015; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). The relationship between supervisor and subordinate can also affect employee health (Gregersen, Vincent-Hoper, & Nienhaus, 2014). Further to this, research has shown that poor leadership can result in additional work stress affecting adversely employee health (Blanchard, 1993 in Gregory & Osmonbekov, 2019), whereas good leadership can positively affect employee health and wellbeing (Gregory & Osmonbekov, 2019). Additionally, Ilmarinen (2006) stated that leadership is an important component of work factors that can influence workability. When it comes to the relationship between supervisor and employee, LMX is seen as a valuable social resource to employees leading to positive workplaces (Nielsen et al., 2017). Thus, leaders can affect employees through the provision of suitable to the employees' needs resources (Gregersen et al., 2014) such as high performance HR practices (Kooij et al., 2013) easing the job demands (Bakker et al, 2006). Research has shown that the working relationship between an employee and supervisor can have health and wellbeing implications for the employee (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994 in Danna & Griffin, 1999). Finally,

recent research has shown association between LMX and employee physical and mental health, providing evidence as to the role of LMX on employee health (Gregory & Osmonbekov, 2019). Based on the above it is expected that managers and supervisors with the use of the HR bundles of Training/Development/Non-discrimination and Job Design practices can affect workability through LMX. Thus, it is expected that LMX may act as a mediating variable between these two bundles of HR practices and workability.

The research hypotheses are the following:

Hypothesis 1a: The HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices is expected to be statistically significant to workability.

Hypothesis 1b: The HR bundle of Job Design practices is expected to be statistically significant to workability.

Hypothesis 2a: Work engagement mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability.

Hypothesis 2b: Work engagement mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Job Design practices and workability.

Hypothesis 3a: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability.

Hypothesis 3b: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Job Design practices and workability.

Hypothesis 4a: Organisational climate mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability.

Hypothesis 4b: Organisational climate mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Job Design practices and workability.

Hypothesis 5a: LMX mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability.

Hypothesis 5b: LMX mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Job Design practices and workability.

7.5 Analyses used

To test the hypotheses above for both organisations quantitative data were collected through online and paper and pencil survey for Organisation B and online only for Organisation A (see 7.7 section for further details). Several externally validated measures were used to collect quantitative data (further details are provided in the section 7.8). The dataset for both organisations was checked for any missing values; entries with missing values in key variables were removed (further details are given in section 7.10). It was assumed that the data were normally distributed. The level of probability for significance acceptance was 0.05. Correlations were in line with assumptions for sufficient correlations and multicollinearity (Dancey & Reidy, 2007) suggesting that the measures in this research were acceptable for use in the subsequent hierarchical regression analysis (Boon et al., 2011). Hierarchical linear regression was performed to understand the extent to which the bundles of HR practices can predict workability and examine the extra variance accounted for by each additional variable (e.g. Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Moreover, hierarchical regression was performed to test for mediation; the control variables as identified in the published literature to significantly affect workability (see section 7.8) were included in the hierarchical regression analyses; these were entered in the first step and each bundle of HR practices in the second one Boon et

al., (2011). The mediating variables were entered in the third step in line with Boon et al., (2011).

7.6 Participants

Demographic information about the participants is presented at the Tables 7.3 and 7.4 for Organisations A and B respectively.

Table 7.3 Participant demographics for Organisation A (N=77)

	n	Percentage
Sex		
Female	58	75.0%
Male	19	25.0%
Age		
<50s	37	48.0%
50s and over	40	52.0%
Education Level		
CSE's	1	1.3%
O levels	5	6.5%
GCSE's	4	5.2%
A levels	9	11.6%
Vocational education	8	10.4%
Undergraduate course	14	18.2%
Postgraduate course	26	33.7%
Other higher education courses	9	11.7%
Other	1	1.3%
Length of time in the organisation		
0-5 years	29	37.6%
6-10 years	14	18.2%
11 years and over	34	44.1%

Table 7.4 Participant demographics for Organisation B (N=103)

	n	Percentage
Sex		
Female	64	62.10%
Male	38	36.80%
Other	1	0.97%
Age		
<50s	67	65.00%
50s and over	36	35.00%
Education Level		
CSE's	4	3.88%
O levels	4	3.88%
GCSE's	12	11.65%
A levels	3	2.91%
Vocational education	15	14.60%
Undergraduate course	12	11.65%
Postgraduate course	37	35.90%
Other higher education courses	10	9.71%
Other	5	4.85%
No formal qualification	1	0.97%
Length of time in the organisation		
0-5 years	61	59.22%
6-10 years	16	15.50%
11 years and over	26	25.24%

7.7 Procedure

Data were collected via an electronic questionnaire available on an online survey platform (Bristol online surveys) which was supported by Nottingham Trent University. For those participants that did not have access to emails and computers, the questionnaire was also available in paper copy. The participants could complete the paper survey and return it to the researcher in a free post envelope which was addressed to the research supervisor. Only one out of the two participant organisations (Organisation B) used a mixture of online and paper copies of the survey. The link to the online questionnaire was sent directly from researcher's email for Organisation B and via the HR in Organisation A. The paper copies were administered to the relevant departments via the researcher. The first wave of survey was launched in April 2018. After 2 weeks since the survey was launched to two organisations and roughly 2 weeks before the survey closed, a reminder via email was sent to the potential participants. For Organisation A, the email was sent via the HR included in the newsletter bulletin. For Organisation B the reminder was sent via email and distribution of flyers (at the workplace premises) (with regards to the survey) by the researcher. For those that did not have access to emails and computers, the reminders were communicated via the line managers. In this study

for the Organisation B, 38% of respondents (N=42) used the paper method to complete and return the questionnaire.

7.8 Measures

Several externally validated measures were used to collect quantitative data. The full instruments used in both organisations are presented in the Appendix.

HR practices

The HR practices emerged from the interviews with managers and focus groups from both organisations. These are: training and development, participation, flexible working, flexible retirement options, teamwork, fair and equal treatment, recruitment, flexi-time options, bereavement, present opinion in matters, work on own way, challenging work tasks, ergonomic adjustments, adjusted work planning, benefits package, performance appraisals, health and safety training, access to occupational health service and career progression. From the exploratory factor analysis two types of HR bundles were distinguished for the two organisations: the (1) Training/Development/Non-discrimination one and the (2) Job Design one that includes multiple items i.e. HR practices. The Training/Development/Non-discrimination one included the following HR practices: training and development, career

progression, health and safety training, appraisals, recruitment, equal treatment. The Job Design one included: participation, challenging tasks, benefits, ergonomic adjustments, adjusted work planning, work on own way, present opinion on matters. In the survey the participants were asked to indicate for each of these HR practices the extent to which they perceive that their organisation provides/offers them with the practice (based on/in line with the study/measure by Boon et al., 2011) using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) to assess employees' perceptions of HR practices. According to Karanika-Murray & Michaelides (2015), "seven points provide a better approximation to an interval scale than five points" (p. 229). A sample item is "My organisation provides me with opportunities for training and development" (based on/in line with the study/measure by Boon et al., 2011).

Organisational climate

Organisational climate was measured by the nine-item scale (short version) on a seven-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree) developed by Karanika-Murray and Michaelides (unpublished). The short version scale was provided to the researcher by researcher's PhD supervisor – Professor Maria Karanika-Murray. The long version is available from Karanika-Murray and Michaelides (2015). A sample item is "We can adapt

our job roles according to the needs of the workplace” (the referent is the workplace and not the respondent).

Work engagement

Work engagement was measured by the nine-item scale (short version) on a seven-point Likert scale (0=Never to 6=Always) in Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova (2006). The scale consists of three sub-scales which are Vigour, Dedication and Absorption. Sample item for Vigour is “At my work, I feel bursting with energy”; Sample item for dedication is “My job inspires me”; Sample item for absorption is “I get carried away when I am working”.

Organisational individualism-collectivism

Organisational individualism (OI) was measured by six-item scale on a seven-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree) and Organisational collectivism (OC) by seven-item scale on a seven-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree) in (Robert & Wasti, 2002). Sample items for OI include “Employees’ ability to think about themselves is valued” and for OC “Employees are taken of like members of the family”. The referent is the organisation.

Workability score (WAS)

WAS was used as an alternative measure of workability. It is a single-item measure of workability as mentioned by (Fassi et al., 2013), which has showed high convergence with the rest of the traditional Workability Index (Ilmarinen et al., 2015).

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was measured with a single-item question "Overall how satisfied are you with your job?" on a five-point scale (1=Very dissatisfied to 5=Very satisfied) (Scarpello & Campbell, 1983). Research has shown that the single item question of job satisfaction is correlated with a multiple item measure of job satisfaction (Nagy, 2002).

LMX (Leader-member exchange)

LMX was measured using the LMX7 scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). LMX is a dyadic instrument, however, for this study LMX was measured from the perspective of employees and specifically about employees' perceptions of supervisor/line manager – employee relationship. A sample item is "How well does your supervisor/line manager recognise your potential?". Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale (1= Not at all to 5= Fully for this sample item).

Socio-demographic and occupational variables

Data on several socio-demographic variables was collected as part of the study. These included age, social age (Barrett, 2005), gender, educational qualifications, marital status, caring responsibilities. For the qualifications the researcher consulted with the UK government website on educational qualifications (gov.uk, 2021b). Also, occupational data were collected such as job role, contract type, shift work and organisational tenure.

Control variables

Variables such as job demands (physical, cognitive, quantitative, work pace), work conditions, health status, lifestyle, age, have been shown to affect workability therefore included in the study as control variables (Ilmarinen, Tuomi, & Klockars, 1997; van den Berg et al., 2009). The physical job demands and work conditions were measured using the Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ) (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). A sample item for physical demands is "The job requires a lot of physical effort"; for work conditions is "The job has a low risk of accident". Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale (1= Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree). The cognitive and quantitative job demands were measured using the second version of Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (Pejtersen, Søndergå, Kristensen, Borg,

& Bue Bjorner, 2010). A sample item for the quantitative demands is "Is your workload unevenly distributed so it piles up?" on a five-point Likert scale (1=Never/Hardly ever to 5=Always). A sample item for the cognitive demands is "Do you have to keep your eyes on lots of things while you work?" on a five-point Likert scale (1=Never/Hardly ever to 5=Always). Work pace was measured using the second version of Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (Pejtersen et al., 2010). A sample item is "Is it necessary to keep working at a high pace?" which was measured on a five-point Likert scale (1= To a very small extent to 5=To a very large extent). The work pace item "Do you have to work very fast?" was measured on a five-point Likert scale (1=Never/Hardly ever to 5=Always) according to the authors' instructions (Pejtersen et al., 2010). Physical exercise, alcohol consumption, body mass index (BMI) and smoking status were included as indicators of lifestyle (Airila, Hakanen, Punakallio, Lusa, & Luukkonen, 2012). Physical exercise was measured through a single-item question about the frequency of exercise "How frequently do you do some form of moderate exercise (e.g., walking, gardening, etc) for 150 minutes in total per week or vigorous exercise (e.g. jogging, active recreation, etc) for 75 minutes in total per week, or combinations of both?" on a five-point Likert scale (1=Never to 5=Every week). For this question the researcher liaised with the NHS guidelines about physical exercise (NHS, 2019). Alcohol consumption was

measured through a single-item question about the frequency of alcohol consumption per week "How much alcohol do you drink per week in units?" on a five-point Likert scale (1=0 units to 5=More than 14 units). For this question the researcher consulted with NHS guidelines about alcohol consumption in the UK (NHS, 2018). Body mass index as calculated by dividing the body weight by the square of body height (Airila et al., 2012). Smoking status was measured using a single-item question "Do you smoke?" on a three-point scale (1= No, never to 3= Yes, currently). The health status was measured via a single-item question "In general, would you say your health is:" on a five-point Likert scale (1=Poor to 5=Excellent) (Pejtersen et al., 2010). The Figure 7.1 shows how the hypotheses model is linked to the external and internal context in relation to HR bundles of practices and workability.

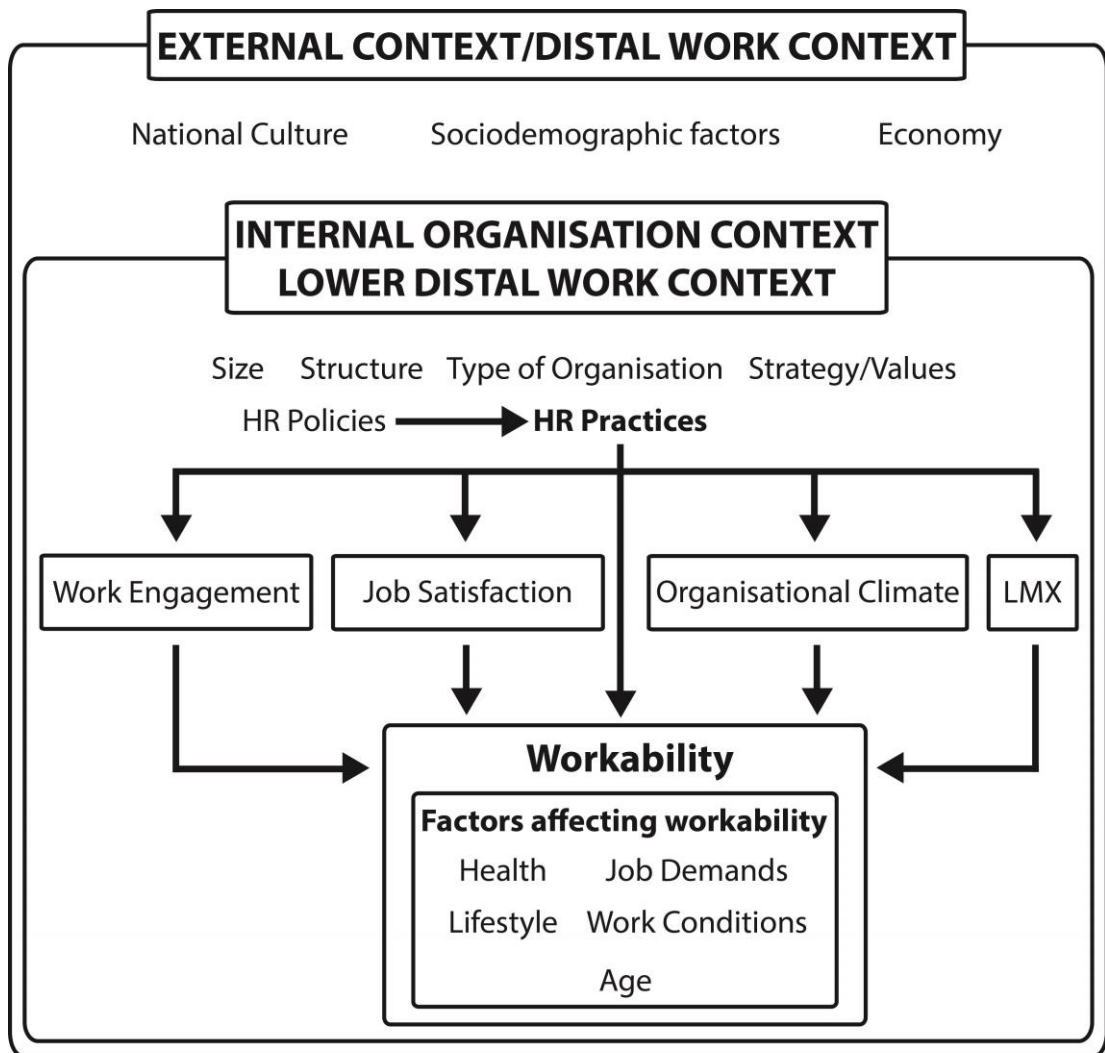


Figure 7.1 Hypotheses model, external and internal context in relation to HR practices and workability. HR practices reflect the bundles of Training/Development/Non-discrimination and Job Design practices

7.9 Results

The results emerged from hierarchical linear regression analysis using IBM SPSS version 26. Hierarchical linear regression analysis was performed for each bundle of HR practices. The dependent variable is workability; the control variables were entered in the

first step and each bundle of HR practices in the second one. The mediating variables were entered in the third step. The analysis was performed for Organisations A and B separately.

7.10 Sample

The first wave of the survey was administered in April 2018. For the Organisation A the completed surveys received 79 responses. From those participants 2 were excluded because of the missing values in key variables. This left 77 responses available for further analysis. For the Organisation B completed surveys received 107 responses. From those participants 4 were excluded because of the missing values in key variables. This left 103 responses available for analysis.

With regards to factor analysis Kass & Tinsley (1979) suggest 5-10 participants per item. Based on Kass & Tinsley (1979) the sample for Organisation A meets the requirements for factor analysis considering the minimum number of participants required per item: $5 * 13$ HR practices = 65 which is smaller than 77 total participants available sample for analysis. Similarly for Organisation B where the available sample is 103 participants. With regards to preliminary tests used, Barlett's test of sphericity and Kaiser-Myer-Olkin (KMO) were performed to measure the

sampling adequacy and suitability of data for factor analysis (Pallant, 2005). For Organisation A KMO was 0.84, which is higher than 0.5 indicating that factor analysis is an appropriate method of analysis. The Barlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$). For Organisation B the KMO was 0.80, which is higher than 0.5 indicating that factor analysis is an appropriate method of analysis. The Barlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$).

Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha and correlations of the variables in the study are presented at Tables 7.5 and 7.6. Work engagement, LMX, organisational climate had good to excellent internal consistency.

Organisation A

The acceptable levels for reliability for Cronbach's alpha coefficient should reach 0.6 (Taber, 2018). The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for work engagement scale for this study was 0.91, which shows high internal consistency. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for organisational climate for this study was 0.90, which shows high internal consistency. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for LMX was 0.89. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for work conditions was 0.6, which is an acceptable level of reliability (Taber, 2018). The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient

for physical demands was 0.90; for cognitive demands was 0.76; for quantitative demands was 0.76; for work pace was 0.78. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for organisational collectivism was 0.89 and for organisational individualism was 0.81.

Organisation B

The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for work engagement scale for this study was 0.94 which shows high internal consistency. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for organisational climate for this study was 0.91, which shows high internal consistency. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for LMX was 0.93. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for work conditions was 0.76. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for physical demands was 0.93; for cognitive demands was 0.71; for quantitative demands was 0.76; for work pace was 0.83. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for Organisational collectivism was 0.93 and for Organisational individualism was 0.82.

It was not possible to measure internal consistency for job satisfaction, age, and workability because these were single items. Also, it was not possible to measure internal consistency for job demands in total as this was computed into one variable to reflect the different aspects of job demands including scales for physical, cognitive, quantitative job demands and work pace.

None of the study variables had an extremely high correlation (except for the variables of collectivism and individualism) that could cause statistical issues in the simple regression analyses, thus the results should be interpreted with caution. The high correlation between collectivism and individualism might be explained by the fact that they are both considered robust dimensions of organisational culture (Robert & Wastii, 2002).

Table 7.5 Cross-sectional Descriptive Statistics, Scale reliabilities and Correlations between Variables (N =77) Organisation A

	M	SD	a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Workability	9.69	1.57	-													
2 Age	46.73	12.81	-	0.17												
3 Job Satisfaction	3.84	.71	-	.22	-.01											
4 Work Engagement	47.16	8.50	.91	.30**	.03	.46**										
5 LMX	25.66	5.29	.89	.06	-.12	.46**	.34**									
6 Organisational Climate	46.42	9.80	.90	.16	-.09	.43**	.47**	.52**								
7 Lifestyle	34.38	5.12	-	-.22*	.21	-.19	-.10	-.13	-.19							
8 Health Status	3.38	.92	-	.40**	.01	.19*	.18	.09	.09	-.41**						
9 Work Conditions	18.55	2.91	0.6	.23*	-.05	.29**	.18	.21*	.28*	-.11	.22*					
10 Job Demands	42.50	7.48	-	-.05	.08	-.28*	.18	-.12	-.11	.19	-.13	-.33**				

11 Individualism (OI)	26.46	6.21	.81	.07	-.11	.31**	.21	.40**	.70**	-.04	.01	.29**	-.20			
12 Collectivism (OC)	28.22	8.85	.89	-.03	-.09	.19*	.18	.22*	.55**	-.05	-.02	.07	-.10	.60**		
13 HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination	30.61	6.76	.89	.07	.13	.47**	.27**	.47**	.57**	-.01	.01	.40**	-.12	.64**	.47**	
14 HR Job Design	32.36	8.47	.89	.03	-.01	.38**	.40**	.44**	.69**	-.11	-.04	.25*	-.02	.70**	.68**	.61**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 7.6 Cross-sectional Descriptive Statistics, Scale reliabilities and Correlations between Variables (N =103) Organisation B

	M	SD	a	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Workability	9.40	1.64	-													
2 Age	43.48	11.99	-	-.16												
3 Job Satisfaction	3.67	1.00	-	.40**	-.15											
4 Work Engagement	44.91	12.34	.94	.42**	.01	.53**										
5 LMX	24.51	7.12	.93	.40**	-.14	.35**	.51**									
6 Organisational Climate	45.60	11.80	.91	.23*	-.15	.42**	.56**	.65**								
7 Lifestyle	34.08	5.27	-	.95	.08	.10	.09	.11	.04							
8 Health Status	3.30	.88	-	.32**	-.03	.19*	.28**	.20*	.11	-.14						
9 Work Conditions	16.73	4.40	.76	-.16	-.15	.12	.16	.14	.18	-.02	.15					
10 Job Demands	42.98	8.56	-	-.24*	.22*	-.29*	-.13	-.34*	-.16	.05	-.02	.17				
11 Individualism	26.40	8.88	.82	.26**	-.24*	.43**	.52**	.49**	.69**	.06	.16	.25*	-.13			

(OI)

12 Collectivism (OC)	29.56	11.34	.93	.41**	-.22*	.54**	.59**	.63**	.75**	.05	.24**	.13	-.24*	.72**		
13 HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination	30.96	7.30	.90	.24**	-.08	.46**	.38**	.46**	.63**	.07	.14	.10	-.35**	.57**	.56**	
14 HR Job Design	31.42	9.84	.90	.23*	-.08	.43**	.48**	.49**	.77**	.04	.16	.27**	-.28**	.72**	.62**	.63**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

The bivariate correlations showed whether the two sets of HR practices (HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination and HR bundle of Job Design) are positively related to workability, but they did not show the extent to which they can predict workability or examine the extra variance accounted for by each additional variable (e.g. Cohen & Cohen, 1983). Therefore, hierarchical linear regression was performed to understand this.

Organisation A

Hypothesis 1a

The results of the hierarchical regression analysis for in Organisation A showed that the control variables explained 17% of the variance in employees' workability which was statistically significant. The addition of HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices explained 16% of the workability variance and was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices is not significantly related to workability (standardised beta was 0.01, $p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis 1a was not supported.

The results for regression analysis with workability as dependant variable are shown at Table 7.7.

Table 7.7 Regression analysis for Workability and HR Training / Development/Non-discrimination practices (N=77)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	5.92	2.25		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.05	.62
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.14	.25
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.18	.12
Health Status	.51	.21	.30	.01
Age	.03	.01	.20	.05
Step 2				
Constant	5.89	2.29		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.06	.63
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.14	.26
Work Conditions	.10	.07	.17	.16
Health Status	.52	.21	.30	.01
Age	.03	.01	.21	.06
HR Training /Development/Non-discrimination practices	.00	.03	.01	.94

$AdjR^2 = 0.17$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .001$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis1b

The addition of HR Job Design practices had as a result the $AdjR^2$ to decrease from 16% to 15%, but this was not significant. The regression analysis showed that HR bundle of Job Design practices is not significantly related to workability (standardised beta was 0.03, $p > 0.05$).

Thus, Hypothesis 1b was not supported.

The results for regression analysis with workability as dependant variable are shown at Table 7.8.

Table 7.8 Regression analysis for Workability and HR Job design practices (N=77)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	5.88	2.26		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.05	.66
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.13	.30
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.18	.12
Health Status	.53	.21	.31	.01
Age	.02	.01	.18	.10
Step 2				
Constant	5.75	2.35		.01
Job Demands	.01	.03	.05	.67
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.12	.33
Work Conditions	.09	.07	.17	.15
Health Status	.54	.21	.31	.01
Age	.02	.01	.19	.10
HR Job Design practices	.01	.02	.03	.82

$AdjR^2 = 0.16$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .001$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 2a

For a variable to mediate the relationship between perceived HR practices and workability, it needs: 1) the HR practices to be significantly associated to the mediator 2) the HR practices to be significantly associated to workability 3) when adding the mediator in the regression model, the relationship between perceived HR practices and workability decreases significantly (Boon et al.,

2011). Full mediation is achieved when if the impact of the bundles of HR practices on workability becomes non-significant when controlling for the mediator (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was significantly associated with work engagement. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was entered in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.28, $p < 0.05$ (see Table 7.9), thus, the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1a, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.9 Regression Estimates for Work Engagement (N=77)

	Work Engagement			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	18.42	12.94		.15
Job Demands	.32	.14	.28	.02
Lifestyle	-.10	.21	-.06	.64
Work Conditions	.66	.35	.23	.06
Health Status	1.70	1.22	.18	.16
Age	.01	.08	.08	.88
Step 2				
Constant	12.85	12.75		.31
Job Demands	.32	.13	.29	.01
Lifestyle	-.09	.21	-.05	.68
Work Conditions	.32	.37	.11	.39
Health Status	2.06	1.19	.22	.08
Age	-.06	.08	.00	.99
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.35	.15	.28	.02

*AdjR*²= .08 for Step 1; Δ *AdjR*²= .07 for Step 2 (all ps<.001)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). Control variables were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices in the second step and work engagement added in the third step. The regression analysis showed that work engagement does not mediate the relationship between HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability (*AdjR*² increased from 17% to roughly 20%). This increase was significant $p < 0.05$. For work engagement the standardised beta

was 0.24, $p < 0.05$ and for HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices the standardised beta decreased from 0.02, $p > 0.05$ to -0.05, $p > 0.05$. Thus, neither the third condition was met, and the mediation hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 2a was not supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and work engagement as mediator are shown at Table 7.10.

Table 7.10 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Work Engagement (N=77)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	5.75	2.31		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.06	.61
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.13	.31
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.18	.12
Health Status	.55	.22	.31	.01
Age	.02	.01	.19	.09
Step 2				
Constant	4.96	2.29		.03
Job Demands	-.00	.03	.06	.95
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.13	.35
Work Conditions	.07	.06	.17	.28
Health Status	.48	.22	.32	.03
Age	.02	.01	.19	.09
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.04	.02	.02	.04
Step 3				
Constant	5.08	2.33		.03
Job Demands	-.00	.03	-.01	.93
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.11	.35
Work Conditions	.08	.07	.14	.26
Health Status	.46	.22	.26	.03
Age	.02	.01	.19	.09
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	-.01	.03	-.05	.04
Work Engagement	.05	.02	.24	.70

$AdjR^2 = .017$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .001$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .05$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 2b

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Job Design practices was significantly associated with work engagement. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Job Design practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.41, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.11), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1b, the HR bundle of Job Design practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.11 Regression Estimates for Work Engagement (N=77)

	Work Engagement			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	19.73	12.80		.12
Job Demands	.30	.14	.27	.03
Lifestyle	-.10	.21	-.06	.62
Work Conditions	.64	.35	.23	.07
Health Status	1.47	1.20	.16	.22
Age	.04	.08	.08	.64
Step 2				
Constant	5.24	12.36		.67
Job Demands	.27	.12	.25	.03
Lifestyle	.02	.19	.01	.90
Work Conditions	.31	.33	.11	.35
Health Status	2.30	1.12	.25	.04
Age	.05	.07	.08	.47
HR Job Design practices	.42	.11	.41	.00

$AdjR^2 = .01$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .15$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of work engagement as a mediator had as a result the $AdjR^2$ to increase from 16% to roughly 20% which was significant ($p < 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that work engagement does not mediate the relationship between HR Job Design practices and workability. For work engagement the standardised beta was 0.27, $p < 0.05$ and for HR Job Design practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.05 $p > 0.05$ to -0.06, $p > 0.05$). Thus, neither the third condition for mediation was met and the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 2b was not supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and work engagement as mediator are shown at Table 7.12.

Table 7.12 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Work Engagement (N=77)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	5.69	2.31		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.05	.64
Lifestyle	-.03	.04	-.11	.37
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.18	.12
Health Status	.57	.22	.32	.01
Age	.02	.01	.16	.16
Step 2				
Constant	5.35	2.45		.03
Job Demands	.01	.03	.05	.66
Lifestyle	-.03	.04	-.10	.42
Work Conditions	.09	.06	.17	.18
Health Status	.59	.22	.34	.01
Age	.02	.01	.16	.15
HR Job Design practices	.01	.02	.05	.66
Step 3				
Constant	5.09	2.39		.03
Job Demands	-.03	.03	-.02	.89
Lifestyle	-.03	.04	-.11	.39
Work Conditions	.07	.06	.14	.25
Health Status	.47	.22	.27	.03
Age	.02	.01	.14	.20
HR Job Design practices	-.01	.02	-.06	.63
Work Engagement	.05	.02	.27	.03

$AdjR^2 = .017$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .002$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .05$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 3a

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was significantly associated with job satisfaction. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.46, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.13), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1a, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.13 Regression Estimates for Job Satisfaction (N=77)

	Job Satisfaction			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	3.77	1.03		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.01	-.20	.08
Lifestyle	-.01	.02	-.08	.52
Work Conditions	.05	.03	.19	.10
Health Status	.11	.10	.14	.26
Age	.00	.01	.01	.89
Step 2				
Constant	3.15	.94		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.01	-.21	.05
Lifestyle	-.01	.02	-.08	.48
Work Conditions	.00	.03	-.00	.98
Health Status	.13	.09	.18	.11
Age	.01	.01	.00	.99
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.05	.01	.45	.00

$AdjR^2 = .011$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .017$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of job satisfaction as a mediator had as a result the $AdjR^2$ to increase from 15.60% to 16.60% which was not significant ($p > 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability. For job satisfaction the standardised beta was 0.17, $p > 0.05$ and for HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.01, $p > 0.05$ to -

0.07, $p > 0.05$) which was not significant. Thus, neither the third condition for mediation is met and the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 3a was not supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and job satisfaction as mediator are shown at Table 7.14.

Table 7.14 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Job Satisfaction (N=77)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	5.92	2.25		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.06	.62
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.14	.25
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.18	.12
Health Status	.51	.21	.30	.01
Age	.03	.01	.21	.05
Step 2				
Constant	5.89	2.30		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.06	.63
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.14	.26
Work Conditions	.10	.07	.18	.16
Health Status	.51	.21	.30	.01
Age	.03	.01	.21	.06
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.00	.03	.01	.94
Step 3				
Constant	4.66	2.46		.06
Job Demands	.02	.03	.09	.43
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.13	.31
Work Conditions	.09	.07	.18	.16
Health Status	.46	.21	.27	.03
Age	.07	.01	.21	.05
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	-.02	.03	-.07	.58
Job Satisfaction	.39	.29	.17	.19

$AdjR^2 = .017$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .00$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .002$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 3b

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Job Design practices was significantly associated with job satisfaction. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the Job Design practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.36, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.15), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1b, the HR bundle of Job Design practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.15 Regression Estimates for Job Satisfaction (N=77)

	Job Satisfaction			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	3.86	1.01		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.01	-.21	.07
Lifestyle	-.01	.02	-.10	.42
Work Conditions	.04	.03	.19	.11
Health Status	.08	.09	.11	.37
Age	.06	.01	.08	.45
Step 2				
Constant	3.04	.97		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.01	-.24	.03
Lifestyle	-.01	.02	-.05	.65
Work Conditions	.02	.03	.09	.46
Health Status	.12	.09	.16	.16
Age	.01	.01	.12	.26
HR Job Design practices	.03	.01	.36	.00

$AdjR^2 = .017$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .12$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of job satisfaction as a mediator had as a result the AdjR² to increase from 15% to roughly 16% which was not significant ($p>0.05$). The regression analysis showed that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between HR Job Design practices and workability. For job satisfaction the standardised beta was 0.18, $p>0.05$ and for HR Job Design practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.03, $p>0.05$ to -0.04, $p>0.05$) which was not significant. Thus, neither the third condition for mediation was met and the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and job satisfaction as mediator are shown at Table 7.16.

Table 7.16 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Job Satisfaction (N=77)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	5.88	2.26		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.05	.66
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.13	.30
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.18	.12
Health Status	.53	.21	.31	.01
Age	.02	.01	.18	.10
Step 2				
Constant	5.75	2.35		.01
Job Demands	.01	.03	.05	.67
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.13	.33
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.17	.15
Health Status	.54	.21	.31	.01
Age	.02	.01	.19	.10
HR Job Design practices	.01	.02	.03	.81
Step 3				
Constant	4.46	2.50		.07
Job Demands	.02	.03	.09	.43
Lifestyle	-.03	.04	-.11	.36
Work Conditions	.08	.06	.16	.19
Health Status	.49	.21	.28	.02
Age	.02	.01	.16	.14
HR Job Design practices	-.01	.02	-.04	.74
Job Satisfaction	.42	.29	.18	.15

$AdjR^2 = .02$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .00$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .02$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 4a

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was

significantly associated with organisational climate. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.57, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.17), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1a, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.17 Regression Estimates for Organisational Climate
(N=77)

Organisational Climate				
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	44.67	14.98		.00
Job Demands	-.06	.16	-.05	.71
Lifestyle	-.27	.25	-.15	.27
Work Conditions	.83	.41	.25	.04
Health Status	.04	1.40	.00	.98
Age	-.04	.09	-.05	.67
Step 2				
Constant	33.28	12.77		.01
Job Demands	-.07	.13	-.06	.59
Lifestyle	-.26	.21	-.14	.21
Work Conditions	.02	.38	.01	.95
Health Status	.63	1.17	.06	.59
Age	-.05	.08	-.07	.46
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.82	.15	.57	.00

$AdjR^2 = .011$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .27$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The regression analysis showed that organisational climate does not mediate the relationship between HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability ($AdjR^2$ decreased from 16.10% to 16%). This change was not significant. For organisational climate the standardised beta was 0.13 $p > 0.05$ and for HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.21 to -0.05,

$p > 0.05$) which was not significant. Thus, neither the third condition for mediation was met and the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 4a was not supported.

The results for regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and organisational climate as mediator are shown at Table 7.18.

Table 7.18 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Organisational Climate (N=77)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	5.81	2.25		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.04	.71
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.13	.30
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.18	.11
Health Status	.53	.21	.31	.01
Age	.03	.01	.21	.06
Step 2				
Job Demands	5.74	2.30		.01
Lifestyle	.01	.02	.04	.71
Work Conditions	-.04	.04	-.13	.31
Health Status	.09	.07	.17	.16
Age	.53	.21	.31	.01
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.03	.01	.21	.06
Step 3				
Constant	5.05	2.41		.04
Job Demands	.01	.02	.05	.67
Lifestyle	-.03	.04	-.11	.38
Work Conditions	.09	.07	.17	.17
Health Status	.52	.21	.30	.01
Age	.03	.01	.22	.05
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	-.01	.03	-.05	.72
Organisational Climate	.02	.02	.13	.34

$AdjR^2 = .23$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .01$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .01$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 4b

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Job Design practices was significantly associated with organisational climate. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Job Design practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.68, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.19), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1b, the HR bundle of Job Design practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.19 Regression Estimates for Organisational Climate

(N=77)

	Organisational Climate			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	45.07	14.69		.00
Job Demands	-.05	.16	-.04	.76
Lifestyle	-.31	.24	-.17	.20
Work Conditions	.81	.40	.25	.05
Health Status	-.17	1.36	-.02	.90
Age	.01	.09	.01	.95
Step 2				
Constant	23.55	11.27		.04
Job Demands	-.11	.12	-.08	.36
Lifestyle	-.15	.18	-.08	.42
Work Conditions	.18	.31	.05	.56
Health Status	.81	1.02	.08	.42
Age	.05	.07	.07	.43
HR Job Design practices	.76	.10	.67	.00

$AdjR^2 = .11$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .41$ for Step 2; (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of organisational climate as a mediator had as a result the $AdjR^2$ to increase from 15% to 16% which was not significant ($p > 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that organisational climate does not mediate the relationship between HR Job Design practices and workability. For organisational climate the standardised beta was 0.21, $p > 0.05$ and for HR Job Design practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.02 to -0.11,

$p > 0.05$) which was not significant. Thus, neither the third condition for mediation was met and the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 4b was not supported.

The results for regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and organisational climate as mediator are shown at Table 7.20.

Table 7.20 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Organisational Climate (N=77)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	5.78	2.25		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.04	.75
Lifestyle	-.03	.04	-.11	.36
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.19	.11
Health Status	.54	.21	.32	.01
Age	.02	.01	.18	.11
Step 2				
Constant	5.66	2.35		.01
Job Demands	.01	.03	.03	.77
Lifestyle	-.03	.04	-.11	.38
Work Conditions	.01	.06	.18	.14
Health Status	.55	.21	.32	.01
Age	.02	.01	.18	.11
HR Job Design practices	.00	.02	.02	.83
Step 3				
Constant	4.86	2.41		.04
Job Demands	.01	.03	.05	.66
Lifestyle	-.03	.04	-.09	.45
Work Conditions	.09	.06	.17	.16
Health Status	.52	.21	.30	.01
Age	.02	.01	.17	.14
HR Job Design practices	-.02	.03	-.11	.46
Organisational Climate	.03	.03	.21	.19

$AdjR^2 = .22$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .01$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .02$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 5a

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was

significantly associated with LMX. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.48, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.21), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1a, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.21 Regression Estimates for LMX (N=77)

	LMX			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	23.54	8.27		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.90	-.04	.73
Lifestyle	-.10	.14	-.10	.48
Work Conditions	.32	.23	.18	.15
Health Status	.18	.77	.03	.81
Age	.00	.05	.00	.97
Step 2				
Constant	18.57	7.53		.01
Job Demands	-.03	.08	-.05	.68
Lifestyle	-.10	.12	-.10	.43
Work Conditions	-.04	.22	-.03	.83
Health Status	.43	.69	.07	.54
Age	-.01	.04	-.01	.91
HR Training /development/non- discrimination practices	.37	.90	.48	.00

$AdjR^2 = .10$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .10$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The regression analysis showed that LMX does not mediate the relationship between HR Training/ development/ non-discrimination practices and workability (AdjR² decreased from 15.60% to 14.40%) which was not significant. For LMX the standardised beta was -0.03 $p > 0.05$ and for HR Training/ Development/Non-discrimination practices the standardised beta increased (from 0.08 to 0.09, $p > 0.05$) which was not significant. Thus, neither the third condition for mediation was met and the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 5a was not supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and LMX as mediator are shown at Table 7.22.

Table 7.22 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of LMX

(N=77)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	5.92	2.25		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.06	.62
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.14	.25
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.18	.12
Health Status	.51	.21	.29	.01
Age	.03	.01	.21	.05
Step 2				
Constant	5.89	2.29		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.05	.63
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.14	.26
Work Conditions	.09	.07	.17	.16
Health Status	.51	.21	.30	.01
Age	.03	.01	.21	.06
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.00	.03	.08	.94
Step 3				
Constant	5.91	2.41		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.05	.63
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.14	.26
Work Conditions	.09	.07	.17	.17
Health Status	.52	.21	.30	.01
Age	.03	.01	.21	.06
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.00	.03	.09	.94
LMX	-.00	.04	-.00	.97

$AdjR^2 = .17$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .01$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = -.01$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 5b

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Job Design practices was significantly associated with LMX. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Job Design practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.43, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.23), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1b, the HR bundle of Job Design practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.23 Regression Estimates for LMX (N=77)

	LMX			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	24.55	8.35		.00
Job Demands	-.04	.09	-.06	.62
Lifestyle	-.10	.14	-.10	.45
Work Conditions	.31	.23	.17	.17
Health Status	.03	.77	.01	.97
Age	.02	.05	.04	.73
Step 2				
Constant	16.86	7.8		.03
Job Demands	-.07	.08	-.09	.42
Lifestyle	-.04	.13	-.04	.73
Work Conditions	.09	.22	.05	.68
Health Status	.38	.71	.06	.59
Age	.03	.05	.08	.47
HR Job Design practices	.27	.07	.43	.00

$AdjR^2 = -.01$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .012$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of LMX as a mediator had as a result the AdjR² to decrease from 14.80% to 13.60% which was not significant ($p > 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that LMX does not mediate the relationship between HR Job Design practices and workability. For LMX the standardised beta was -0.014, $p > 0.05$ and for HR Job Design practices the standardised beta increased (from 0.03 to 0.032, $p > 0.05$) which was not significant. Thus, neither the third condition for mediation was met and the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 5b was not supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and LMX as mediator are shown at Table 7.24.

Table 7.24 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of LMX
(N=77)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	5.88	2.25		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.05	.66
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.13	.30
Work Conditions	.10	.06	.18	.12
Health Status	.53	.21	.31	.01
Age	.02	.01	.18	.10
Step 2				
Constant	5.74	2.35		.01
Job Demands	.01	.02	.05	.67
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.12	.33
Work Conditions	.09	.06	.17	.15
Health Status	.54	.21	.31	.01
Age	.02	.01	.19	.10
HR Job Design practices	.01	.02	.03	.82
Step 3				
Constant	5.81	2.45		.02
Job Demands	.01	.02	.05	.68
Lifestyle	-.04	.04	-.12	.33
Work Conditions	.09	.07	.17	.16
Health Status	.54	.21	.31	.01
Age	.02	.01	.19	.10
HR Job Design practices	.01	.02	.03	.80
LMX	-.00	.04	-.01	.91

$AdjR^2 = .016$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .01$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .01$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

None of the hypotheses in Organisation A were supported.

Organisation B

Hypothesis 1a

The results of the regression analysis for all participants in organisation B showed that control variables explained 23% of the variance of workability, which was statistically significant. The addition of HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices explained 26% of the workability variance and was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices are positively related to workability (standardised beta was 0.22, $p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 1a was fully supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable are shown at Table 7.25.

Table 7.25 Regression analysis for Workability and HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices (N=103)
Workability

	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	8.65	1.65		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.02	-.13	.17
Lifestyle	.05	.03	.18	.06
Work Conditions	-.11	.03	-.30	.00
Health Status	.84	.19	.44	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.07
Step 2				
Constant	6.97	1.80		.00
Job Demands	-.01	.02	-.07	.50
Lifestyle	.04	.03	.14	.13
Work Conditions	-.11	.03	-.29	.00
Health Status	.74	.19	.38	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.16	.09
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.05	.02	.22	.03

$AdjR^2 = .02$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .03$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 1b

The addition of HR Job Design practices had as a result the $AdjR^2$ to increase from 23% to 25%, but this was not significant ($p > 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that HR practices of Job Design is not related to workability (standardised beta was 0.19, $p > 0.05$).

Thus, Hypothesis 1b was not supported.

The results for regression analysis with workability as dependant variable are shown at Table 7.26.

Table 7.26 Regression analysis for Workability and HR Job Design practices (N=103)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	8.67	1.65		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.02	-.14	.15
Lifestyle	.05	.03	.18	.06
Work Conditions	-.11	.03	-.30	.00
Health Status	.84	.19	.44	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.08
Step 2				
Constant	7.98	1.66		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.02	-.10	.31
Lifestyle	.05	.03	.16	.09
Work Conditions	-.12	.04	-.33	.00
Health Status	.75	.19	.39	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.08
HR Job Design practices	.03	.02	.19	.06

$AdjR^2 = .23$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .02$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 2a

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was significantly associated with work engagement. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, HR bundle of

Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.47, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.27), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1a, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was met.

Table 7.27 Regression Estimates for Work Engagement (N=103)

	Work Engagement			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	20.25	12.79		.11
Job Demands	-.15	.15	-.10	.33
Lifestyle	.32	.22	.15	.16
Work Conditions	.10	.27	.04	.70
Health Status	4.97	1.43	.39	.00
Age	.04	.10	.04	.70
Step 2				
Constant	-4.86	12.65		.70
Job Demands	.06	.14	.05	.65
Lifestyle	.12	.20	.06	.54
Work Conditions	.14	.24	.05	.57
Health Status	3.49	1.32	.26	.01
Age	.06	.09	.06	.50
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.83	.18	.47	.00

$AdjR^2 = .11$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .18$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). Control variables were entered in the first step of the regression, the perceived HR practices in the second step, and work engagement added in the third step. The regression analysis showed that work engagement mediates the relationship between HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability (AdjR² increased from 25% to 28%). For work engagement the standardised beta was 0.23, $p < 0.05$ and for HR Training/ development/ non-discrimination practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.21 $p < 0.05$ to 0.10, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the third condition for mediation was met and the hypothesis was supported.

The 2a Hypothesis was fully supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and work engagement as mediator are shown at Table 7.28.

Table 7.28 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Work Engagement (N=103)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	P
Step 1				
Constant	8.58	1.67		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.02	-.15	.14
Lifestyle	.06	.03	.20	.04
Work Conditions	-.11	.04	-.30	.00
Health Status	.82	.19	.43	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.09
Step 2				
Constant	7.02	1.82		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.02	-.08	.44
Lifestyle	.047	.03	.16	.11
Work Conditions	-.11	.04	-.29	.00
Health Status	.72	.19	.38	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.16	.10
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.05	.03	.21	.05
Step 3				
Constant	7.18	1.79		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.02	-.09	.37
Lifestyle	.04	.03	.14	.13
Work Conditions	-.11	.03	-.31	.00
Health Status	.61	.19	.32	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.07
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.03	.03	.10	.37
Work Engagement	.03	.02	.22	.05

$AdjR^2 = .22$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .02$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .02$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 2b

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Job Design practices was significantly associated with work engagement. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Job Design practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.45, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.29), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1b, the HR bundle of Job Design practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.29 Regression Estimates for Work Engagement (N=103)

	Work Engagement			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	19.41	12.55		.12
Job Demands	-.13	.15	-.10	.36
Lifestyle	.32	.22	.15	.15
Work Conditions	.11	.27	.04	.67
Health Status	4.92	1.42	.36	.00
Age	.04	.10	.04	.67
Step 2				
Constant	8.13	11.60		.48
Job Demands	.01	.17	.01	.94
Lifestyle	.20	.20	.09	.33
Work Conditions	-.10	.25	-.04	.68
Health Status	3.54	1.32	.26	.00
Age	.05	.09	.05	.60
HR Job Design Practices	.54	.12	.45	.00

*AdjR*²= .011 for Step 1; Δ *AdjR*²= .016 for Step 2 (all *ps*<.001)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of work engagement as a mediator had as a result the *AdjR*² to increase from 25% to 28% which was significant (*p* < 0.05). The regression analysis showed that work engagement does not mediate the relationship between HR Job Design practices and workability. For work engagement the standardised beta was 0.24, *p*<0.05 and for HR Job Design practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.18, *p*>0.05 to 0.07, *p*>0.05). Thus, the third condition for mediation was not met and the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 2b was not supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and work engagement as mediator are shown at Table 7.30.

Table 7.30 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Work Engagement (N=103)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	8.65	1.64		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.02	-.16	.12
Lifestyle	.06	.03	.19	.04
Work Conditions	-.11	.04	-.30	.00
Health Status	.82	.19	.43	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.08
Step 2				
Constant	8.02	1.66		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.02	-.11	.26
Lifestyle	.05	.03	.17	.07
Work Conditions	-.12	.04	-.33	.00
Health Status	.74	.19	.39	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.08
HR Training /Development/Non-discrimination practices	.03	.02	.18	.09
Step 3				
Constant	7.75	1.63		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.02	-.12	.24
Lifestyle	.04	.03	.15	.11
Work Conditions	-.12	.03	-.32	.00
Health Status	.63	.19	.33	.00
Age	-.03	.01	-.18	.06
HR Job Design practices	.01	.02	.07	.53
Work Engagement	.03	.02	.24	.03

$AdjR^2 = .23$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .02$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .03$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 3a

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was significantly associated with job satisfaction. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.38, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.31), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1a, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was met.

Table 7.31 Regression Estimates for Job Satisfaction (N=103)

	Job Satisfaction			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	3.01	1.11		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.01	-.24	.02
Lifestyle	.03	.02	.18	.07
Work Conditions	.01	.02	.01	.94
Health Status	.34	.12	.28	.00
Age	-.01	.01	-.11	.28
Step 2				
Constant	1.15	1.15		.32
Job Demands	-.01	.01	-.12	.24
Lifestyle	.02	.02	.12	.23
Work Conditions	.01	.02	.02	.83
Health Status	.23	.12	.19	.06
Age	-.01	.01	-.09	.36
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.06	.02	.38	.00

$AdjR^2 = .13$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .12$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The regression analysis showed that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability ($AdjR^2$ increased from 26% to 30%). For job satisfaction the standardised beta was 0.26, $p < 0.05$ and for HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.22, $p < 0.05$ to

0.12, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the third condition of mediation was met, and the hypothesis was supported.

Thus, the hypothesis 3a was fully supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and job satisfaction as mediator are shown at Table 7.32.

Table 7.32 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Job Satisfaction (N=103)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	8.65	1.66		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.02	-.14	.17
Lifestyle	.05	.03	.18	.06
Work Conditions	-.11	.03	-.30	.00
Health Status	.84	.19	.44	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.18	.07
Step 2				
Constant	6.98	1.81		.00
Job Demands	-.01	.02	-.07	.50
Lifestyle	.04	.03	.14	.14
Work Conditions	-.11	.03	-.29	.00
Health Status	.74	.19	.38	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.16	.09
HR Training /Development/Non-discrimination practices	.05	.03	.22	.03
Step 3				
Constant	6.50	1.77		.00
Job Demands	-.01	.02	-.04	.71
Lifestyle	.03	.03	.11	.23
Work Conditions	-.11	.03	-.30	.00
Health Status	.64	.19	.33	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.14	.14
HR Job Design practices	.03	.03	.12	.27
Job Satisfaction	.41	.17	.26	.01

$AdjR^2 = .23$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .03$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .04$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 3b

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Job Design practices was significantly associated with job satisfaction. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Job Design practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.33, $p < 0.05$ (see Table 7.33), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1b, the HR bundle of Job Design practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.33 Regression Estimates for Job Satisfaction (N=103)

	Job Satisfaction			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	2.80	1.11		.01
Job Demands	-.03	.01	-.23	.03
Lifestyle	.04	.02	.19	.07
Work Conditions	.01	.02	.02	.83
Health Status	.33	.12	.27	.01
Age	-.01	.01	-.09	.37
Step 2				
Constant	2.07	1.08		.05
Job Demands	-.02	.01	-.16	.13
Lifestyle	.03	.02	.15	.12
Work Conditions	-.01	.02	-.04	.69
Health Status	.24	.12	.12	.05
Age	-.01	.01	-.09	.38
HR Job Design Practices	.03	.01	.33	.00

$AdjR^2 = .12$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .08$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of Job satisfaction as mediator had as a result the $AdjR^2$ to increase from 25% to 30%, which was significant ($p < 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that job satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between HR Job Design practices and workability. For job satisfaction the standardised beta was 0.27, $p < 0.05$ and for HR Job Design practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.19, $p > 0.05$ to 0.10, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the third condition for mediation was not met and the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

The results for regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and Job satisfaction as mediator are shown at Table 7.34.

Table 7.34 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Job Satisfaction (N=103)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	8.67	1.66		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.02	-.14	.15
Lifestyle	.06	.03	.18	.06
Work Conditions	-.11	.04	-.30	.00
Health Status	.84	.19	.44	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.08
Step 2				
Constant	7.99	1.67		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.02	-.10	.31
Lifestyle	.05	.03	.16	.09
Work Conditions	-.12	.04	-.33	.00
Health Status	.75	.19	.39	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.08
HR Job Design practices	.03	.02	.19	.06
Step 3				
Constant	7.11	1.65		.00
Job Demands	-.01	.02	-.06	.54
Lifestyle	.04	.03	.12	.20
Work Conditions	-.12	.03	-.32	.00
Health Status	.65	.19	.34	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.15	.12
HR Job Design practices	.02	.02	.10	.32
Job Satisfaction	.42	.17	.27	.01

$AdjR^2 = .23$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .02$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .05$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 4a

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was significantly associated with organisational climate. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.69, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.35), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1a, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was met.

Table 7.35 Regression Estimates for Organisational Climate (N=103)

	Organisational Climate			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	42.79	14.33		.00
Job Demands	-.18	.16	-.13	.25
Lifestyle	.18	.25	.08	.48
Work Conditions	.28	.29	.11	.34
Health Status	2.06	1.56	.14	.19
Age	-.14	.11	-.14	.20
Step 2				
Constant	5.11	11.87		.66
Job Demands	.12	.13	.09	.35
Lifestyle	-.08	.19	-.04	.66
Work Conditions	.33	.22	.13	.13
Health Status	-.20	1.21	-.01	.87
Age	-.10	.08	-.10	.24
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	1.21	.16	.69	.00

$AdjR^2 = .04$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .041$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of organisational climate as a mediator had as a result the $AdjR^2$ to decrease from 27.70% to 27.10% which was not significant ($p > 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that organisational climate does not mediate the relationship between HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability. For organisational climate the

standardised beta was 0.082, $p > 0.05$ and for HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices the standardised beta decreased from 0.21 $p < 0.05$ to 0.15, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the third condition for mediation was not met and the hypothesis was not supported.

4a hypothesis was not supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and organisational climate as mediator are shown at Table 7.36.

Table 7.36 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Organisational Climate (N=103)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	8.12	1.80		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.02	-.14	.17
Lifestyle	.07	.03	.21	.03
Work Conditions	-.11	.04	-.29	.00
Health Status	.90	.20	.45	.00
Age	-.03	.01	-.18	.06
Step 2				
Constant	6.48	1.94		.00
Job Demands	-.01	.02	-.07	.49
Lifestyle	.05	.03	.17	.08
Work Conditions	-.10	.04	-.28	.00
Health Status	.80	.20	.40	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.08
HR Training /development/non- discrimination practices	.05	.03	.21	.04
Step 3				
Constant	6.42	1.95		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.02	-.08	.45
Lifestyle	.06	.03	.17	.08
Work Conditions	-.11	.04	-.29	.00
Health Status	.80	.20	.40	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.16	.10
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.04	.03	.15	.26
Organisational Climate	.01	.02	.08	.54

$AdjR^2 = .24$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .03$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .00$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 4b

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Job Design practices was significantly associated with organisational climate. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Job Design in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.81, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.37), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1b, the HR bundle of Job Design practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.37 Regression Estimates for Organisational Climate (N=103)

	Organisational Climate			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	39.22	14.29		.00
Job Demands	-.13	.16	-.09	.42
Lifestyle	.18	.25	.08	.47
Work Conditions	.32	.29	.12	.28
Health Status	1.85	1.57	.13	.24
Age	-.13	.11	-.13	.25
Step 2				
Constant	17.00	9.50		.07
Job Demands	.12	.10	.08	.27
Lifestyle	.03	.16	.01	.87
Work Conditions	-.08	.20	-.03	.66
Health Status	-.76	1.05	-.06	.47
Age	-.09	.07	-.09	.23
HR Job Design practices	.97	.09	.81	.00

$AdjR^2 = .19$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .57$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of organisational climate as mediator had as a result the $AdjR^2$ to decrease from 27.50% to 27% which was not significant ($p > 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that organisational climate does not mediate the relationship between HR Job Design practices and workability. For organisational climate the standardised beta was 0.11, $p > 0.05$ and for HR Job Design practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.17, $p > 0.05$ to

0.09, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the third condition of hypothesis was not met, and the hypothesis was not supported.

Thus, the hypothesis 4b was not supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and organisational climate as mediator are shown at Table 7.38.

Table 7.38 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of Organisational Climate (N=103)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	P
Step 1				
Constant	8.18	1.77		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.02	-.15	.14
Lifestyle	.07	.03	.20	.03
Work Conditions	-.11	.04	-.29	.00
Health Status	.90	.19	.45	.00
Age	-.03	.01	-.19	.06
Step 2				
Constant	7.50	1.79		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.02	-.11	.28
Lifestyle	.06	.03	.19	.05
Work Conditions	-.12	.04	-.32	.00
Health Status	.82	.20	.41	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.18	.07
HR Job Design practices	.03	.02	.17	.09
Step 3				
Constant	7.24	1.84		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.02	-.12	.25
Lifestyle	.06	.03	.19	.05
Work Conditions	-.12	.04	-.32	.00
Health Status	.83	.20	.42	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.09
HR Job Design practices	.01	.03	.09	.59
Organisational Climate	.01	.02	.11	.48

$AdjR^2 = .26$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .01$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .01$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 5a

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was significantly associated with LMX. Control variables (job demands,

lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.54, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.39), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1a, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was met.

Table 7.39 Regression Estimates for LMX (N=103)

	LMX			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	25.46	7.63		.00
Job Demands	-.27	.09	-.31	.00
Lifestyle	.19	.13	.14	.15
Work Conditions	.03	.16	.02	.85
Health Status	1.89	.85	.23	.02
Age	-.06	.06	-.11	.28
Step 2				
Constant	7.69	7.12		.28
Job Demands	-.12	.08	-.14	.12
Lifestyle	.06	.11	.05	.57
Work Conditions	.05	.14	.03	.69
Health Status	.81	.74	.10	.28
Age	-.05	.05	-.08	.34
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.58	.10	.54	.00

$AdjR^2 = .19$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .24$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of LMX as mediator had as a result the AdjR² to increase from 25% to 28%, which was significant. The regression analysis showed that LMX mediates the relationship between HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability. For LMX the standardised beta was 0.25, $p < 0.05$ and for HR Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.22, $p < 0.05$ to 0.08, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the third condition for mediation was met and the hypothesis was supported.

Thus, hypothesis 5a was fully supported.

The results for regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and LMX as mediator are shown at Table 7.40.

Table 7.40 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of LMX (N=103)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	P
Step 1				
Constant	8.60	1.68		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.02	-.13	.18
Lifestyle	.05	.03	.18	.06
Work Conditions	-.11	.04	-.29	.00
Health Status	.83	.19	.43	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.08
Step 2				
Constant	6.97	1.82		.00
Job Demands	-.01	.02	-.07	.51
Lifestyle	.04	.03	.14	.14
Work Conditions	-.10	.03	-.29	.00
Health Status	.73	.19	.38	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.16	.10
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.05	.03	.22	.03
Step 3				
Constant	6.50	1.79		.00
Job Demands	-.01	.02	-.03	.75
Lifestyle	.04	.03	.13	.17
Work Conditions	-.11	.03	-.30	.00
Health Status	.69	.19	.36	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.14	.15
HR Training /Development/Non- discrimination practices	.02	.03	.08	.48
LMX	.06	.03	.25	.04

$AdjR^2 = .22$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .03$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .05$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

Hypothesis 5b

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test if the HR bundle of Job Design practices was significantly associated with LMX. Control variables (job demands, lifestyle, work conditions, health, and age) were entered in the first step of the regression, the HR bundle of Job Design practices in the second step. It was shown that they were significantly associated; the standardised beta was 0.44, $p < 0.001$ (see Table 7.41), thus the first condition for mediation was met. As seen for hypothesis 1b, the HR bundle of Job Design practices was not significantly associated with workability, thus the second condition for mediation was not met.

Table 7.41 Regression Estimates for LMX (N=103)

	LMX			
	b	SE B	β	p
Step 1				
Constant	23.77	7.56		.00
Job Demands	-.24	.09	-.28	.00
Lifestyle	.19	.13	.15	.15
Work Conditions	.05	.16	.03	.76
Health Status	1.79	.85	.22	.03
Age	-.06	.06	-.10	.34
Step 2				
Constant	17.07	7.02		
Job Demands	-.16	.08	-.19	.01
Lifestyle	.13	.12	.10	.05
Work Conditions	-.08	.15	-.05	.27
Health Status	.94	.80	.11	.60
Age	-.06	.06	-.09	.24
HR Job Design practices	.32	.07	.44	.32

$AdjR^2 = .12$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .14$ for Step 2 (all $ps < .001$)

Hierarchical linear regression was run to test for mediation (condition 3). The addition of LMX as mediator had as a result the $AdjR^2$ to increase from 25 % to roughly 28%, which was significant ($p < 0.05$). The regression analysis showed that LMX does not mediate the relationship between HR Job Design practices and workability. For LMX the standardised beta was 0.25, $p < 0.01$ and for HR Job Design practices the standardised beta decreased (from 0.19, $p > 0.05$ to 0.09, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the third condition of mediation was not met, and the hypothesis was not supported.

Thus, the hypothesis 5b was not supported.

The results for hierarchical regression analysis with workability as dependant variable and LMX as mediator are shown at Table 7.42.

Table 7.42 Hierarchical regression testing the mediating role of LMX

(N=103)

	Workability			
	b	SE B	β	P
Step 1				
Constant	8.67	1.65		.00
Job Demands	-.03	.02	-.14	.15
Lifestyle	.06	.03	.18	.06
Work Conditions	-.11	.03	-.29	.00
Health Status	.84	.19	.44	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.08
Step 2				
Constant	7.98	1.66		.00
Job Demands	-.02	.02	-.10	.31
Lifestyle	.05	.03	.16	.09
Work Conditions	-.12	.04	-.33	.00
Health Status	.75	.19	.39	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.17	.08
HR Job Design practices	.03	.02	.19	.06
Step 3				
Constant	7.01	1.68		.00
Job Demands	-.01	.02	-.05	.58
Lifestyle	.04	.03	.13	.15
Work Conditions	-.112	.03	-.32	.00
Health Status	.698	.186	.36	.00
Age	-.02	.01	-.15	.12
HR Job Design practices	.01	.02	.09	.44
LMX	.06	.03	.24	.03

$AdjR^2 = .23$ for Step 1; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .02$ for Step 2; $\Delta AdjR^2 = .04$ for Step 3 (all $ps < .001$)

7.11 Organisational culture

The third aim of the study was to explore whether Organisations A and B would be positively related to a collectivistic or an individualistic type of organisational culture respectively based on the bundles of perceived HR practices (as identified further above). Based on the selection criteria for the organisations as emerged from the literature review on the differences and commonalities between UK and the Nordic contexts, it is assumed that Organisation A would be positively related to collectivistic culture and Organisation B will be positively related to an individualistic culture. To test this, the organisation culture measure was used (Robert & Wasti, 2002) (see further above). According to Robert & Wasti (2002), employees' perceptions of organisational culture predicts/is related to the organisation's workplace/HR practices.

Hypothesis 6a: The organisational culture of Organisation A is positively related to collectivistic culture.

Hypothesis 6b: The organisational culture of Organisation B is positively related to individualistic culture.

To investigate the organisational culture for the two organisations, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination and the HR bundle of Job Design were computed into one variable for each of the organisations – perceived HR practices. This is owing to the aim here is to explore the organisational culture of each of the organisations based on the HR practices as a whole, and not for each HR bundle separately. Then, a simple linear regression was carried out for each of the organisations using IBM SPSS version 26. The predictor variable was the perceived HR practices, and the outcome was organisational individualism or organisational collectivism in each case.

Organisation A

A simple linear regression was carried out to predict organisational collectivism (OC) based on the perceived HR practices. The regression analysis showed that HR practices are positively related to OC (standardised beta was 0.65, $p < 0.01$). The results of the simple linear regression analysis for Organisation A are presented at Table 7.43.

Table 7.43 Organisational Collectivism and HR practices for Organisation A (N=77)

Variables	Organisational Collectivism (OC)			
	b	SE B	β	p
Constant	2.25	3.76		.05
Perceived HR practices	.42	.06	.65	.01

AdjR²=.41, p<.01

A simple linear regression was carried out to predict organisational individualism (OI) (dependent variable) based on the perceived HR practices (independent). The regression analysis showed that HR practices are positively related to OI (standardised beta was 0.76, $p < 0.01$). The results of the simple linear regression analysis for Organisation A are presented at Table 7.44.

Table 7.44 Organisational Individualism and HR practices for Organisation A (N=77)

Variables	Organisational Individualism (OI)			
	b	SE B	β	p
Constant	4.23	2.30		.07
Perceived HR practices	.35	.04	.76	.01

AdjR²= .57, p<.01

Organisation B

A simple linear regression was carried out to predict organisational individualism (OI) (dependent variable) based on the perceived HR practices (independent). The regression analysis showed that HR practices are positively related to OI (standardised beta was 0.72, p<0.01). The results of the simple linear regression analysis for Organisation B are presented at Table 7.45.

Table 7.45 Organisational Individualism and HR practices for Organisation B (N=103)

Variables	Organisational Individualism (OI)			
	b	SE B	β	p
Constant	1.40	2.53		.58
Perceived HR practices	.401	.04	.72	.00

AdjR²= .51, p<.01

A simple linear regression was carried out to predict organisational collectivism (OC) (dependent variable) based on the perceived HR practices (independent). The regression analysis showed that HR practices are positively related to OC (standardised beta was 0.72, $p < 0.01$). The results of the simple linear regression analysis for Organisation B are presented at Table 7.46.

Table 7.46 Organisational Collectivism and HR practices for Organisation B (N=103)

Variables	Organisational Collectivism (OC)		β	p
	B	SB		
Constant	-3.18	3.33		.34
Perceived HR practices	.52	.05	.72	.00

AdjR²=.51, $p < .01$

The Table 7.47 summarises the degree of support from the hypotheses tested so far.

Table 7.47 Hypotheses, degree of support

Hypotheses	Degree of support	Organisation A/B
The HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination is expected to be positively related to workability	No support	A
	Fully supported	B
The HR bundle of Job Design is expected to be positively related to workability	No support	A
	No support	B
Work engagement mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination and workability	No support	A
	Fully supported	B
Work engagement mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Job Design practices and workability	No support	A
	No support	B
Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability	No support	A
	Fully supported	B
Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Job Design and workability	No support	A
	No support	B
Organisational climate mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability	No support	A
	No support	B
Organisational climate mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Job Design practices and workability	No support	A
	No support	B

LMX mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices and workability	No support	A
	Fully supported	B
LMX theory mediates the relationship between the HR bundle of Job Design practices and workability	No support	A
	No support	B
The organisational culture of Organisation A is positively related to collectivistic culture	Fully supported	
The organisational culture of Organisation B is positively related to individualistic culture	Fully supported	

7.12 Findings

This study provided statistical evidence on the relationship between HR bundles of perceived practices (Training/development/ non-discrimination and Job Design) and workability in two different organisations in the UK through the mediating effect work engagement, job satisfaction, leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship and organisational climate. Secondly explored whether the organisational culture of Organisations A and B based on the perceived HR practices would be positively related to organisational collectivism or organisational individualism respectively. The HR bundles of Training/Development/Non-discrimination and Job Design that emerged from the factor

analyses are mostly in line with the theoretical framework of Kooij et al., (2010) and Boon et al., (2011). Overall, the analyses showed that the HR practices are relevant to workability regardless of employees' age. Specifically, the HR bundle of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices was relevant and positively related to workability in Organisation B. This means that the existence of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices as perceived by the employees in Organisation B led to higher levels of workability. Thus, the implementation of these practices can promote workability for all employees including the older ones. Work engagement, job satisfaction and leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship mediated the relationship between those practices and workability. This means that the employees who perceive positively those practices through the motivational power of work engagement, job satisfaction and LMX can achieve higher levels of workability. Thus, these HR practices can promote workability for all employees through the motivational aspect of work engagement, job satisfaction and high-quality relationship between manager and employee.

The HR bundle of Job Design practices was not relevant to workability neither for Organisation A nor Organisation B. None of the hypotheses for Organisation A were supported. In both

organisations both the bundles of HR practices were positively related to both organisational individualism and collectivism. This may imply that the participant organisations use a range of HR practices that are related to both organisational collectivism and individualism. However, the practices that used to test this emerged from the interviews and focus groups that did not cover the whole set of practices offered/implemented in the organisations (see limitations in the next chapter). The results showed that emphasis should be given on practices such as development and training, appraisals, recruitment, and non-discrimination practices, which were found to be associated with workability in the UK organisations. Previous research on HR practices and workability has shown that practices such as training and development are important for both older and younger workers (Pinto et al., 2015). Also, in line with previous research it was shown that work engagement (e.g., Rongen et al, 2014; Boström et al., 2016) and job satisfaction (Arshadi & Zare, 2015; Kjellstrand & Gard, 2014) were found to be positively associated with workability. Even though the HR bundles as identified in Pak et al (2020) are different to the HR bundles of practices that emerged through this study (so it would not be possible to compare the results in relation workability) it is worth mentioning how the finding of this study relates to other research findings. Pak et al (2020) showed that

developmental practices such as training and development are positively related to workability (Pak, Kooij, De Lange, van den Heuvel, & van Veldhoven, 2020); this finding is in line with what emerged from this study in relation to training and development practices for Organisation B. According to Pak et al., (2020) maintenance practices such as ergonomic adjustments, and the utilisation practices such as task enrichment, are negatively related to workability. The results will be further discussed in the next chapter.

7.13 Conclusion

The focus of this chapter was to explore the relationship between workplace practices and older workers' workability in two different organisations in the UK. Overall, the analyses showed that there are HR practices relevant to workability regardless of employees' age. The next chapter aims to bring together the findings from the current and previous chapter, to set out the original contribution to knowledge and provide implications for theory/practice and areas for future research beyond the scope of this study.

8 Discussion

This concluding chapter brings together the arguments and findings presented within this thesis. It restates the aim of the thesis, discusses the findings from the empirical chapters, discusses the role of context, examines the limitations of the current research, sets out the original contribution to knowledge made by this thesis, provides practical and theoretical implications and a programme of research to further develop the scope and analysis presented here.

The thesis firstly delivers an overview on the commonalities and differences between the UK and Nordic contexts that have shaped the attitudes towards work and thus workability. Secondly, an overview of the workability concept and its underlying values and how these are understood in different contexts is presented. Thirdly, an overview on HR practices in relation to ageing and workability is given. Fourthly, the first empirical qualitative study is presented. Fifthly, the aims and the results of the second quantitative empirical study on the relationship between HR practices and workability are presented. Sixthly, findings, original contribution to knowledge, limitations, future research, practical and theoretical implications in relation to workability, HR practices and older workers within the UK context are discussed.

The present thesis aimed at developing an understanding of the HR practices around workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the Finnish concept of workability is referenced in the UK reports in the face of ageing related challenges, but there is little evidence as to its applicability. This thesis offers comprehensive evidence as to how workability could be promoted in the UK through the use of HR practices with the potential to benefit all workers. In Chapter 3, workability can be defined in various ways and from different perspectives depending on the point of view that is studied/considered such as occupational health (Ilmarinen, 2009). The current thesis draws on the holistic model of workability which was developed in an occupational health and ageing (Ilmarinen, 2001).

The research questions of the thesis are:

1. What are the HR practices that are relevant to workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK?
2. How is workability understood/conceptualised in the UK context?

3. How do HR practices impact on workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK?

To address these two empirical studies were undertaken. The first empirical qualitative study (Chapter 6) firstly identified the HR practices that are relevant to workability, the factors that can affect the implementation/perception of HR practices in relation to workability, and how workability is understood within the UK context (first and second research questions). Data for the study were collected via interviews with managers and focus groups with employees in two organisations in the UK. This is followed by the second empirical study (Chapter 7) - first wave of a two-wave survey administered to employees in the two organisations in the UK which aimed to examine the relationship between HR practices and workability (third research question). The study: 1) demonstrated the relationship between perceived HR practices and workability through the mediating effect of organisational climate, LMX, job satisfaction and work engagement 2) explored whether organisations' culture is positively related to a collectivistic or individualistic organisational culture. The second wave of the survey that aimed to generate longitudinal evidence on the relationship between HR practices and workability is presented on

a descriptive manner due to the inevitable hurdles of getting enough responses to perform statistical analyses (see limitations).

8.1 Findings of the empirical studies

The first study aimed to gain insights into HR practices in relation to workability in the context of an ageing workforce, as implemented by managers and perceived by employees in two different organisations in the UK. The study identified a number of HR practices in relation workability such as flexible working options, performance appraisals, ergonomic adjustments etc. Also, it showed that neither of the two participant organisations have HR policies and practices specifically aimed at older workers even though there were mentioned a few (such as flexible retirement options). This was evident in both organisations despite their different type (a community benefit organisation and a higher education institution). Also, this study aimed to understand how workability is conceptualised and understood in the UK. Based on the holistic model of workability, this is often illustrated as a “four-floor house” (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). The first floor reflects the health resources of the individual; the second floor reflects the competence of the individual; the third floor reflects the individual’s attitudes towards work and finally the fourth floor that

consists of all aspects of work (e.g., work community, work environment) (Ilmarinen et al., 2015). The study showed that the data support the multidimensionality of the Finnish concept of workability, however, it was not possible to assess the significance of “each floor” as it is beyond the scope of this study. The findings highlighted what HR practices are relevant to employee workability in terms of work performance, health, and wellbeing at work in the UK with the potential to benefit all workers including the older ones. Also, it offered useful insights how workability can be conceptualised in the UK raising awareness about HR practices that are relevant to workability in the UK organisations.

The key findings of the second empirical study showed that the Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices were relevant to all participants’ workability in Organisation B (including the older workers). Also, it was supported that work engagement, job satisfaction and leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship mediated the relationship between those practices and workability. The Job Design practices were not relevant to workability neither in Organisation A nor in Organisation B. The hypotheses for Organisation A were not supported. As mentioned in the previous chapter, G*Power was used to determine the sample size for the study (Faul et al., 2007). The samples were below the

recommended power analysis, which means that the statistical tests were underpowered and would explain the absence of statistically significant results. Thus, any findings should be interpreted with caution.

The analyses concluded that there are practices relevant to all workers' workability. The findings from the studies conducted as part of this research showed consistency with research findings in relation to workability and UK HR practices. But this research takes also into account the role of context which is important in further understanding the concept and applicability of workability via HR practices – this is analysed further below. Findings from the quantitative study showed that the Training / development / non-discrimination practices were relevant to workability in Organisation B. This finding is consistent with what Pak et al, (2020) found about perceived workability and developmental practices. It was shown that workplace practices that aim to further develop employees' skills (e.g., training and promotion) have been positively associated with perceived workability (Pak et al., 2020). Emphasis should be given on practices such as development, training and non-discrimination practices which were found to be associated with workability. Also, findings from the present research supported that work engagement, job satisfaction

and leader-member exchange relationship mediated the relationship between those practices and workability. In line with previous research, it was shown that work engagement (e.g., Rongen et al, 2014; Boström et al., 2016) and job satisfaction (Arshadi & Zare, 2015; Kjellstrand & Gard, 2014) are positively related to workability. Additionally, as Kuvaas & Dysvik (2010) found, the leader-member exchange relationship is important in explaining the relationship between HR practices and employee outcomes. Thus, through the motivational situation of work engagement, job satisfaction and LMX is highly likely to achieve high workability among employees. The Job Design practices were not relevant to workability neither for Organisation A nor B. Previous research has shown that job control and autonomy practices as part of job and work design have been positively associated with workability (Feldt, Hyvönen, Mäkikangas, Kinnunen, & Kokko, 2009; Tuomi, Vanhala, Nykyri, & Janhonen, 2004; van den Berg et al., 2008; Weigl, Müller, Hornung, Zacher, & Angerer, 2013). Also, Job Design practices such as ergonomic adjustments, task enrichment and reduced workload (classified under the wider categories of maintenance, utilisation, and accommodative practices) were negatively related to workability; this might be explained by the way the HR practices were implemented (Pak et al., 2020). This in turn highlights the

importance of context when it comes to the role of HR practices for employee outcomes and in this case workability. Ultimately, the findings of this study highlight the importance of development, training and non-discrimination practices to support workability in the UK organisations raising awareness about how employees' work performance, motivation, health and wellbeing can be promoted with the work context.

8.2 The role of context

HRM can be affected by a number of factors such as the size and the strategy of the organisation (Jackson & Schuler, 1995) (as seen in Chapter 5). This means that there are not universally present characteristics for every organisation, and these vary according to their size, organisational goals, and strategy. Cultural and regulatory institutional context plays a major role when it comes to the selection of HR practices (Biemann, Mayrhofer, & Koch-Bayram, 2021). Further to this Boxall (1995) highlighted that the management practices such as the HR practices are affected by the social norms of each society (Boxall, 1995). Thus, it is important to recognise the role of context when it comes to the promotion of older workers' workability in the UK through HR practices.

Research has shown that organisational characteristics play a vital role on the type of age-related workplace policies (Conen, van Dalen, & Henkens, 2012; Fleischmann, Koster, & Schippers, 2015). Context has received limited attention from HRM researchers, despite the fact that context has been highlighted as important in explaining HR policies and practices (Mayrhofer, Gooderham, & Brewster, 2019). As seen in Chapter 2, context is affected and shaped by several factors (economic, cultural, social, and demographic factors). These can have a major influence on how HR practices are implemented and perceived as well as on the outcomes of these which are organisational (e.g., organisational performance), or individual (e.g., workability). That means that if an HR strategy works in a context does not necessarily mean that will have the same outcomes in another context (Mayrhofer et al., 2019). As showed in Chapter 2, UK and Nordic contexts differ in many aspects; that means that workability may not work or understood similarly in these two contexts. This also may explain the absence of distinct HR policies and practices for older workers in the UK context.

Context is defined as "situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behaviour as

well as functional relationships between the variables” (Johns, 2006, p. 386) and “its influence is often unrecognized or underappreciated” (Johns, 2006, p. 389). Research has shown that HR practices can predict very little of the outcome variable (e.g. workability); this may be due to factors such as personal characteristics or societal norms (Wang & Shultz, 2010). That means that since the context of the organisations is different (different type, size) the way the HR practices are implemented and the way the employees perceive the HR practices may vary in its essence. Context can have an impact on the relationship between work design and employee outcomes/behaviours such as job satisfaction or low degree of autonomy (Morgeson et al., 2010). Also, it can explain the differences among research findings (Johns, 2006). This means that if something works in one research site does not necessarily mean that it will work in the same way in another one. Also, context has helped to understand these variations in research findings which in turn has contributed to the understanding of organisational behaviour (Hackman, 2003; Johns, 2006). Having an understanding and appreciation for cross-national contextual differences in for example employment, work context can bring into light any subtle differences among organisational practices (Rousseau & Fried, 2001) in relation to employee outcomes. Based on the above, this means that how

workplace practices may impact on workability in one context does not necessarily mean that will impact in the same way in another and in this case the UK context.

According to van Veldhoven and Peccei (2015) HR practices have an immediate effect upon the employees and their activities. The work context in relation to HR practices and workability (outcome) are presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. A comprehensive review revealed that evidence for the effectiveness of HR practices on several outcomes (such as workability, extension of working lives) is inconclusive (Pak et al., 2020). There are authors who argued that HR research often overlooks cultural differences (collectivistic / individualistic), economic direction, labour market characteristics and political context (Thompson, 2011). Boxall & Macky (2009) highlighted the ethnocentric nature of HR systems - some HR practices may not work in other contexts. Thus, in terms of workability this may mean that the way the workability concept works in other contexts may vary significantly from the UK context mainly due to the different values and notions about work (see comprehensive review at Chapter 2). By applying the Nordic mindset and work approaches to the UK may not result in the intended outcomes. As shown in Chapter 3, the way the underlying dimensions of workability (health, competence, work

attitudes/values, work context) are perceived and understood vary when these are researched in different contexts. Similarly, how workability can be understood in the UK context (Chapter 6). Understanding context may require an interdisciplinary approach to create knowledge-base for context (Cooke, 2018).

8.3 Implications for theory

This thesis ultimately contributes to the literature on understanding the role of HR practices for workability by recognising the role of context. The findings from the studies in this thesis help to improve the understanding of how HR practices can impact on employees' workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK. It offered the following theoretical contributions to the promotion of workability in the UK by:

- Offering a conceptualisation of workability in the UK

The findings of the thesis add new qualitative evidence as to how employee workability is conceptualised in the UK. This is the first study that provides an understanding about how workability is conceptualised in the UK which has important theoretical implications in terms of adding to the existing models of workability (e.g., Gould et al., 2008).

- Developing a new measure for assessing the relationship between HR practices and workability

Utilising data from the empirical studies in the thesis, a new measure for assessing the relationship between HR practices and workability in the context of an ageing workforce was developed. This has important theoretical implications as it offers insights as well as a comprehensive account of HR practices that could be relevant to the promotion of employee workability in UK organisations in the context of an ageing workforce.

As mentioned in previous chapters, the UK appears to have adopted a Tayloristic and Neo-Fordist approach to work which are mainly described by the hierarchical structure, mass production than the quality of work (e.g Payne & Keep, 2003) and less so the employment relationship (Littler, 1978). That means that this approach focuses more on bureaucracy and the structure of control than the interaction between the employee and the organisation (Littler, 1978). In contrast the Nordic management style tends to be more employee-orientated including the traits of a collectivistic culture (Lindell & Arvonen, 1996). These differences appear to have historically affected the attitudes and approach towards work and subsequently the applicability of the workability concept. This

thesis showed that workability could be promoted within the UK context with the potential to benefit the employees. Through the use of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices employee workability could be achieved in the ageing workforce context. Thus, it is assumed that there is gradual shift towards work organisation and approach towards work in the UK for the benefit of the work in the face of ageing related challenges.

Further to the above, the thesis offers a conceptualisation of workability in the UK in addition to different models of workability as mentioned in Chapter 3. However, further research is needed to understand the significance of each factor and how it is ultimately illustrated from the UK perspective and how it can be compared to similar models such as the Job Demands Resources (JDR) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) when it comes to the role of HR practices on employee health and wellbeing. The focus of the thesis was not to test/evaluate these models in relation to workability but to understand how the UK context has been shaped in relation to applicability of the Nordic concept of workability through HR practices with regards to an ageing workforce in the UK. Further research will be needed to understand the nature and concept of workability in relation to these models.

Although, it was revealed that neither of the participant organisations had specifically aimed to older workers HR policies and practices, the participants were able to mention a few. However, it was stated that there was not a clear age element in managing employees and this lies on individual needs, which might subject to age. The management needs to ensure that the policies are communicated in a consistent way across members of staff so that they could see how policies could apply across age groups. By providing for example training and development opportunities to target all ages would subsequently benefit the ageing workers. Finally factors such as work engagement, job satisfaction and high-quality relationship between employees and line managers, can be also relevant in promoting and supporting workability in the UK organisations.

8.4 Further research

This thesis looked at the role of workplace practices for workability in the UK context. HR policies and practices need to be implemented and communicated consistently across the organisation so as different age groups can benefit from. Also, in line with Pak et. al., (2020), the way the HR practices are implemented can have an impact on workability as an outcome.

Further research is suggested as to the way HR practices are implemented and delivered and their impact on workability as an employee outcome.

The workability approach could act as a tool and guide for HR managers and organisations in general to identify in advance any potential issues that could impact on employees' work performance, motivation, health and wellbeing at work and proceed to necessary work adjustments. This would help to identify several factors that could affect workability throughout different stages of working life. In response to the limitations of the quantitative study in this thesis, it would be important to use a longitudinal approach in order to capture the effect of HR practices on workability and the relevant changes over the course of time (e.g., Mayrhofer et al..2019). Despite the fact that this thesis has recognised the role of context in understanding workability, further research on different organisational settings would be necessary to get useful insights as to workability in the UK context. Last but not least, further research will be needed to understand the nature of workability in relation to specific models of work such as the Tayloristic model and Neo-Fordist model of work.

8.5 Original contribution to knowledge of the thesis

This thesis provides several significant insights with regards to workability and HR practices in the UK context. To date limited is the qualitative research on this concept and how this is experienced (Boström et al., 2016; Stigmar, Ekdahl, & Grahn, 2012; Kjerstin Stigmar, Grahn, & Ekdahl, 2010). Research so far has adopted a quantitative approach with regards to workability (e.g. Tuomi et al., 1997; Pak et al., 2020; Sousa, Ramos & Carvalho, 2019). Even though the role of context and its importance for promoting good workability have been acknowledged (e.g., Boström et al., 2016; Tengland, 2011), research has focused more on different age and occupational groups, than the national and sociocultural context. Thus, this PhD thesis adopts a mixed-methods approach responding to the call for further research on the role of context in understanding the HR practices in relation to ageing and workability and unlike previous research:

- Recognises the importance of national and sociocultural context in understanding workability;

- Develops an in-depth understanding on how workability could be conceptualised in the UK; how it can be promoted through relevant workplace practices;
- Offers evidence on the workplace practices that could be relevant to all workers' participation at work in the UK context as well as informing evidence-based solutions for employers and policymakers;
- Contributes to UK employers' increased awareness of the conditions and factors that are important for workability that can be vital in supporting employees' participation at work as they age through the use of relevant workplace practices and via the mechanism of job satisfaction, work engagement and relationship between manager and employee. The findings from this research will benefit UK organisations, who are interested in making the most of the ageing workforce and harness employees' potential as they age.

8.6 Limitations of current research

There are several limitations identified in regards to the design of the research. The sample comprised of 77 and 103 employees for Organisation A and B respectively representing 12% and 7% response rate. This could be explained by reasons such as that the

participants were busy, have previously completed other questionnaires or felt that the survey was irrelevant to them (Weiner & Dalessio, 2006; Fenton-O’Creevy, 1996 in Baruch & Holtom, 2008). A sample size calculation showed that 114 participants were required to perform the regression analyses. Thus, it can be concluded that there was not enough statistical power to support the hypotheses. Also, the fact that the data for quantitative analysis were analysed separately may have contributed to the issue of power, leading to type 1 and type 2 errors. This could have been addressed by combing data into a larger dataset and conducting correction analyses. However, as seen further above the reason for separating data in this thesis lies on the subsequent quantitative assessment of organisational culture (individualistic/collectivistic) for each of the organisations which is based solely on the HR practices applied in each of the organisations (Robert & Wastii, 2002). The sample of older workers for Organisation B was 36, which makes it difficult to get significant results for such a small sample. For Organisation A the sample of older workers was 40, still underpowered to perform regression analyses. Despite this, the analyses generated useful insights for all employees including the older ones.

Regarding the second quantitative study (which was run in October 2018 in the two organisations), the final dataset was extremely small (n=18 for Organisation A and n=50 for Organisation B) which did not provide enough data to perform further analysis. The data were not used. Thus, because there were usable data only from the first wave of the survey, it was not possible to provide cause and effect evidence on the relationship between perceived HR practices and workability. Even though there is not a universal rule of thumb regarding the minimum necessary sample size for performing factor analysis, there are some general recommendations. Kass and Tinsley (1979) suggest 5-10 participants per item to perform factor analyses. The sample obtained from the second quantitative study was quite low for generating reliable results (De Winter, Dodou, & Wieringa, 2009). The use of a larger sample at different time points would generate more evidence on the casual relationship between HR practices and workability (Pak et al., 2020).

8.7 Conclusion

Findings from the current research suggest that there are HR practices in some organisations that have the potential to benefit workers' workability including the older ones in the UK. Also, by

placing emphasis on the motivational aspect and impact of work engagement, job satisfaction and high-quality relationship between manager and employee, organisations through the promotion of Training/Development/Non-discrimination practices could potentially promote and achieve workability for employees (including the older ones). Therefore, older workers will be able and motivated to continue working. Having in place workability-supportive HR practices to inform the human resource management strategy, organisations have the potential to respond effectively to the challenges that are associated with ageing in the UK context. This study was not able to fully identify the HR practices relevant to workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK. It was shown that most HR practices do not appear to be associated with workability. For example, the HR bundle of Training / Development / Non-discrimination practices was relevant to employees' workability for Organisation B, but not for Organisation A. The HR bundle of Job Design practices was not relevant to workability neither for Organisation A, nor Organisation B. It was demonstrated how workability is conceptualised in the UK supporting the multidimensionality of workability concept as originally framed in the Finnish context. Based on the above findings the potential of HR practices to benefit employees' workability in the UK was revealed. Nevertheless, more work is

needed to fully unveil the HR practices that are relevant to employees' workability in the context of an ageing workforce in the UK.

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APPENDIX

Literature search

In order to inform the literature reviews, there have been used a number of peer-reviewed published journals, books and reports dated from 1984 to 2021. Since the first literature review focused on identifying the factors that have shaped the Nordic and UK contexts historically to date, the starting date for the literature search was 1984 when first the Hofstede's model of national cultures was first published. Google scholar was used to identify relevant databases such as Emerald, Wiley and Science Direct. A number of keywords was used to carry out the literature search including workability, culture, UK, Nordic countries, HR practices and older workers. Also, confidential correspondence was used with regards to critique of Ilmarinen's approach for workability (see Chapter 3), having obtained the individual's consent.

Interview guide - managers

Questions:

1. What experiences do you have working with older workers?

2. A. Which factors could impact positively on older workers' workability/ employees as they age throughout their working life (in terms of work performance, motivation, health, and wellbeing)?
B. Which factors hinder/impact negatively on older workers' workability/employees as they age throughout their working life?
3. As a manager to what extent do you think you are affecting older workers' workability with your work practices/behaviour and in what way? Could you give me examples?
Probes:
 - a. In what ways you are affecting/supporting older workers'
 - work performance
 - health and wellbeing,
 - motivation at work?
4. In what ways you can think of you could enable older workers within your organisation to improve/maintain their levels of workability? Could you give me some examples?
5. To what extent do you feel that as a manager you have responsibility for (supporting/taking care of) your employees' workability when they age? Why (not)? In what ways do you do so?
6. To what extent do you believe that it is important older workers maintain/have good workability during their working life? Why (not)? What does this (workability) mean for you?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to add that we have not discussed yet?

Interview guide - focus groups

Questions:

1. What does it mean for you to have good workability in your job? To what extent is this important for you in carrying out your job role as you age?
2. How do you think your workability will change in 10 years from now? What are these factors that affect your workability (positively/negatively) as you age?
Probes:
 - a. What factors do you think could adversely impact on your workability?
 - b. What factors could contribute to maintaining or improving your workability?
3. What does your organisation do to support your workability as you age?

4. What do you think that your organisation could do to support your workability as you age?
5. How important do you think is your organisation have in place HR policies/practices to support your workability as you age?
Why do you think so?
Probes:
 - a. To what extent do you think that the HR practices can support your performance, motivation, health, and wellbeing at work when ageing? Could you give me some examples?
6. To what extend do you feel that your line manager can help/support your workability? Could you give me some examples?
Probes:
 - a. Is your line manager playing an important role in supporting your work performance, health, wellbeing, and motivation at work? How?
 - b. In what ways does your line manager can help you maintain or improve your workability? Could you give some examples?
 - c. To what extent do you think that your working relationship with your line manager can affect your workability?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

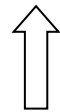
Thematic analysis – Worked example

In the following example, it is presented: the lower level of coding and the higher level of coding to identify the practices that are relevant to employee workability in an ageing context with regards to the example of the HR practice of “ergonomic adjustments”. The analysis was mostly in line with the research by Kooij et al., (2014) who categorised the qualitative data in key themes which were the HR practices.

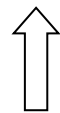
Example

“...we do desktops assessment that people are fine with what they say so everybody in the office because we will we do with desktop assessment of the computers and make sure about that guidance, and everything is right the rise in the right level and we do once a year and signed off by me and that’s quite needed downstairs because people suffer from bad backs and things...”

Theme: Workplace practices for employees' work ability in the UK in an ageing context



Higher level of coding -> Final code: HR/workplace practices



Lower level of coding -> Initial descriptive code: Things that organisations in the UK do to manage/support employee workability in an ageing context in the UK.

