



PERSPECTIVES OF OLDER EMPLOYEES IN CHANGING LABOUR MARKET

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Abstract

Due to an ongoing increase in the average life expectancy and a decrease in the average birth rate, there are less active people that are of working age in the labor market. However, this year's Covid-19 pandemic highlighted that older workers are much more vulnerable in an ever-changing labor market. It is therefore essential to analyze how employers create working conditions for more senior employees during a pandemic. As well as the employment opportunities of older workers in the longer term. Applied methods of analysis: scientific literature and analysis of various documents, interviews, and analysis of the research results, their interpretation. The study found that older employees had difficulty adapting to changed working conditions and faced a higher risk of health issues. The article thus showed that existing stereotypes among employers limit the employability of older people.

Keywords: Work; Aging; Older employees; Workers; Labor market; COVID-19.

1. Introduction

Demographic, cultural and economic changes, as well as the health system's progress, led to the changes in the structure of society while declining birth rates and higher life expectancy resulted in increase of the share of older people in many countries. Furthermore, improving quality of life and longer life expectancy increases the number of elderly population in society. The share of the retirement-age population grows, and the number of working-age populations declines due to the ageing society, thus challenging the state's labor market. The European Employment Strategy states that there is a need to promote employment accessibility for all those who can participate in the work activity and emphasize that the increase of personal abilities for life-long participation in the labour market is one of Europe's strategic objectives (Europe 2020, COM (2010)). Thus, it seeks to ensure positive interaction between economic, employment and social policy measures by promoting long-term and continuous participation in the work activity and providing conditions to remain active in the labor market. Employment and active participation of elderly population are considered the main objectives of the EU labor market policy. In order to implement the objectives mentioned above, it is essential to ensure good mental and physical health of an elderly population, to apply more flexible retirement system, to create the most suitable working conditions, to ensure that the elderly would be able to acquire new knowledge and skills, to refresh the existing ones, and be provided with equal employment opportunities in the labor market.

From an economic point of view, one of the most important measures to avoid a rise in the share of non-working age population is the increase of retirement age. However, this process is extremely negative since pre-retirement age people find it difficult to get employed and stay in the existing jobs. It promotes the protection of interests of elderly population in the labor



market. Furthermore, the average age of elderly, withdrawing from the labor market does not coincide with the average retirement age. In Lithuania, even 44,8 percent of persons over 50 years old are unemployed (Social report, 2016-2017).

The Statistics Lithuania publishes the latest demographic trends in Lithuania, which show a further decline of population: the number of permanent residents in Lithuania declined by 37,8 thousand or 1,3 percent in 2018, in comparison with 2017. Given the presented facts, it is evident that Lithuania is rapidly aging and already has the seventh oldest population in the EU. Currently, the median age in Lithuania is 43 – it means that half of the Lithuanian population are older than 43, indicating the population aging. The share of elderly population grows, while the share of the working-age population diminishes. While comparing, it should be pointed out that the elderly population, i.e., persons over 65 years, accounted for 11 percent of the total population in 1990, and in 2018 this number is equal to 23 percent of the total population of Lithuania. The share of the working-age population (15-64) of the total population diminished from 67 percent in 1990 down to 62 percent in 2017. If one hundred working-age persons maintained 16 elderly persons in 1990, currently, one hundred working-age persons have to maintain even 29 older people, therefore, the state must adapt to the changes as mentioned earlier by addressing the issues of elderly population in the labor market and providing for proper social policy (The Statistics Lithuania).

Even in economic growth conditions, when there is a shortage of workers, older people often remain on the margins. In the reality of Covid-19, they are at even greater risk of not participating in the world of work and society. Forty-one percent in Lithuania, job seekers, are over 50 years old, and one in four of them has been looking for work for more than a year. A prolonged job search reduces older people's employability and pushes a person into long-term unemployment, which also has long-term psychosocial consequences.

The influence of the aging population on the labor market is researched by Didžgalvytė and Lukšaitė, (2014). It should be noted that Moskvina and Skučienė (2014) analyzed the factors of dismissal from the labor market at elder age that should be considered, in order to select legal measures to keep older people included in the labor market. Meanwhile, theoretical aspects of the elderly participants in the labor market were examined by Corsi and Lodovici, (2013), Seltzer and Yahirun, (2013). Brazienė and Mikutavičienė, (2015), Skučienė, Bartkus, Moskvina and Uleckienė, (2015), Mikulionienė and Rapolienė (2016) looked at the opportunities of older people to be included in the labor market. However, there is a lack of research done on COVID-19 impact on older employees in the market.

This article aims to review the aspects of inclusion of older employees in the labour market and analyze how employers create working conditions for senior employees during a pandemic. The following objectives are set to reach the aim: to describe the changes in the labour market in the context of ageing population, to identify the factors limiting the employment of older persons, and to put forward the recommendations on how to increase the inclusion of older persons in the labour market. The following research methods were applied: analysis of scientific literature and documents, key informant interviews, analysis and interpretation of the research results. Qualitative research method – survey of expert opinion in the form of a structured questionnaire (interview) – was selected for empirical research (Bitinas, Rupšienė, Žydžiūnaitė, 2008). The interview method was more appropriate for the same reasons – it was sought to go deep into real and sometimes hidden reasons why elderly employees are looked at rather skeptically in the labor market (Baley, 2007).

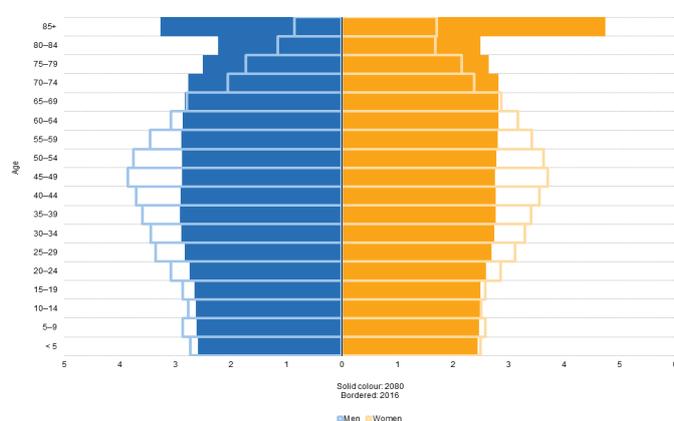
2. Literature review

2.1 Changes in the labour market in the process of population ageing

Population aging is a long-term trend that started in Europe several decades ago. It is evident from the changing structure of population age and is reflected in the growing share of elderly population, related with decreasing proportion of working-age people. It can be argued that this process is not only an actual change of elderly population – it is a complex process, reflecting the relationship of elderly population with the remaining society in the light of increasing life expectancy, and including the following age factors: biological (entirety of physiological changes), psychological (individual abilities to adapt his behaviour to environmental changes), social (social norms and roles applied to an individual in respect of his age) (Labauskaitė, Astrauskaitė, Kiyak (2014). In the process of ageing, some of population face difficulties due to biological, psychological, and social age, since adaptation in the labour market is affected by all above factors. Therefore, ageing itself cannot be defined only as diminished physical powers. It should be noted that population ageing causes the following problems: working-age people

are no longer able to generate enough income for pensions: the elderly are forced to work longer and cannot enjoy their retirement. It is projected that the share of elderly population will increase, while the share of youth and working age people will decline significantly in EU in the next few decades (European Commission, 2014). Seeking to identify the future trends of population ageing, the Eurostat population projections (EUROPOP2015), covering the period from 2015 to 2080, forecast the EU population will increase with its peak of 528,6 million in 2050, and thereafter will gradually decline down to 518,8 million in 2080. While comparing the age pyramids of 2015 and 2080 (see Figure 1), it might be observed that the share of elderly people will continue to increase. Over the next decades, the share of elderly population will significantly grow due to high number of baby boomers. However, it obvious that the shape of this pyramid will transform, becoming similar to rectangle, narrowed in the middle (in the age of 45 – 54 years) in 2080.

Figure 1. EU population age pyramids 2016 and 2080 (% of the total population)

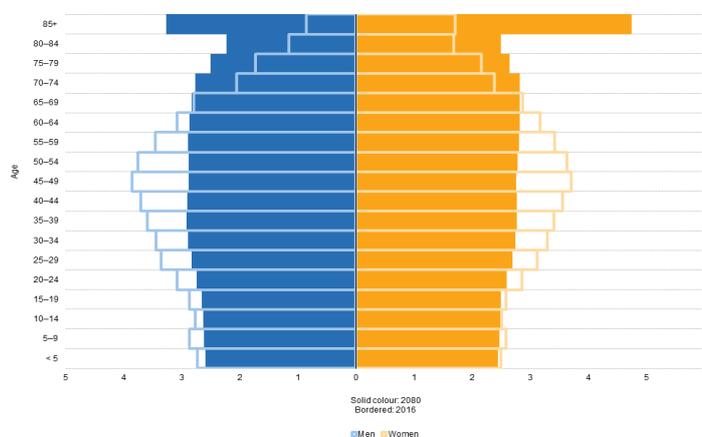


Note: 2016: estimate, provisional 2080: projections (EUROPOP2015).
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: demo_gjangroup and proj_15npsms)

Source: Eurostat, 2016

Another important aspect of population ageing is a gradual ageing of the elderly population, since a relative segment of very old people grows faster than any other age segment of the EU population. The share of people aged 80 years, or the share of elderly people is projected to increase more than double from 5,4 percent to 12,7 percent during the period of 2016–2080 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. EU population by broad age groups 2016–2080 (% of the total population)

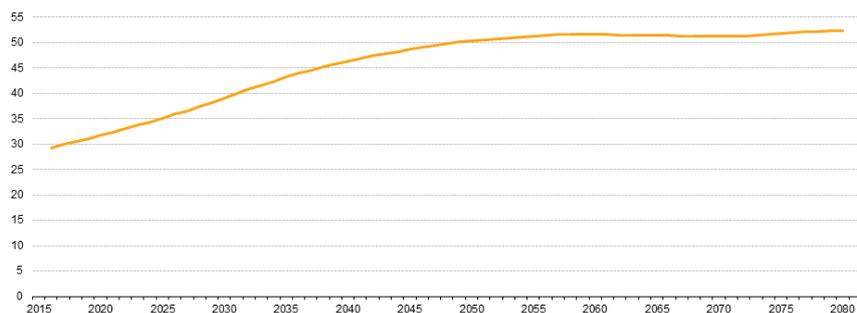


Note: 2016: estimate, provisional 2080: projections (EUROPOP2015).
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: demo_gjangroup and proj_15npsms)

Source: Eurostat, 2016

While referring to the period of 2016–2080, the share of working-age population is expected to continuously decrease until 2050, slightly stabilizing later, while the share elderly population is projected to account for an increasing share of the total population: people aged 65 and over will account for 29,1 percent of the EU-28 population in 2080, in comparison with 19,2 percent in 2016. As a result of the movement of people from one age group to another, the projected EU-28 ageing index will increase almost double from 29,3 percent in 2016 to 52,3 percent in 2080 (see Figure 3). The total age-dependency ratio is projected to increase from 53,2 percent 2016 to 79,7 percent 2080.

Figure 3. EU population by broad age groups 2016–2080 (% of the total population)



Note: 2016: estimate, provisional. 2017–80: projections (EUROPOP2015).
Source: Eurostat (online data codes: demo_pjanind and proj_15nddim)

Source: Eurostat, 2016

On the basis of the EU projections, it might be argued that the share of people aged 80 or elderly people in the EU population will increase more than twice during the period of 2016 – 2080, i.e., from 5,4 percent to 12,7 percent in 2080. People aged 65 and over will account for 29,1 percent of the EU population, in comparison with 19,2 percent in 2016. As a result of the movement of people from one age group to another, the projected EU ageing index will increase almost double from 29,3 percent in 2016 to 52,3 percent in 2080. In summary, it should be stated that the presented projections stimulate to transform both social security and labour market system with the expectation that the share of the oldest population will grow at a particularly high pace in the next decades.

Population ageing has twofold effect on the structure of labour – the number of elderly employees as well as the number of persons, who are no longer able to carry out economic activity, thus, becoming dependent on the social security mechanism, is growing (Ambrazevičiūtė, 2014). The latter causes financial burden on the working age people, who finance the social insurance fund. The current system of the labour market is adapted to the model where the larger share of population maintains the socially supported elderly population. Negative influence of population ageing on the labour market is dealt with increase of retirement age and formal reduction of the number of economically inactive people (Okunevičiūtė – Neverauskienė, 2011). However, actual number of economically inactive population does not depend solely on the retirement age. Despite threat to the changes in the labour market, it is believed that population ageing will not necessarily affect the labour market negatively, if certain changes are made. The conditions of the labour market must be adapted to the socio-demographic changes, focused on the labour productivity, quality of the labour force, and labour force participation (Moskvina, Okunevičiūtė – Neverauskienė, 2011). Considering the negative influence of population ageing on the labour market and the economic stability of the country, it should be noted that special measures are required to provide conditions for the longest possible activity of employees in the labour market. Although ageing is primarily defined as an entirety of physiological changes, not only physical limitations burden elderly people. Namely, the economic activity potential of elderly population can be limited by the following reasons: insufficiently flexible employment forms; lack of development of adapted places; limited opportunities of lifelong learning; unequal access to healthcare services; lack of measures promoting later retirement (Kanopienė, Mikulionienė, 2006).

While analysing the influence of the labour market on employment of elderly people, the retirement time, the working load, the method of retirement (how fast a person moves from part-time work to full retirement, the nature of work before retirement), the changes in the labour market, and the causes of retirement should be considered. As it has already been mentioned, the motives for retirement are often caused not by physiological changes that prevent from economic activity, but by incompatibility of the needs of the labour market and the elderly people. It might be argued that the reasons for early retirement of elderly people from the labour market are determined both by employer and employee position. Didžgalvytė, Lukšaitė (2014), Nilsson, Bülow, Kazemi (2015) various studies revealed that individual's view towards normal retirement depends on the social security system, his financial situation, needs, even on occupation. For example, people, who are engaged in physical work, tend to quit earlier because of health problems and reduced physical capacity (Moskvina, Skučienė, 2014). Other reasons are related with employer's needs in considering elderly population as more difficult to adapt to the labour market. It should be noted that elderly population faces more difficulties in adapting to the labour market due to the following reasons: professional and working experience is not in demand under modern economic conditions; lack of information and technological skills; lack of foreign language skills; qualification development programmes are targeted at young people; employers' view that elderly population is insufficiently energetic, that elderly population often lacks confidence in its forces, often does not want to raise its qualification or acquire to speciality; insufficient social partnership fails to implement appropriate representation of elderly employees at the company or the state level. (Lengvinienė, Rutkienė, Tandzegolskienė, 2014). Given these factors, it is essential to retain elderly people in the labour market. This requires the measures to protect elderly employees present in the labour market. Furthermore, the employees should be encouraged to refresh their skills and to develop their qualification

2.2. Regulation of labour relations in respect of population ageing

A political, economic, social and cultural context of EU has led to the fact that the region of Western and Central Europe has experienced one of the most noticeable and earliest population ageing trends. Demographic changes in the Community have been driven by both declining birth rates and progress in the health system. Therefore, EU was one of the first to launch specific actions to deal with the issues caused by influence of population ageing on the labour market. The EU strategy papers state that the longest possible participation in the labour market stimulates the domestic markets, stabilizes the pension fund systems, has positive effect on the overall employment, therefore, it is one of the strategic objectives. Looking at the statistics, it can be seen that during the period from 2001 to 2010, exit from the labour market was delayed by 1,6 years (women – 1,9, men – 1, 3). It evidences about quite successful strategy of retention of elderly employees in the labour market. Therefore, it is important to analyse the measures implemented at EU level for changes in labour relations in the context of population ageing. Article 147 of Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012) states that while solving the issues of employment the Union shall encourage cooperation between Member States and support and, if necessary, complement their action. Paragraph 1 of Article 153 of the same legislation specifies that the Union shall support and complement the integration of persons excluded from the labour market (Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. OJ, C326/47 (2012). While analysing the evolution of the EU policy in dealing with the issues of population ageing in respect of the labour market, two stages can be distinguished: from founding of the Community in 1957 to the Treaty of Amsterdam, and after this Treaty. In the first decades of the Community existence, population ageing was not included in any official policy agenda or reflected in any other papers. The Treaty on European Union included the provision prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of nationality and gender, but age was not mentioned there. The first period was characterized only by declarative documents, which including recommended guidelines to avoid the consequences of population ageing. Although the papers, issued during this period, affected the law of the Member States, they did not lead to specific binding rules of law of the Community (Ambrazevičiūtė, 2014). Here, the resolution of the European Parliament, adopted in 1982, on the situation and problems of the aged in the European Community should be noted. This paper observes demographic change that emerges as the composition of population changes by age group, i.e., as the share of elderly population increases. With regard to labour law, clause 8 of the resolution was of particular importance, stating that the legal regulation where a person is removed from the labour market as he reaches the retirement age is not acceptable in the Community (Council Recommendation of 10 December 1982 on the principles of a Community policy with regard to retirement age, OJ 1982, L 357). It was highlighted that person's exit from the labour market as he reaches the retirement age is his right rather than an

obligation imposed by the state. This resolution encouraged the European Council to adopt the Recommendation on the principles of a Community policy with regard to retirement age. The latter emphasized that termination of employment relationships should not be based on the fact of retirement, and financial incentives to promote the early retirement may be introduced only because of exceptional economic circumstances.

While analysing population ageing and the changes in the labour market in the context of regulation of labour relations, the Treaty of Amsterdam 1997 is considered as a qualitatively new and progressive step, since the Council gained the competence to directly affect the legal systems of the Member States and to take actions in event of discrimination (age is also included in the types of discrimination). As the issue of population was declared as one of the most important fields of social policy, the European Commission encouraged the cooperation of the Member States in solving this issue at the Community level in 1999. Application of employment policy and labour market measures was named as one of the four action fields in the document for overcoming the consequences of ageing (Kanopienė, Mikulionienė, 2006). On the basis of the Treaty of Amsterdam, on 27th of November, 2000, the Council Directive 2000/78/EC, regulating the principles of equal treatment in the labour market of the Community and targeted towards establishment of equal rights and non-discrimination principles, as well as towards promotion of the EU employment policy, was adopted (Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation).

Over the recent decades, the European labour market has been affected by international migration, fast technological development, growing dynamism and competitiveness. These changes have led to the necessity to restructure the labour market, to improve adaptability of companies and employees by applying the concept of flexicurity, which is based on a combination of social security and flexibility. While applying the principles of flexicurity, security guarantees are associated with help for improving skills for career development, with possibility to change the work place or retrain rather than with retention in the work place (Mačernytė Panomariovienė, 2011).

Considering the relevance of population ageing, 2012 was announced as the European year for active ageing and solidarity between generations. Active ageing was defined as the process of optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age. Active ageing is understood as the process allowing to realize the potentials for physical, social, and mental well-being (European Parliament and the Council Decision on the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. OJ 2011, L 246/). It should be noted that solidarity between generations is the key factor in the labour market. Invaluable experience of elderly employees and skills of youth should be used as an exchange program. Taking into account the relevance of flexicurity in the context of population ageing, the Communication from the Commission "Towards common principles of flexicurity: more and better jobs through flexibility and security", 2007, should be mentioned (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Towards Common Principles of Flexicurity: More and better jobs through flexibility and security. COM (2007) 359 final). The latter presents the common principles of flexicurity: flexible and reliable contractual arrangement, modern labour laws, collective agreements, modern labour organization; implementation of comprehensive lifelong learning strategy, improving the adaptability and employability of workers; effective and active labour market policy, reducing unemployment spells and easing the transition periods; social security measures that encourage employment and facilitate labour market mobility. It might be stated that this Communication encouraged the Baltic countries to restructure the labour market in the way that social security would be associated with opportunities to adapt in the labour market rather than with retention of a working place. In other words, the guarantees of employment rather than of labour market should prevail.

In Lithuania, one of the most important aspects of the principle of non-discrimination in the labour market and other fields is primarily regulated in the main document of the country, i.e., the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Article 29 whereof states that "all persons shall be equal before the law, courts, and other state institutions and officials. Human rights may not be restricted; no one may be granted any privileges on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions, or view" (The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, Official Gazette 33, 1014 (1992). Meanwhile, Article 48 of the Constitution is more relevant in the context of labour. It specifies that "everyone may freely choose a job or business, and shall have the right to have proper, safe, and healthy conditions at work, as well as to receive fair pay for work and social security in the event of unemployment".

The legal regulation of Lithuania in addressing the issues of elderly population in the labour market is focused towards additional support and implementation of the principle of non-discrimination by age. Considering the real situation, where

difficulties in the labour market are faced by people in their fourth or fifth decade, the age limit additional support has been decreased. Relatively strict regulation of the labour market limits the flexibility of employers in making decisions on admission and dismissal from work. This, in turn, potentially negatively affects the employment possibilities of the high-risk groups as the elderly population. Therefore, more flexible regulation of labour relations, established by the Labour Code, which came into effect in 01 07 2017, might be beneficial for older employees.

3. Methodology

Problem of research – less favourable attitude of employers towards elderly employees is one of the problems hindering the integration of elderly population in the labour market. Object of research – integration of elderly population in the labour market. Aim of research – to reveal the attitudes of employers in respect of support and inclusion of elderly employees in the labour market.

Objectives of empirical research: 1) to conduct the survey of employers' opinion, which would help to identify the factors hindering the inclusion of elderly population in the labour market 2) to propose methods and ways on how to improve inclusion and participation of elderly population in the labour market in the future 3) to give preliminary view of Covid-19 impact on labour market for elderly employees. Qualitative research method – survey of expert opinion in the form of a structured questionnaire (interview) – was selected for empirical research.

The survey was conducted through a formal interview, i.e., interview with pre-arranged questions that all respondents were asked in the same order. This form of interview was selected, seeking to find out the expert opinion about the current situation and, by comparing answers, to reveal the expert attitude towards support and inclusion of elderly employees in the labour market. In case of this research, the method of interview was more appropriate for the same reasons – it was sought to go deep into real and sometimes hidden reasons why elderly employee are looked at rather sceptically in the labour market. Analysis and interpretation of qualitative research data requires high objectivity in order to ensure the validity of the research results. Data were analysed on the basis of comparative analysis. The informant group consisted of 5 employers – the persons leading the companies. The following criteria were applied: experience of management (at least 3), the number of employees (at least 15). The aforementioned criteria were selected in order to reflect the attitudes of employers, taking into account the experience of managers in management of human resources, and the structure of employees in the companies.

The prepared questionnaire consists of a group of interrelated questions to be answered by interviewed informants. The problem-related questions: How do you evaluate the employment opportunities for elderly persons? Are there any discriminatory provisions for employment of elderly persons? What are the possibilities for development of qualification and retraining?.

4. Results

In addition to being more susceptible to contracting COVID-19, older workers face a number of challenges that contribute to their likelihood of being laid off from their jobs. The shift to working from home could hurt older employers due to a lingering perception that more seasoned workers aren't as tech-savvy as their younger counterparts. The informants were asked to comment on the employment opportunities for elderly persons.

"I usually focus on older people as a guarantor of stability and responsibility. We now notice that the supply of older people looking for work is really high. For example, the school and kindergarten catering sector is home to people who have worked in luxury restaurants that have had to close due to quarantine, which increases the competence of our company and improves the quality of services"

The respondents emphasized the disadvantages of elderly employees, highlighting that these employees are not sufficiently motivated, would hardly adapt to the existing innovations in the company: "older workers are not flexible, hardly accept innovations, resulting in a decrease of work performance", "they find it more difficult to accept new information, they need to be motivated to go to training", "elderly employees find it more difficult to adapt to certain innovations, especially information technology", "technology is constantly improving in our sector, they hardly adapt to innovations", "do not want to be retrained, in order to master new technologies". During the survey, respondents agreed that proper leadership by managers and management of organization motivates individuals to change and to adapt to the changes in an organization: "if physical health allows, I have not noticed that employees would lose their motivation naturally with age", "our organization does not divide



employees to old and young, our team is friendly", "precise tasks and division of work allows for effective use of the age difference and right motivation of employees", "age is not very important for motivation, sometimes young people do not want anything...", "poor foreign language skills, the older generation is perfect of Russian language, however, the labor market often requires good English language skills". The respondents stated that they would be more cautious about older persons, when looking for a new employee, since the named disadvantages of elderly employees include not only physiological changes, but also extremely difficult acceptance of technological innovations at work and lack of foreign language skills. However, those employers whose attitudes towards elderly employees remain positive are ready to provide opportunities to be retained in the labor market.

It was asked whether the employee's experience is considered an advantage. It has been noticed that none of the informants identified age as a direct advantage, however, they were positive about experience and emphasized the personal characteristics, which help to adapt and work in a team: "age is not an advantage, however, experience is always a decisive factor when getting employed", "experience must be in line with positivity, creativity", "we select employees according to their ability to work in a team, communicativeness, responsibility", "we choose according to desire to work, to adapt to the duties, requirements", "it is essential that a person would be able to work in team, to have the desire to change and improve", "I have noticed that older people are more responsible and diligent in carrying out tasks at work". The informant noted: "People of older generation like to emphasize the fact that they are with higher education, however, often the knowledge gained in 1980s, is outdated", "we evaluate experience and competencies of the people because we cannot rely solely on a diploma as the knowledge was acquired long ago."

It was sought to find out the attitude of the informants towards older long-term unemployed persons. The majority stated that long-term unemployment has negative effect on the person's skills, therefore, these individuals find it hard to adapt in a new team, they lack self-confidence, willingness to change and improve: "long-term unemployment shows that a person has been refused to be employed by a number of employers for some reasons", "people lose their working skills over a long period of time, therefore, I would think good before employing", "it is risky to employ a long-term unemployed person, I would employ him, if I knew at least the main causes of long-term unemployment", "if a person could not work because of a good reason, I would give him a chance", "it would depend on the position in the company and the reasons that led to long-term unemployment." In conclusion, it might be argued that the respondents would go deep into the reasons of long-term unemployment and consider the specific situation of these persons.

While considering the opportunities of elderly employees to be retained in the labour market, the informants stated that they would employ the older person, who had completed retraining courses. For some employers, completing courses would serve as a proof of motivation, however, a part of them emphasized that it would not be an advantage: "Yes. It would prove that a person still has aims, motivation. We would kindly employ this person for the position that does not require much experience"; "If these courses are related with company's activities and the person meets other required criteria, we will consider his candidacy to the required position"; "We would employ him, however, it would not be an advantage. Maybe, we would impose a probationary period to let him show what he is able to do." The informants would agree on training elderly employees if it positively affected their productivity. Some employers would like the state to at least partially finance this kind of training: "We could not pay for training solely from our funds, it is huge expenses"; "I would like to get the state support not only for employing the elderly, but also for retaining and raising the qualification of elderly employees"; "Training is quite expensive, but it is better to invest in an employee than to look for a new one." During the interview, the respondents said pointed out that they would use the possibility to employ an older person by subsidizing his working place. However, they would employ only if an employee met all requirements and this position was required: "Subsidies are very necessary"; "I use subsidies when the company's needs meet according to the working place"; "It is the possibility for an older employee to go back to work.". The informants stated that compensation of salary expenses is a sufficient incentive to employ an older person, while subsidies could also be granted with a probationary period.

The research revealed a positive attitude towards employment of retirement-age persons, although the informants stated that productivity of employees in this age group should be lower, and the possibilities would allow employing only for jobs that do not require much skills: "It is nothing bad, if a person has willingness, skills, motivation. It is only welcoming, if he still needs activity. I hope the number of these pensioners will increase in the future"; "I have employed some of such people because recommendations, knew that they are trustable people"; "The number of learning, active seniors is increasing, therefore, maybe the number of those, who would be active in the labour market, despite of getting a pension, would also grow in the future". It



can be argued that there is a positive attitude towards working persons of retirement-age, who are capable to work and are required for organization, however, the solutions for staying in the labour market as long as possible require systematic and targeted measures, which would be focused on and dedicated for the employees, who are currently active in the labour market and will reach their retirement age a few years later.

5. Conclusion

Population ageing is a complex phenomenon, defining the relationship of elderly population with the remaining society. This process leads to the fact that the difficulties of adaptation in the labour market, caused by biological, psychological and social changes, are faced by an increasing share of population. In Lithuania, there is a lack of a clear public employment strategy, therefore the applied solutions are often insufficient and inconsistent, there is a lack of a comprehensive approach to the situation, the needs of different groups and the causes of unemployment are underestimated. In order to ensure public employment, appropriate targets should be set for the public sector and business organizations, and self-care for those in their fifties and older should be encouraged. It is still early to predict outcomes of covid-19 crisis, but health risks for older workers already raised their unemployment rates in Lithuania suggesting that some older unemployed workers will stop looking for work permanently.

As Lithuanian population ages, elderly people will account for an increasing share of population, therefore, on the one hand, their active inclusion in the labour market will be characterized by ever increasing influence on the public life, on the other hand, it will be difficult to discriminate the majority of employees. Thus, the society will have to change the view towards elderly employees and understand that there is a need of a full range of measures that would be active before an employee falls into the category of high-risk group, related with his age. Attractiveness of elderly population as labour force in the labour market may be increased by applying flexicurity principles. Strengthen enforcement of laws particularly in areas that are viewed to put elderly employees at a disadvantage.

The results of the completed research revealed that the employers' attitude towards older employees is determined by stereotyped thinking that the elderly does not have sufficient motivation to change, therefore, age affects their decision in the process of employee selection. Older persons, working in organizations, are rated quite favourably – especially those with experience and wishing to retrain. In most cases, the employer does not select an elderly person due to his lack of knowledge or skills rather than due to his age, thus, the support system for elderly population should be so as to help people to stay in the labour market as long as possible. Addressing the issue of influence of population ageing on the labour market requires a systematic and preventive approach. Therefore, application of some support measures in the labour market should be started as soon as possible. The persons, who fall into this age group, should be provided with the opportunities of retraining and refreshing their skills.

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