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An issue of age in the labour market in Slovakia

Abstract. Introduction. Equal opportunities in the labour market with regard to age issues are currently among the important research topics in countries with a developed economy. In the context of sustainable economic development, the dynamics of economic growth and social cohesion, it is at the forefront of the application of democratic principles in the economy. The labour market is the most affected by the issue of equal opportunities in terms of age. Current and future demographic developments in Europe imply the need to create new jobs and access to employment in the European Union's labour markets. In this article, we introduce information which is necessary for analysis of the future developments in society. Knowledge on development and changes in a composition of the national workforce are important factors of growth and raising prosperity.

With regard to the aforementioned, *the purpose* of this paper is to examine whether representatives of the addressed companies in Slovakia believe that the young people (we particularly mean persons in a group less than 25 years old) are disadvantaged in the Slovakian labour market and what could be the reasons of that. By the research on how difficult it is for individual age and gender categories to obtain a job opportunity in the labour market, we also aim to verify the hypothesis of unfavourable labour market position of older people, especially women.

Results. Based on the information from own survey carried out among the economically active population of Slovakia in 2005–2016, we deliver insights on the issue of age which is one of the most important labour market factors. Final synthesizing of data was performed on the sample of 1 659 interviews. In particular, the research has found out that approximately two thirds of the employers believed that the young people are not disadvantaged in the labour market; the relationships among the workers of different age in the organizations are considered good in the vast majority of cases (62%); 71% of employers reject suspicion that they remunerate the employees according to the age; and only a minority has confirmed statement that they take into account the age of employees, however, 86% of employers have confirmed they do not seek workers older than 50, especially women.

Conclusion. It has been confirmed by the research undertaken that the age issue is the most common reason for discrimination. At the same time, it is difficult to detect such discrimination, as far as the employers usually do not recognize such fact. The most vulnerable workforce age groups are found to be young women as well as those over 45.

Keywords: Labour Market; Age; Discrimination; Equality of Access; Slovakia

JEL Classification: J71; M14; M54

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Проблема віку на ринку трудових ресурсів Словаччини

Анотація. Рівні можливості на ринку трудових ресурсів для різних вікових груп є однією з важливих тем досліджень у країнах із розвинутою економікою. В контексті сталого економічного розвитку, динаміки економічного зростання та соціальної згуртованості це питання знаходиться на передньому краї застосування демократичних принципів в економіці. Сучасні й майбутні демографічні зміни в Європі передбачають необхідність створення нових робочих місць і доступ до зайнятості на ринках праці Європейського союзу. У цій статті ми представляємо інформацію, необхідну для аналізу майбутніх подій у суспільстві. Знання про розвиток і зміни в складі національної робочої сили є важливими факторами зростання та підвищення добробуту в країні.

У зв'язку з вищесказаним, мета цієї роботи полягає в тому, щоб з'ясувати, чи вважають представники опитаних компаній у Словаччині, що молоді люди (ми маємо в увазі осіб, що не досягли 25-річного віку) знаходяться в несприятливому положенні на ринку праці Словаччини, і що може бути причиною цього. Вивчаючи питання про те, наскільки складно для окремих вікових і гендерних категорій отримати можливість працевлаштування, ми також прагнемо перевірити гіпотезу про несприятливий стан на ринку праці осіб похилого віку, особливо жінок.

Грунтуючись на результатах власного опитування, проведеного серед економічно активного населення Словаччини в 2005–2016 роках, ми досліджуємо проблематику віку – одного з найважливіших чинників ринку праці. Остаточне синтезування даних було виконано на вибірці з 1659 інтерв'ю. Зокрема, дослідження показало, що приблизно дві третини роботодавців вважають, що молоді не має несприятливого становища на ринку праці; відносини між працівниками різного віку в організаціях вважаються хорошими в переважній більшості випадків (62%); 71% роботодавців відкидають підозру на свою адресу щодо того, що вони винагороджують працівників відповідно до віку, і тільки меншість підтвердила тезу про те, що вони враховують вік співробітників, однак 86% роботодавців підтвердили, що не шукають працівників старше 50 років, особливо жінок.

Дослідження підтвердило, що вікова проблема є найпоширенішою причиною дискримінації на ринку праці. У той же час важко виявити таку дискримінацію, оскільки роботодавці зазвичай не визнають цього факту. Найбільш уразливими віковими групами робочої сили є молоді жінки, а також жінки старше 45-ти років.

Ключові слова: ринок праці; вік; дискримінація; рівність доступу; Словаччина.

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Проблема возраста на рынке трудовых ресурсов Словакии

Аннотация. Равные возможности на рынке трудовых ресурсов для разных возрастных групп в настоящее время является одной из важных тем исследований в странах с развитой экономикой. В контексте устойчивого экономического развития, динамики экономического роста и социальной сплоченности этот вопрос находится на переднем крае применения демократических принципов в экономике. Современные и будущие демографические изменения в Европе подразумевают необходимость создания новых рабочих мест и доступа к занятости на рынках труда Европейского союза. В этой статье мы представляем информацию, необходимую для анализа будущих событий в обществе. Знания о развитии и изменениях в составе национальной рабочей силы являются важными факторами роста и повышения благосостояния.

В связи с вышеизложенным, цель настоящей работы состоит в том, чтобы выяснить, считают ли представители опрошенных компаний в Словакии, что молодые люди (мы имеем в виду лиц, не достигших 25-летнего возраста) находятся в неблагоприятном положении на рынке труда Словакии, и что может быть причиной этого. Изучая вопрос о том, насколько сложно для отдельных возрастных и гендерных категорий получить возможность трудоустройства, мы также стремимся проверить гипотезу о неблагоприятном положении на рынке труда пожилых людей, особенно женщин.

Основываясь на результатах собственного опроса, проведенного среди экономически активного населения Словакии в 2005-2016 годах, мы исследуем проблематику возраста – одного из важнейших факторов рынка труда. Окончательное синтезирование данных было выполнено на выборке из 1659 интервью. В частности, исследование показало, что примерно две трети работодателей считают, что молодежь не находится в неблагоприятном положении на рынке труда; отношения между работниками разного возраста в организациях считаются хорошими в подавляющем большинстве случаев (62%); 71% работодателей отвергают подозрение в свой адрес в том, что они вознаграждают работников в соответствии с возрастом, и только меньшинство подтвердило тезис о том, что они учитывают возраст сотрудников, однако 86% работодателей подтвердили, что не ищут работников старше 50 лет, особенно женщин.

Исследование подтвердило, что возрастная проблема является наиболее распространенной причиной дискриминации на рынке труда. В то же время трудно обнаружить такую дискриминацию, поскольку работодатели обычно не признают этот факт. Наиболее уязвимыми возрастными группами рабочей силы являются молодые женщины, а также женщины старше 45-ти лет.

Ключевые слова: рынок труда; возраст; дискриминации; равенство доступа; Словакия.

1. Introduction

Age discrimination is a negative social phenomenon that disturbs the fundamental equality and freedom of individuals. The emphasis starts to be placed on the fact that states take greater initiative and make precautionary steps in all spheres of social life where the age discrimination occurs with the aim to remove obstacles in order to better and freely exploit the individual human potential. Today, the European Union has one of the most advanced non-discrimination legal frameworks in the world. Nevertheless, while much progress has been made, many Europeans still feel that discrimination continues to be widespread: 15% say they experienced it personally in the last year, and 29% that they witnessed it. (Eurobarometer, 2008)

Majority of population is having some experience in connection with the age discrimination in Slovakia. On the whole, it can be concluded that a particularly high proportion of more than 91% within our pattern believes that the competent and responsible institutions should give more careful consideration to the issue of age discrimination in the labour market than up to present. Respondents express this view in the same proportion independently of their gender, i.e. this problem is often encountered by almost the whole population and it is considered very serious. Almost 50% of the young generation in the age between 18 and 25 considers that a special attention should be given to this issue. Such an opinion considerably prevails in higher age groups.

After the accession of Visegrad 4 countries (V4) to the European Union, the awareness of the problem of age discrimination seems to have risen due to its increasing presence in the public discourse and can be considered as a fairly common phenomenon. (Stypińska, 2014). The young labour entrants together with elderly workers belong to disadvantaged groups on the Czech labour market as well. At the same time, according to OECD data, among the V4 countries, the Czech Republic is the country which most of all inclined to hire older applicants (55-64 y.o.). Readiness to employ such candidates expose 61.6% of employers,

which is 4.6% more than the average EU28. Poland employers have concrete preferences regarding the age of their employees and are rather unwilling to hire older job applicants: just 48.8% employed older candidates (the least of V4). Hungary is slightly more open with 51.5%. On the other hand, Poland has the highest participation of young employees (15-24 y.o.) form V4 - 29.4%, compared to the Slovak Republic which reaches 27.2% or Czech Republic (28.8%). None of V4 counties approaches the average of EU28 counties of 34.4% (OECD, 2017).

2. Brief Literature Review

Directive 2000/78/EC establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation in order to combat discrimination in the labour market. Behaviour is considered to be discriminatory mainly because of religion or belief, disability, but also age. The area of equal opportunities was also specifically promoted by the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty on the basis of which the Charter of Fundamental Rights became legally binding. As a result, workers' rights have also been strengthened, including in relation to the labour market. The Charter of Fundamental Social Rights in the area of Equal Opportunities sets out the obligation for Member States to respect citizens' equality before the law, non-discrimination, as well as the rights of young and elderly people and important social rights. The European Union, through the Treaty of Lisbon, guarantees «... solidarity between generations» (Treaty, L. 2007).

In applying equal opportunities in the labour market, the Slovak Republic is bound with several international documents that track its implementation into legislation and practice. These include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the CEDAW Convention, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, The European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Additional Protocols, the Conventions of the International Labour Organization, the European Social Charter and others.

Due to the European Union membership, the Slovak Republic is obliged to harmonize national legislation with EU law, which also applies to the area of ensuring equal opportunities in the labour market. Following the legislation on the area at European level, Slovakia adopted the Anti-Discrimination Act in 2004, which entered into force on 1st July 2004. This Act provides for the application of the principle of equal treatment and lays down the means of legal protection in case of violation of this principle (National Council of SR, 2004).

Age discrimination is a negative social phenomenon that contributes to the disruption of fundamental equality and freedom of individuals in the Slovak labour market as well. This concept is negatively polarized in relation to a particular situation. Age discrimination in the labour market is a major source of unequal opportunities and labour market treatment, which may result in discrimination in admission, career growth, employment and age-based remuneration or other similar characteristics. According to Kenneth Arrow, for the purposes of this research, labour market discrimination is defined as, «Assessing the personal characteristics of a worker on the labour market that do not affect labour productivity. These characteristics may be gender, race, height, appearance, age, nationality or sexual orientation, or other identifiable characteristic». (Arrow, 1984). Arrow has developed an alternative explanation based on the supposition that employers have inadequate information about the productivity of individual workers. Prematurely, they must use certain characteristics (such as age) to identify these workers' productivity. This hypothesis formed the basis of the theory of statistical discrimination. McCall published similar hypotheses at approximately the same time horizon (McCall, 1973). Many other authors have been inspired to follow Arrow's thoughts. For example, Yinger defines discrimination as «unfavourable treatment of a person which is based only on the person's belonging to a particular group of people» (Yinger, 1998). Altonji and Blank come to define the concept of occupational discrimination which, in their view, arises when the reason of race or gender of a worker comes in, while there are two identical work results and race or gender alone have no impact on labour productivity (Altonji and Blank, 1999). These views result in the definition of discrimination in the labour market, which is cited by the World Bank on its website. According to this institution, discrimination on the labour market is defined as «systematically different treatment of members of a particular group, only on the basis of belonging to that group» (World Bank, 2001).

Human resources management should take account of age of employees and create conditions for offering them equal opportunities without discrimination. We do need to face up to the fact that the age difference in performance between a 40-year-old and 60-year-old professor may not be practically meaningful, but the difference between a 40-year-old and a 60-year-old firefighter may be. In short, for some jobs age-related adverse impact on tests may sometimes be identifying important job-related individual differences, whereas for other jobs adverse impact on selection tests may not reflect actual differences in job performance (Fisher, 2017).

Increasing diversity skills is, of course, considered as an important step in managing diversity effectively in the organization. It is necessary to take into account also the generation gap among employees and adopt the communication skills of management in organization accordingly so that the organization could achieve its objectives and employees could accomplish their tasks efficiently. The crucial skill is to be able to communicate with a diverse workforce. The diverse workforce usually has distinct styles of communication, as team members could have different languages, levels of fluency, non-verbal signals through using body language and facial expressions. Further, the members could even differ in the ways of perceiving and interpreting information. Therefore,

it is important to improve the age-fair practices (Shaban, 2016).

3. Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of the paper is to examine whether representatives of the addressed companies believe that the young people (we particularly mean persons in a group less than 25 years old) are disadvantaged in the Slovakian labour market and what could be the reasons of that. By the research on how difficult it is for individual age and gender categories to obtain a job opportunity in the labour market, we aim to verify the hypothesis of unfavourable labour market position of older people, especially women.

We have implemented information from the research project No. 08/04-I/33-1.2 ISE, where one of the authors was the research team leader and the results of findings have been supplemented by the up-to-date questionnaire surveys addressed to employers in the period of 2005-2016, whereby we could determine the main characteristics of workforce status in the labour market. Final synthesizing of data was performed on the sample of 1 659 interviews of the population between 17 and 69. We also took into account data published by the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic.

4. Results

4.1. Young generation and the labour market

High youth unemployment rates that have troubled Slovakia over the past years remain a concern in spite of positive trend in 2015. The unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds considerably declined (by 4.7%) over one year, to 20.4%. In the second quarter of 2016, the ranking with respect to youth unemployment rate of Slovakia improved from the 8th to the 10th position among EU countries (Lubyová, 2017).

Regardless the fact that in our research employers have not agreed that they attach the greatest importance to age, we believe that this factor is in fact among the most significant ones in deciding, whether a candidate is to be accepted or not. Even though a vast majority of employers share the view that people of each age should have equal opportunities, there do exist deeply embedded ideas on different degrees of attractiveness of the individual age groups in public opinion (among women and men). The research has shown that, according to the three quarters of the respondents, the most important reason for the disadvantage of young people in the labour market is absence of practice followed by the lack of experience.

Based on the replies of the respondents-representatives of the institutions (hereinafter referred to as «respondents»), we observed whether they find young people disadvantaged in the labour market. The research results showed that approximately two thirds of the respondents believed that the young people were not disadvantaged: 67% of them provided a negative answer to our question which is «no» or «rather not». Only 10% of the respondents firmly believe that young people are disadvantaged in the labour market. The following Figure 1 illustrates answers we obtained from the respondents.

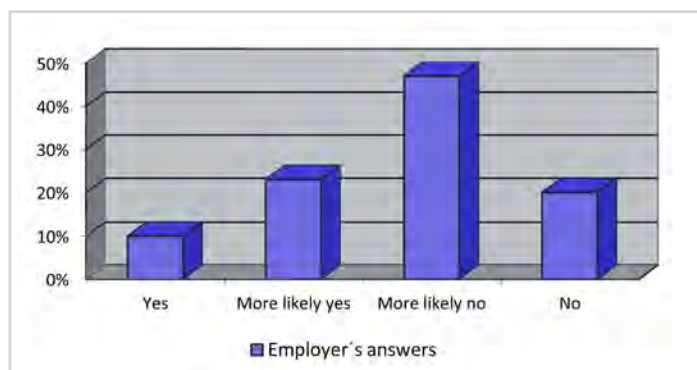


Fig. 1: Answers of the employers to a question whether young people are disadvantaged in the labour market

Source: Own processing, 2016

Having regard to the size of organization that the representatives represent, answers to this question differ to a minimum extent, the differences are almost negligible. Therefore, we can say that discrimination of young people is seen in the same manner, regardless of size of organization in the Slovakian labour market. The respondents of small, medium and large-size organizations have expressed the identical view that the young people are disadvantaged in our labour market (Pawera, 2014).

Another question we were dealing with was focused on the examination of reasons for discrimination of the young people in the labour market, or comparison of causes leading to this disadvantage with causes of discrimination of the middle age persons.

There was a choice of six answers to the question on what could lead to the discrimination of young people in the labour market:

- lack of experience;
- education level;
- lack of practice;
- inability to make a long-term commitment to one employer;
- reluctance to travel to work;
- age and opportunity to express one's own opinion that differs from options offered.

Again, it was the question where the respondents could choose more than one option, and in most of cases they did enter at least two answers.

Approximately three quarters of the addressed respondents believe that lack of practice, followed by the lack of experience are the main reasons for disadvantage of young people in the labour market. Both answers are closely linked to each other, because a young person can indeed obtain the necessary experience by means of practice. The remaining four answers were well behind, since only a small part of the respondents think that inability to make a long-term commitment to one employer or education level can be the cause of disadvantage for the young people. Age and reluctance to travel to work held the smallest proportion of answers. Also, a couple of other answers occurred in our set of answers that have included causes like *poor working habits, high financial reward demands or lack of interest in work*.

Another area of examination was to find out whether, according to the respondents' view, the employability conditions for the young people in the labour market are the same as for the older people. From the answers it is obvious that more than three quarters of the respondents believe that young people have the same conditions for joining the labour market as the older ones. Only 4% of the respondents firmly believe that young people do not have the same conditions, and the remaining 18% believe that they rather do not have the same conditions (see Figure 2).

An interesting thing is that the answers to this question partially differ with respect to the size of organization. Almost 82% of the respondents - representatives of the middle-size

organizations are convinced that young people have been given the same conditions in society for their entry into the labour market as the older people. However, a clear «yes» answer has been supported only by 28.33% of the respondents. A clear «yes» answer was mostly chosen by the representatives of the small organizations, particularly by 32% of the respondents. At the same time, in small organizations there was the highest proportion of the representatives who did not think the young people had the same conditions in the labour market as the older people (6.8% of respondents have answered clear «no», as opposed to 3.33% in the middle-sized and 2.33% in the large-sized organizations). In a sample of the survey among the representatives of the large-sized organizations, more than 23% of the respondents think that young people are unambiguously provided with the same conditions in the labour market as older people. Another 51% of the respondents of this sample group believe that they «rather do».

4.2. Other actors in the labour market

In spite of provisions of the anti-discrimination law and other anti-discrimination measures in the legislation in Slovakia, there are cases of discrimination of the senior citizens by their working age in the labour market. This means loss for society, since thereby the society loses their knowledge and experience. Candidates' age is considered to be of small or intermediate importance for an organization. The following Figure 3 illustrates the results of our research.

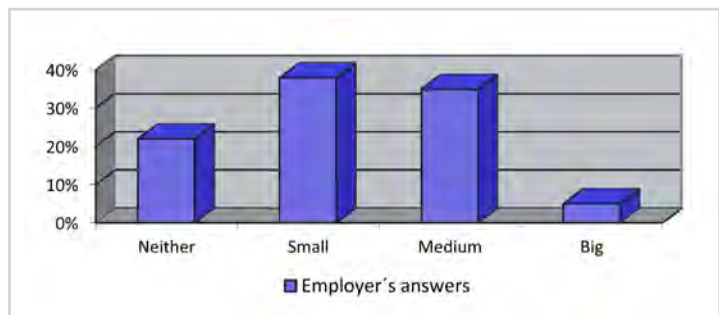


Fig. 3: The importance of the candidates' age from the employers' point of view
Source: Own processing, 2016

The age structure of employees

Importance of the candidates' age has been also proved in the research by the Regióny.sk Civil Society Association that determined «the age structure of employees in three well-known large multinational corporations operating in Slovakia and in each of them the average age was lower than 30, in one of them even 22 within the executive workers, and 24 within the chief executives. In the words of the company's representative, this is not the deliberate selection of young workers, but rather a mere chance. He has stated that he realises advantages of the diverse age structure of employees and he has had no interest in dismissal of its aging employees at the working age and replacing them with young workers, for the company has trained them and they have acquired valuable experience there... However, he stated, it is important to maintain and develop the capacity to work of the employees» (Pawera, 2014).

Relationships among the workers of different age in the organizations are good in vast majority of cases (62%), which is definitely positive, as far as a good climate in a working team should be one of the priorities of each employer (see Figure 4). This fact should not contribute to the reluctance to employ older workers. We can explain it by maturity of older workers who do not have so many personal concerns (e.g. family concerns), they are sufficiently experienced to know how to act in certain moments at work and do not seek the conflict situations. Among

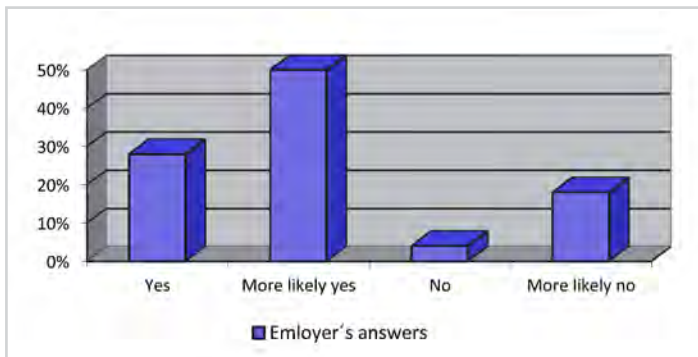


Fig. 2: Answers of the employers to a question whether young people have the same conditions in society for their employability in the labour market as the older people
Source: Own processing, 2016

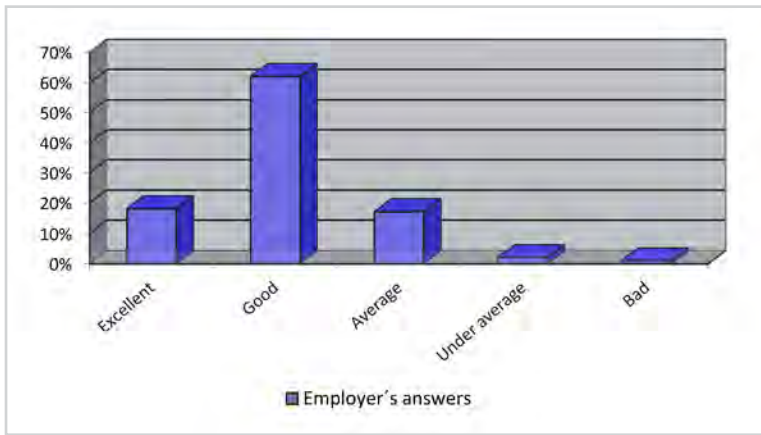


Fig. 4: Relationships among workers of different age in the organization from the employers' point of view
Source: Own processing, 2016

the workers of the same age the conflicts and squabble arise more frequently, which does not happen among the older and younger workers. An exception is the situation when a leading worker is younger or a newcomer in the enterprise and the older workers are his superiors.

According to our research, 86% of employers have confirmed they do not seek workers older than 50. This can be probably explained by the fact that these workers are not considered prospective by employers in terms of future, and therefore they rather employ younger people who represent a long-term gain for the employer and from such point of view it pays off more to invest in them. This does not mean that the older candidates shall be treated differently in these organizations, since employers have at the same time expressed their opinion that aptitudes are most relevant for them, as well as previous results and willingness to work.

The potential of people to obtain employment opportunities

Regarding the employment status of people of different ages, it is important to point out the fact that employment patterns differ across the age groups most significantly when comparing the youngest and the oldest age cohorts. As can be observed in time series for employment rate by the various age groups, the development of employment varied from age to age, especially in difficult macroeconomic conditions (Lubyová, 2017).

Men come out better in each age-and-gender couple (younger male - younger female, middle aged male - middle aged female, older male - older female). Younger people can find work the most likely and they are followed by the middle aged people. On the contrary, the older candidates are bad off. The prevalence of males has been confirmed also by the fact that the chances of females in their young age are even poorer than chances of the middle-aged males (see Table 1).

Having been chosen by 178 respondents, an older woman has become an unequivocal winner. She was ranked first by 78% of the respondents. An older man came second having been determined by 162 answers - 24% of the respondents ranked him first, and 60% - second, after the older woman. As we can see, in the discrimination against the older people it is necessary to distinguish between males and females, since it is particularly the gender discrimination that deepens discrimination on grounds of age, especially in case of older women. The next places in the ranking are taken by the middle-aged woman, the young woman and the middle-aged man and the young man, respectively.

We have examined the employers' preferences in the job-seekers selection when the candidates possessed the qualifications required and only differed in age and gender. Each respondent could enter three answers and for this purpose we distinguished between six categories, namely: women and men of younger, middle and older age. The respondent could also enter the option that they did not find it important to distinguish according to age and gender of the candidates. The answers shown in the Table 2 introduce the particular numbers of answers provided by the respondents.

Answers from the Table 2 show that more than half of the respondents do not distinguish potential employees according to age and gender, which is a positive tendency, however, the answers given may be affected by their unwillingness to show off discriminatory practices. Relatively high number of the respondents could not comment on the issue, for they could provide us with a better picture of employers' views on the individual age groups. From other answers we can conclude that employers prefer men to women. Young and middle-aged men are best placed to enter the job market, on the contrary, the older people are the worst off and they are not preferred by the employers. The results show preference of men to women as well.

Employment opportunities for the higher age people with respect to the gender

Within the framework of age discrimination, we have examined the range of employment opportunities for women above 45 and increase in their retirement age. In the Table 3 we processed the quantitative results of the research regarding the aforementioned issue.

79% of the surveyed employers expressed positive opinion on employing women above 45. In terms of attitude to the increase of retirement age for men and women, 84% and 86% of employers disagreed, respectively.

During our research, we also outlined a hypothetical situation to the respondents within the project called «Plus for women 45+» (Institute for Public Issues, 2005-2008). The respondents have expressed their attitude to creating of employment opportunities if there is lack of such. Approximately 90% of the respondents expressed the opinion that

Tab. 1: Employers' answers to the question for which three candidates it is most difficult to find employment (number of answers)

	1 st place	2 nd place	3 rd place
Young man	6	12	14
Young woman	18	22	36
Middle-aged man	8	9	10
Middle-aged woman	8	31	55
Older man	39	97	26
Older woman	138	20	20
I do not know		23	

Source: Own processing, 2016

Tab. 2: The employers' preferences in the job-seekers selection when the candidates possessed the qualifications required and only differed in age and gender (number of answers)

	1 st place	2 nd place	3 rd place
Young man	36	16	17
Young woman	17	24	15
Middle-aged man	24	33	17
Middle-aged woman	12	21	24
Older man	1	5	2
Older woman	1	2	7
I do not find it important to distinguish according to the age and gender		120	
I do not know		19	

Source: Own processing, 2016

Tab. 3: Attitudes of employers to the employment of vulnerable categories of workers (number of answers)

	I support	I do not support	I do not know
Provide more employment opportunities to women above 45 years	157	10	32
Provide more employment opportunities to disabled people	152	14	35
Provide more employment opportunities to the Roma	77	46	77
Provide more employment opportunities to migrants from other countries (immigrants)	37	82	81
Introduce a longer working week or shorten an annual leave	9	172	19
Increase the retirement age of men	10	168	23
Increase the retirement age of woman	7	172	20

Source: Own processing, 2016

people should have equal opportunities to work irrespective of their age. Remaining 10% of the respondents have declared their ageist attitude for employees and claimed that in such situation younger people should be given preference to the older ones. The research results prove that the equal opportunities for all age groups are required most of all by women, by people with higher education and those who reached the age of 35.

Age is an important factor in the career progression of the employee in the organization. One might suspect that chances of older employees for the career advancement are smaller than of their younger colleagues. The reason of employers for such acting could be to motivate younger workers to stay in the organization and become compatible and to ensure that resources invested in the workers' training and education are used effectively and are fully exploited. From the employer's point of view, a younger worker is more interesting, since he represents a working potential for the future to the enterprise, whereas the older workers represent mainly its current condition. Whether employers take into account age of workers when allowing their career progression is illustrated in the following Figure 5, where we can clearly see that employers claim they give an opportunity of career advancement to all its employees regardless of their age, i.e. they do not take into account the employees' age in their career advancement, or the employers at least do not admit it (66%).

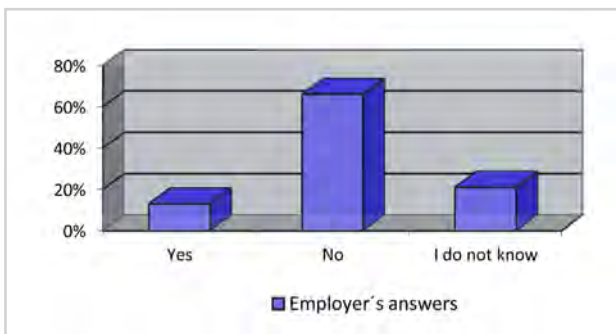


Fig. 5: Answers of the employers on whether they take into consideration age of the employees when enabling their career advancement

Source: Own processing, 2016

Human resources management

Employers allow for the equal opportunities for the career progression regardless of age to their employees, but does it also apply to remuneration? The principle of equal pay for work of equal value was established as early as in The Treaty of Establishment of the European Community in 1957. In spite of this, the European Commission reiterates inequalities in the area of employment relationships. This fact is adversely reflected in the different earnings of men and women. Employee's income share development is the result of interactions between technical development, labour market bodies and other factors like market openness, etc. However, we were interested to discover whether employers differentiated the distribution of remuneration according to the age of their employees. Research has

found out that 71% of employers reject suspicion that they remunerate the employees according to the age; only a minority has confirmed statement that they take into account the age of employees.

Much more balanced results can be seen in answers to the question regarding equal opportunities of the workers with different duration of employment relationship in the organization in terms of their career progression. 47% of the respondents have replied they do not consider this fact at all, whereas, on the other hand, 33% take it into account.

5. Conclusion

Various forms of the workforce discrimination in the European labour markets despite the existing regulations on tackling the issue of discrimination stipulate the importance of work on solving the problems not only at the governmental level, but also at the institutional and managerial levels. Moreover, the size of the enterprises is to be taken into account in order to understand actual approaches towards human resources management.

Management of human resources is one of the most important preconditions for the effective functioning of each company and institution. It has been confirmed in our research that the age issue is the most common reason for discrimination. Nevertheless, oftentimes it is difficult to detect such discrimination as far as the age of the candidate is usually obvious without formal investigation.

Every age has its advantages and disadvantages for the employer. Young people without working experience can be trained in order to meet the needs of the company, they can learn quickly, usually do not have problems with applying IT technologies at the working place, often speak one or two foreign languages, however, the fluctuation among them is the highest comparing to the rest age groups in the labour market. Older people can be very experienced and loyal to the company, but often very expensive for the company in terms of remuneration.

The structure of the employees should correspond to the needs of the company. Age structure of human resources is changing for reasons mentioned earlier. Its ageing brings about major changes in the strategies of human resources management as well as new approaches in management at the workplace, since the competitiveness of organizations shall substantially depend on performance and productivity of aging workers in future.

Some employers prefer to hire and support younger workers, but there exist also employers who do not support practices of stimulating retirement of their older workers, since they present experience and investments that have been built-up in the labour force. Some employers expect older workers to help with training of the young employees and consider it as their task. We take a view that enterprises with a diverse age structure of the employees shall be the best off in the future.

Employment problems of the certain age category, for example, the youngest and the oldest, are not always caused by discrimination and often cannot be solved by the companies. This is an important task of the state employment policy to protect the most vulnerable groups with the appropriate tools. We can expect that the next decades will bring a lot of challenges in the labour market connected with the age issues and changes in the professional requirements to the employees.

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