

Research Dialogues

Gendered ageing in Higher Education Institutions

Maryam Baloch

Abstract

This study examines how age and gender intersect to shape academic professionals' experiences in higher education institutions (HEIs), emphasizing the challenges associated with gendered ageism. Drawing from Judith Butler's work, the study explores how institutional and cultural norms construct the 'ideal academic' at the intersection of gender, race, and age – typically envisioned as a middle-aged white man fully committed to work. Through a critical discourse analysis of interviews with academics at a public university in the United States, the study reveals that being an 'ideal academic' requires careful positioning. For women, this often means avoiding being perceived as students, as youth is associated with eroticism, while simultaneously resisting the perception of older women as 'soft' and lacking the intellectual authority expected in academia. The study concludes that these norms are harmful to those who do not conform to them, resulting in 'impossible' academic lives.

**Università degli Studi di
Milano-Bicocca**
Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo, 1
- 20126, Milano

Tuesday, June 24 2025
h. 14.30- 15.30
Online - Webex

