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Young workers and their dispositions towards mathematics: tensions of a mathematical habitus in the retail industry.

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Summary: This paper presents a case study of contemporary retail industry and the ways in which young workers participate in that field. Public perceptions of low numeracy among young people provided the catalyst for the study. Drawing on a mixed-method approach involving survey, case studies, stimulated recall, observations, and interviews, it was found that young workers approach their numeracy in ways that have been shaped by their experiences, in particular, digital experiences. In contrast, older generations hold different views of young people's numeracy levels and skills, often perceiving them as poor and deficit. The study challenges the orthodoxy of older generations and argues that young workers have developed new ways of working, which align strongly with the post-industrial workplace. As a result, there are considerable tensions between the generations which need to be considered. The paper uses the work of Bourdieu and draws on his notions of habitus, field, and capital to theorize the outcomes.

Classification: M27 F17 C27 C67

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