

DISCRIMINATION OF EMPLOYEES GENERATIONAL GROUPS IN SELECTED HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREAS

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Abstract

In the last two decades, globalization trends and the stabilization of the market economy have led to a situation where industrial enterprises are increasingly reporting a lack of skilled manpower. On the other hand, employees of industrial enterprises are increasingly facing the discrimination in finding job or career growth. The main aim of the paper is to analyse the current state of age discrimination in selected human resource management areas in the Slovak industrial enterprises. The research was carried out in the framework of the VEGA project (1/0348/17), whose questionnaire was used in the research. The research sample consisted of the Slovak industrial enterprise's employees ($n = 534$). The quantitative statistical methods were used to evaluate the obtained data (pie charts, frequency histograms and the table analysis). The analyses were performed in the software SPSS from IBM and Excel from MS. The most interesting results include the finding that the most common form of age discrimination is employee selection (62) and career progression (62).

Key words

Generational group, industrial enterprise, age discrimination, human resource management

INTRODUCTION

“There are currently four generational groups in the labour market. Each generational group is different in terms of its positives and negatives and its properties and characteristics”

[1]. "Generation Baby boomers includes people born between 1946 and 1962. Generation can be characterized as an idealistic, optimistic and typical feature is strong workload and morale. Baby boomers are people who work a lot, identify themselves on the basis of their title and job, and they also sacrifice their private life" [2]. "Representatives of generation X were born between 1963 and 1977. Generation X is full of ambition, they are placing great emphasis on the balance between work and personal life. Typical features include their independence, self-sufficiency and independence" [3]. "People born from 1978 to 1992 are referred to generation Y. Generation Y is ambitious, performance oriented, and self - confident and speaks foreign language. Generation Y has high expectations from the employer. People yearn for meaningful projects and, where necessary, do not distinguish working hours and leisure time. They like to work in a team, they are pragmatic and capable of multitasking" [4]. "Generation Z consists of people born between 1992 and 2010. Generation Z members think they are creative, have good communication skills and can quickly learn and adapt. They also claim to be good leaders and do not make the problem of cooperating with employees from older generations" [5].

Each generational group has different expectations from the employer because of generational differences. Many authors are concerned with the issue of job satisfaction. Fejfarova [6] explored in her article employee training and development as one of the important aspects of employee satisfaction. Smetackova [7] in her article characterized stress as a factor which negatively affects job satisfaction and can cause burnout syndrome. Overall job satisfaction is the result of a different job combination satisfaction factors. On the basis of an article by the author Gazioglu [8] "different aspects of job satisfaction are studied in the literature. These include job satisfaction with gender [9], wage growth [10], age [11, 12], comparison income and unemployment [13, 14] work environment [15], work environment and relations with managers [16], job matching [17] and service sector [18]". Job satisfaction very strongly influences the work performance of employees [19, 20]. "Despite stereotypes about the diminished job performance of older workers, there seem to be relatively small differences between older and younger workers in terms of job performance, and those that do exist seem to favour older workers" [21]. At present, employers need to be aware of the importance of equal access to employees of all ages. Taqi [22] characterized three important actions in order to improve the position of the older generation of employees and to ensure cooperation of all generational groups in the labour market: "promoting training, placement and workplace flexibility; changing attitudes through education and information; and prohibiting age discrimination in employment".

Employee discrimination results in declining performance or staff turnover [23]. Discrimination can be manifested in different ways (age, gender, nationality, or racial) [24]. Employees often feel discriminated against in their normal work activities, which fall within the competences of personnel departments [25]. Providing information and rewarding employees are included among personnel activities that various studies report as frequent reasons for leaving employment [26]. Only, if the management of the company tries to eliminate discrimination, especially the perception of discrimination by employees, they can increase the performance of enterprises and at the same time sustainable management of human resources.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main aim of the paper is to analyse the current state of age discrimination in selected human resource management areas in the Slovak industrial enterprises.

The research sample was composed of industrial enterprises employees from the Slovak Republic. For the greater representativeness of the sample, the authors of the paper have decided to include in the research all generational groups that are currently on the labour market. The

research was conducted from May 2018 to January 2019. The sample of respondents was selected by the authors of the paper based on an unlikely quota selection. The quota selection consisted in ensuring the same or similar distribution of one character in the group. The chosen character was the gender of respondents (261 male respondents and 273 female respondents). The questionnaire was distributed physically to industrial enterprises, as well as through an e-questionnaire that employees could fill in. In total, 534 respondents participated in the research. The Table 1 shows the composition of the respondents according to the enterprise size the in which they are employed.

Table 1 Composition of the respondents according to the enterprise size (own elaboration, 2019)		
Enterprise size	Absolute frequency	Percent [%]
1 -10 employees	32	05.99
11 - 50 employees	66	12.36
51 - 250 employees	105	19.66
251 - 500 employees	68	12.73
More than 500 employees	263	49.25
Total	534	100.0

The Table 1 shows that respondents from the industrial enterprises with more than 500 employees and the respondents from the industrial enterprises with 51 - 250 employees have the largest representation. The respondents were divided into generational groups according to the year of birth (see the Figure 1).

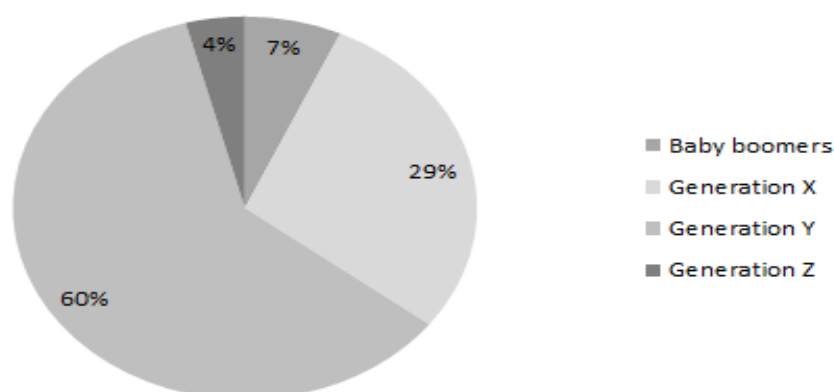


Figure 1 Composition of respondents according to the generational groups (own elaboration, 2019)

The Figure 1 shows that the largest sample consists of respondents from generational group Y and X. The smallest representation was the generational group Z and Baby boomers. It can argue that the generation composition of respondents from questionnaire survey corresponds to the current situation on the labour market. In the Table 2 can be seen the composition of the respondents according to their level of achieved education.

Table 2 Composition of respondents according to the level of education (own elaboration, 2009)				
Generational groups / level of education		Absolute frequency	Percent [%]	Cumulative percent
Baby boomers	primary	3	8.3	8.3
	secondary	18	50.0	58.3
	higher	15	41.7	100.0
Generation X	primary	1	0.7	0.7
	secondary	68	44.4	45.1
	higher	84	54.9	100.0
Generation Y	secondary	101	31.3	31.3
	higher	222	68.7	100.0
Generation Z	secondary	16	72.7	72.7
	higher	6	27.3	100.0

It is clear from the Table 2, that the composition of generational groups in area of achieved education is significantly different. Progress in science and technology, as well as social progress has made education more accessible and more desirable. Due to the above-mentioned reason, the structure of level achieved education is changing (increasing the proportion of employees with higher education). Very important socio-demographic aspect is also the composition of respondents according to the job classification (the Table 3).

Table 3 Composition of respondents according to the job classification (own elaboration, 2019)			
Generational groups / job classification		Percent [%]	Cumulative Percent
Baby boomers	production employee	19.4	19.4
	administrative employee	27.8	47.2
	specialist	25.0	72.2
	managing employee	27.8	100.0
Generation X	production employee	8.5	8.5
	administrative employee	31.4	39.9
	specialist	22.9	62.7
	managing employee	29.4	92.2
	other	7.8	100.0
Generation Y	production employee	8.7	8.7
	administrative employee	45.2	53.9
	specialist	24.1	78.0
	managing employee	13.3	91.3
	other	8.7	100.0
Generation Z	production employee	13.6	13.6
	administrative employee	54.5	68.2
	specialist	18.2	86.4
	managing employee	4.5	90.9
	other	9.1	100.0

The table 3 shows that the job classification is influenced by the level of education. The largest sample of the respondents is composed from employees who perform administrative job.

The data collection tools - In the research was used a questionnaire which was developed by a team of experts in the field of psychology, sociology and human resource management in the framework of the project VEGA 1/0348/17 „The impact of the coexistence of different generations of employees on the sustainable performance of organisations“. The data collection

tool was evaluated as valid and reliable. The questionnaire contains 40 questions. For the purposes of this paper, only some questions were selected and evaluated. Mentioned questions can be seen in the research sample section and in the results and discussion section. For the purpose of the paper, the authors of the paper have chosen and evaluated questions from the questionnaire that deal with the current state of age discrimination.

The research methods - The authors of the paper have used several methods for statistical evaluation of the collected data: descriptive and quantitative statistical methods (histograms, pie charts and supplementary analyses in table form).

The research questions (RQ):

RQ 1: What is the current state of the age discrimination of employees in the Slovak industrial enterprises?

RQ 2: In what areas of human resource management are preferred different age categories of employees in the Slovak industrial enterprises?

REACHED RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The evaluation of the research questions

RQ 1: What is the current state of the age discrimination of employees in the Slovak industrial enterprises?

In order to evaluate the first research question, the authors have used question 22 from the questionnaire: “Have you encountered some form of age discrimination in your working life that personally affected you?” The Figure 2 represents overall result of age discrimination from the perspective of industrial enterprises employees in the Slovak Republic.

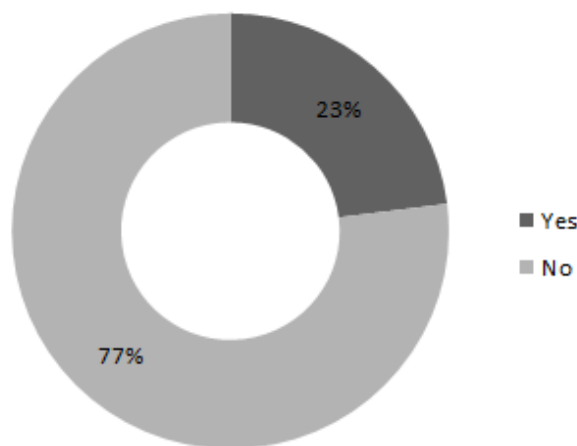


Figure 2 Respondents' answers to question 22 (own elaboration, 2019)

The authors of the paper positively evaluate the fact that up to 77 % of employees in the Slovak industrial enterprises did not face age discrimination. For more detailed view, the Table 4 shows the answers according to the generational groups.

Table 4 Respondents' answers to question 22 according to the generational groups (own elaboration, 2019)				
Generational groups		Frequency	Percent [%]	Cumulative Percent
Baby boomers	yes	12	33.3	33.3
	no	24	66.7	100.0
Generation X	yes	35	22.9	22.9
	no	118	77.1	100.0
Generation Y	yes	69	21.4	21.4
	no	254	78.6	100.0
Generation Z	yes	5	22.7	22.7
	no	17	77.3	100.0

It follows that the most commonly generational groups encountered by age discrimination are Baby boomers and generation X. Both generations are the longest on the labour market and there is a highest risk of age discrimination because of their age.

RQ 2: In what areas of human resource management are preferred different age categories of employees in the Slovak industrial enterprises?

In order to evaluate the second research question, the authors of the paper have used the question 23 from the research questionnaire. The question asked: “Which age categories of employees are discriminated in selected human resource management areas in your enterprise?” The results on this question can be seen in the Table 5. Respondents had the opportunity to select one or more options simultaneously.

Table 5 Area of discrimination according to the generational groups (own elaboration, 2019)					
Generational groups/ area of discrimination		N	Generational groups/ area of discrimination		N
Baby boomers	employee selection	6	Generation Y	employee selection	32
	education	6		education	11
	career progression	8		career progression	34
	providing information	4		providing information	17
	working on interesting tasks	2		working on interesting tasks	14
	employee motivation	3		employee motivation	9
	employee rewarding	7		employee rewarding	27
Generation X	employee selection	23	Generation Z	employee selection	1
	education	11		education	2
	career progression	18		career progression	2
	providing information	8		providing information	5
	working on interesting tasks	7		working on interesting tasks	3
	employee motivation	8		employee motivation	0
	employee rewarding	21		employee rewarding	1

The table 5 below shows that the most common form of age discrimination is the employee selection (62) and career progression (62). The least frequent form of age discrimination is employee motivation (20) and working on interesting tasks (26).

CONCLUSION

Human resources management is closely linked to socially responsible entrepreneurship, which seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination [27, 28; 19, 20]. Management in industrial enterprises is trying to make a profit [29, 30], while many human resource management decisions are discriminatory in order to generate the highest possible profit. For the reasons mentioned above, the authors of the paper have focused on examining the above-mentioned issues. The main aim of the paper was to analyse the current state of age discrimination in selected human resource management areas in the Slovak industrial enterprises. It follows from the analysis that only 23 % of the respondents declare that they have experienced age discrimination. The authors of the paper have considered this fact as positive, as 77 % of the respondents declared that they had not yet encountered age discrimination in work. Generally, generation X encounters age discrimination, while generation Z is the least frequently encountered. Among older adults, perceived age discrimination is highly associated with unhealthy outcomes and dissatisfaction [31]. Another interesting finding is that the most common form of age discrimination is job selection and career progression. The two forms of age discrimination have a negative impact on employee loyalty and performance. On the contrary, the least frequent form of age discrimination is employee motivation and working on interesting tasks. To the general public may seem that the age discrimination covers only the oldest generational groups in industrial enterprises, but research shows that the younger generational groups (generation Y and Z) become a victim of age discrimination. Based on mentioned findings, the authors of the paper have recommended the implementation of Age management policies to the industrial practice. Finally, based on the positive results from the implementation of Age management in the Slovak republic and abroad, the authors of the paper can argue that the concept fights with all forms of age discrimination. The authors of the paper plan the detailed analysis of age discrimination, not only in terms of forms but also in terms of the motivation or employee's performance.

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