

# Attitudes and Practices of Employers towards Ageing Workers: Evidence from a Global Survey on the Future of Retirement

Sarah Harper, Hafiz T. A. Khan, Atulya Saxena, and George Leeson,  
Oxford Institute of Ageing

## Abstract

It has long been asserted that the attitudes and behaviours of employers encourage early withdrawal from the labour market. This paper will draw on the results of the global ageing survey on the Future of Retirement to ask how widespread negative attitudes and stereotypes among employers are and whether these attitudes influence behaviour towards older employees.

## Introduction

Evidence from across the OECD countries suggests that economic, industrial and organisational changes in both the private and public sectors of the labour market have driven down the labour force participation of older people. There is also a marked decline in economic activity among men aged 65 and over in advanced economies. While around one third of men of this age are still economically active in Asia and Latin America, this falls to less than one fifth in North America and less than one tenth in Europe (see Table 1 below). Indeed, at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the labour force participation rate of men aged 65–69 years was over 50% only in two countries, Israel and Mexico. The labour force participation rate for this group was less than 20% in about two thirds of OECD countries.

Table 1. Percentage of economically active men by age and region, 2005

Age	World	Latin America	Asia	North America	Europe
50–54	90.7	89	92.4	86.2	84.3
55–59	80.6	81.2	83.4	77.3	67.2
60–64	64.1	69.5	70.6	57.0	34.5
65+	30.2	37.2	36.9	18.0	7.7

Source: ILO (n.d.)

Globalisation and increasing competition have exacerbated this on-going process. Across Europe and North America, older workers are targets for redundancy during recessions, and once unemployed are unlikely to find work again (Raeside and Khan, 2003; Harper, 2006). Research in the United Kingdom, for example, reveals that older workers

had been targeted for early retirement or redundancy in almost 90% of downsizing organisations (Harper, 2006). Research has also pointed to both a forthcoming skills crisis and experience drain which will result from the ageing of societies, and the continued drain of older workers from our workforces (*ibid.*). Indeed, there is consistent evidence revealing a lack of practices designed to promote or maintain the inclusion of older people in the work force (OECD, 2006). Furthermore, with the global prospect of ageing populations, most of the developing countries will face the reality of shrinking workforces and the problem of managing their labour market in such a situation in order to achieve sustainable economic growth (Nordheim, 2004).

## Role of Employers

It has long been asserted that the attitudes and behaviours of employers encourage early withdrawal from the labour market (McKay and Middleton, 1998; Lumsdaine, 1996; Scales and Scase, 2000). There are several key contributing components to this assertion. Firstly, how widespread are negative attitudes and stereotypes among employers; do these attitudes influence behaviour towards older employees; and are employers now sufficiently aware of age discrimination and associated legislation that they are overtly deny these stereotypical attitudes while still pursuing negative behaviours? We also need to consider whether there are other dynamics working the labour force which may be confused with discriminatory attitudes, so that apparent ageist behaviour is in fact a proxy for other forces, and whether these are changing, particularly in the light of age discrimination legislation in different parts of the world. This paper will draw on the results of the global ageing survey on the Future of Retirement to address the first two questions: how widespread are negative attitudes and stereotypes among employers, and do these attitudes influence behaviour towards older employees.

### *Employers' attitudes and behaviours*

As an extensive review pointed out, redundancy and fixed retirement ages are frequently based on perceptions of older workers abilities that are stereotypical and may not represent the actual abilities of those workers (Harper and Laslett,

2005). *Slow work speed, low adaptability*, particularly to new technologies, *low trainability, low skills uptake*, and *too cautious*, are all stereotypes expressed by employers (Casey, 1992; Taylor and Walker, 1994; Hayward *et al.*, 1997). The perception that age and characteristics are related appears embedded in our current societal perceptions. North American research (Forte and Hansvick, 1999), for example, reports that while older workers are rated more highly in terms of *academic skills, ability to get along with co-workers, willingness to take directions, work ethic, productivity and supervisory skills*, younger workers are rated more highly in terms of *computer skills, stamina and energy, flexibility, and ability to learn quickly*. Older workers have what Arrowsmith and McGoldrick (1996) call qualitative skills: *high quality of service, pride in job, cheerfulness, reliability*. Younger workers, on the other hand, exhibit so-called quantitative characteristics: *fast pace of work, trainability, adapt at handling new technology*. Such stereotypical attitudes appear to have changed little since the early research carried out in 1950s by Kirchner and Dunnette (1954), Le Gros Clark (1959), and Belbin (1958) (Harper, 1989; Bird and Fisher, 1986).

Yet, there is little empirical evidence to substantiate the view that those over 50 are less able to perform modern economic activity than those younger (Lindley, 1999; Stoney and Roberts, 2003; Glover and Brain, 1997). Indeed, as Warr (1994) has shown, there are generally far more variations within age groups than across age groups. Yet, several studies conclude that age discrimination against older workers is deeply embedded in the cultures, policies and practices of many organisations (Taylor, 2006; Hollywood *et al.*, 2003).

Of more importance, however, is whether these attitudes influence how employers treat older workers. Taylor and Walker's work on the impact of stereotypes on employer attitudes while prolific, actually only draws on a small UK surveys of specific organisations (1991, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1998; Walker and Taylor, 1993). However, it makes an important contribution to the debate. This work on stereotypes draws primarily on a 1991 postal survey of 300 firms with over 500 employees (Taylor and Walker, 1994), but the apparent ageist attitudes found therein have more recently been confirmed in Walker's pan European research (Walker, 2006).

We can examine this in more detail through taking the issue of the training of older workers. Research suggest that firms are reluctant to train older workers because it is more efficient to concentrate on younger workers as economic returns are likely to be larger given the longer payback time. In fact, training an older worker will bring returns to the employer, while training a younger worker will benefit one's competitors. However, lack of training among older workers has long been recognised (Gibson *et al.*, 1993). Dibbden and Hibbett's (1993) analysis of the UK Labour Force Survey, for example, revealed that those aged 25 to 49 were twice as likely, and those 16 to 24 three times as

likely, to receive training than those aged over 50. The recent assessment by Metcalf and Meadows (2006), for example, found that while over three quarters of employers agreed on the desirability of increased training for older workers, many recognised that this did not occur due to stereotypes regarding the expectations and abilities of these older workers.

However, we must take note of the argument that age may be being used as a proxy for other factors. As Casey (1992) has argued, with long-term contracts the wages of some older workers may simply exceed their marginal productivity, and it may be considered more cost-effective for the organisation to dismiss them. A similar argument is produced by Issacharoff and Worth Harris (1997) who suggest that the United State's 1967 Age Discrimination Employment Act which, following 1986, allowed no upper limit on employment, has actually been rather problematic. The Act was written to combat stereotypical age discrimination in the form of employer motivated retirement. It does not acknowledge that there may be appropriate reasons for placing limits on employment age. Economically, it may not be prudent to retain an older worker if that worker costs more than the product he is responsible for. It may also be morally unjust to retain an older worker if a younger one with dependents exists.

There is also evidence to suggest that employers are not only eager to push older workers out, and reluctant to train and retrain them, they are reticent even to employ them. Within Europe, as Metcalf and Meadows (2006) illustrate, workers also suffer from age discrimination in recruitment, in particular, in age criteria in advertisements or person specifications. This will be open to challenge now as all EU states are expected to compile with EU age discrimination legislation. The studies by Taylor and Walker (1994) and Hayward *et al.* (1997) both highlight perceived factors which might discourage employers from recruiting older workers: lack of appropriate skills, lack of qualifications, and low return on training investment. Platman and Taylor (2004) highlight potential barriers to employment in IT including employer attitudes and behaviours, particularly in recruitment evidence from the US, however, implies that we cannot neglect the role of institutional factors beyond work deter employers from hiring older people. Defined benefit pensions schemes (Hutchens, 1986; Parsons, 1988) and health insurance (Scott *et al.*, 1995), for example, keep employers from recruiting and retaining older employees.

The question as to whether employers are consciously deny ageist behaviour, particularly in the light of age discrimination legislation is difficult to address, mainly due to the cross sectional methodology of much of the research, and the fact that several legal systems are in a process of change at the current time. For example, while the survey of 60 HR leaders within large public and private organisations by Harper *et al.* (2004) found a contrast between stated attitudes in respect of age and behaviour, with 80% stating that they did not take age into account in selecting employers

for training, none had actually trained any worker over 45 in the previous year. In contrast, in a recent survey of British HR managers, a quarter of the respondents admitted that age did have an influence on the recruitment decision-making process (CIPD, 2005). A similar finding is made by Metcalf and Meadows (2006) who report that 20% of their employers openly stated that certain jobs were more suitable for certain ages than others. Interestingly, the range of attributes of older and younger workers reported to substantiate this claim were akin to the stereotypical attributes highlighted in earlier research reported above. Tikkanen *et al.* (2002) highly valued older workers, but again on stereotypical lines – particular social and professional competences, and morale.

There are some indications, however, that behaviours may be changing. Surveys have recently indicated that employers are now much more aware of negative attitudes and that these are becoming, less publicly acceptable (McNair and Flynn, 2005; Harper *et al.*, 2004; Metcalf and Meadows, 2006). In addition, recent age discrimination legislation has not only highlighted the unacceptability of this behaviour, but also the legality of it. In the UK context, for example, as early as 1997. Arrowsmith and McGoldrick (1997) were identifying an improvement in attitudes to the recruitment of older workers. Walker and Taylor (1998) indicated that where senior managers have attempted to, and have been successful in, influencing the operational culture of the organisation, older people were experiencing increased opportunities with regard to employment and promotion. While Hollywood (2003) reports that smaller employers may be able to accommodate older workers through greater flexibility and informality in their recruitment and selection methods. Similarly, Metcalf and Meadows (2006) report that the number of people reporting that they have been passed over for promotion for being too old has halved since 1995.

## Future of Retirement

As the above literature illustrates, most of our understanding of employer attitudes and their impact on behaviour comes from national and local cross-national studies. *The Future of Retirement Study*, a global cross-sectional longitudinal survey conducted in 21 countries in 2004 and 2005, allows the possibility of global comparisons, and in particular attempts to gain early indications of the attitudes and behaviours of employers in the transitional and developing economies where the concept of retirement as a mass movement at the end of a working life is just beginning to emerge.

In 2004, approximately 10,000 people aged 18+ were surveyed in nine countries and one territory (Brazil, Canada, China, France, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Mexico, UK and USA). In 2005, the number was increased to twenty-one by adding Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Malaysia, Poland,

Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sweden, Turkey and South Korea. In addition, the second wave has surveyed 6320 private sector employers, some 300 in each country and Hong Kong, with a view to elucidating the attitudes of employers to issues relating to older workers.

### *Characteristics of Respondents*

Company type was determined by the number of employees: small (10-99 employees), medium (100-499 employees), and large (over 500 employees) (see Table 2 in the Annex). Companies were classified into three such categories in order to study various norms and behaviour of employers, employees and above all the employment market. In addition, these companies were randomly selected mostly from urban settings in each country. The sample comprised of 2202 small, 1733 medium and 2385 large companies. Economically developed countries are characterised by larger companies and hence more such companies were selected in the sample. For example, in the UK, 17% of employers were selected from small companies and 64% from large companies (see Table 2 in the Annex). Whereas in Egypt, about 50% of selected employers were from small companies and only 16% from large companies.

### *When do workers become 'older workers'? Employers' perceptions*

Employers' views about the age at which members of their workforce are appropriately categorised as 'old' varied considerably by country, and also by company size, though in this case the effect was much smaller. Across the sample as a whole, the mean age threshold for defining an older worker was approximately 54 years. This age threshold was highest in Japan (60.4 years) and lowest in Turkey (44.0 years). At first glance it might seem as though this difference reflects the different age profiles of these two countries. As Figure 1 below shows, however, there is no obvious or straightforward relationship between the age profile of a population (measured here by median age) and the age at which employers in that country tend to categorise their employees workers as 'old'.

The effect of company size on the definition of an older worker was much smaller, though still statistically significant, and remained small when the distribution of different-sized companies across different countries was taken into account. The difference between small/medium companies and large companies was largest for the European employers (51 years vs. 53.9 years) and in most parts of the world, it was the larger companies that reported the higher age thresholds (see Table 3 in the Annex). Oddly enough, results for employers in the USA and Canada run in the opposite direction. Whether this reflects real differences in the perceptions of European and North American employers, or is simply a quirk in the sample, is hard to say.

There is significant gender and company size variation

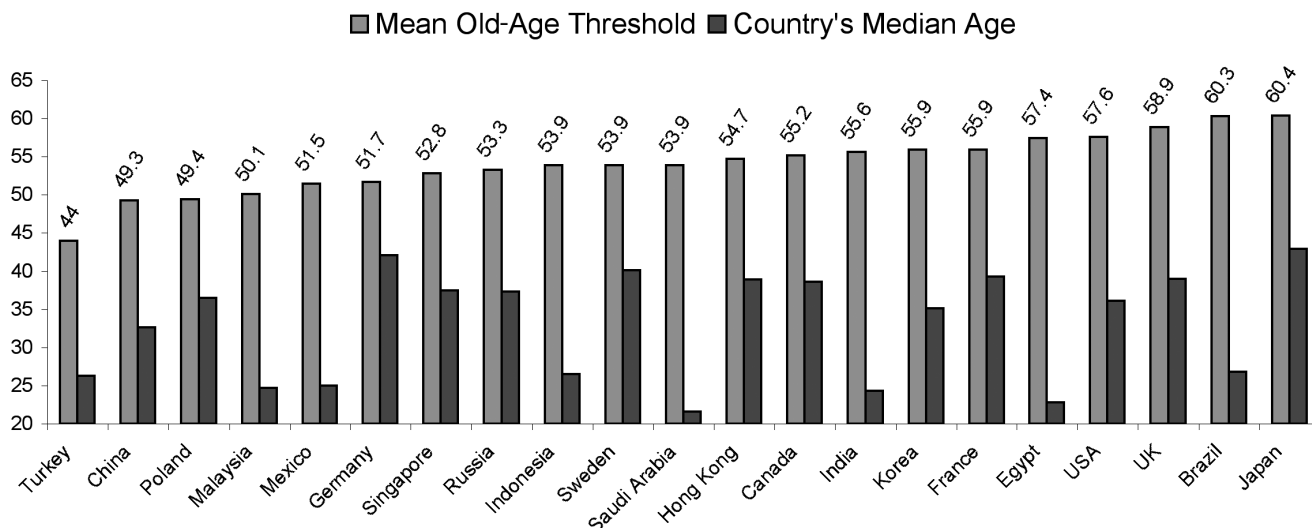


Figure 1: Mean old-age threshold and population's median age by country

among employers' reporting of typical retirement age (see Table 4 in the Annex). For each category of company, women retire earlier than men. However, both men and women retire earlier from smaller companies than from the larger ones.

### Future of Retirement and Employers' Attitudes

The Future of Retirement survey is able to begin to test attitudes and stereotypes at the global level. While, as a global survey, it loses considerable detail, it has the advantage of being able to paint a broad-brush picture of process which are developing at the global level.

### Positive or negative views of older workers

Taking the positive stereotypes of older workers (defined as aged 50 years and over) as *more loyal* and *more reliable*, and the negative stereotypes of *less motivated*, *less flexible*, *less productive*, *less technologically orientated*, and *slower learners*, these were tested globally (see Figure 2) and across the regions.

At the global level, around half of all private employers view older workers as being less technologically oriented (47%) and slower learners (53%) than younger workers. This is not overwhelming evidence of negative stereotyping. The positive angle is that 49% of employers feel that older workers are at least as technologically oriented, and 43% find them at least as quick to learn,

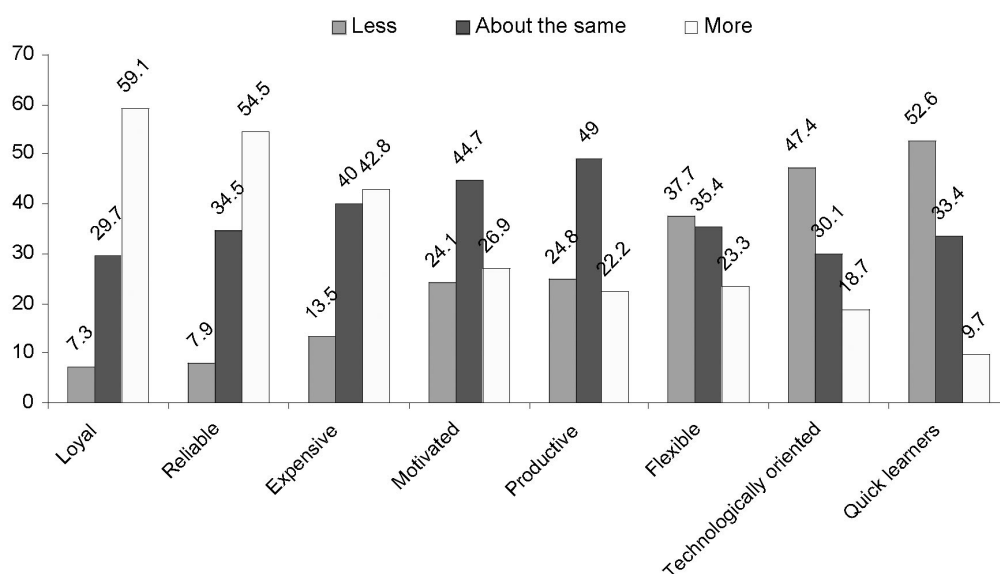


Figure 2: Stereotypes of older workers vs. younger workers, percentage of respondents globally

as younger workers. Around a third of employers feel that older workers are less flexible than younger workers, and only a quarter feel that older workers are less productive and less motivated. Less than 10% perceive older workers as less reliable and less loyal. We can assess employers' positivism or negativism towards older workers compared with younger workers by looking at the number of characteristics with less than 10% of employers (positivism) and the number with more than 50% (negativism). In doing this, a regional pattern does indeed emerge.

The United Kingdom and the United States come out as positivists (a score of 4 out of 7 with less than 10%), while Turkey and Saudi Arabia are negativists (a score of 4 out of 7). In addition, the United Kingdom is non-negativist with zero characteristics more than 50%, while Turkey and Saudi Arabia are non-positivist with zero characteristics less than 10%.

Apart from the few exceptions then, employers do not to any great extent regard older workers as less attractive to their workplaces than younger workers. It is interesting to note in this context that in the two predominantly negative countries, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, people's perceived best age of retirement is significantly lower than elsewhere, and furthermore the practiced age of retirement in the surveyed workplaces in these countries is amongst the lowest. These low retirement ages, both perceived and practiced, are associated with negative perceptions of employers when comparing older and younger workers, and to the still relatively young age structures of these countries, both of which support a still growing young adult population and this workforce.

Across all regions employers agreed that older workers were as motivated as younger workers. While employers in North and Latin America perceive older workers to be as flexible as younger workers, those in Europe, Asia and the Middle East/Africa see them as less flexible. Across all regions bar the Middle East/Africa employers agreed that older workers were as productive as younger workers. In the Middle East/Africa, however, nearly half employers saw them as less productive. Two thirds of employers in North America, Europe and the Middle East/Africa and half those in Asia saw older workers as being less technologically orientated than younger workers. Only in Latin America were they viewed as the same. Two thirds of the employers in Asia and half the employers in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East/Africa saw older workers as being slower learners than younger workers. However nearly two thirds of those in North America stated that they were the same. In terms of positive characteristics, over half the employers in Europe and Asia, and over two thirds of employers in Latin and North America viewed their older workers as being more loyal and reliable than younger workers. Only in the Middle East/Africa was there no perceived difference between older and younger workers on these measures.

The Future of Retirement survey reveals clearly that an ageing workforce would like the idea of flexibility in later life, be it part-time work or transitions into and out of the workplace as one's life situation and circumstances change. The difference between the advanced and transitional economies in relation to perceptions of retirement, is mirrored in different structures and opportunities for older workers. The more advanced economies and demographics of Europe and North America are thus generally more positive towards older workers, and offer more opportunities.

### *Employers' behaviour towards older workers*

The survey also gathered information on what the employers does or should currently offer to their own employees aged 50 years or more. The vast majority of employers reported that they offered their older workers an opportunity to guide and teach younger workers, followed by an ability to continue earning an income. However, relatively a small percentage of employers offer them new kinds of work as well as an opportunity to work fewer hours. There exists, however, a big difference between employers' intention ("should offer") and their actual practice ("does offer"). All the employers agree that they should offer more to older workers than what they do offer at present (Figure 3). This may indicate a positive attitude of employers to older workers, or growing awareness in some societies that it is expected that employers are more open to offering opportunity to older workers.

#### *New kinds of work*

Globally, only 35% of surveyed employers state that they offer older workers the opportunity to pursue *new kinds of work*. The leading positivist countries, the United Kingdom and the United States, have the highest proportion of employers (70%) stating that they do indeed offer older workers the opportunity to pursue new kinds of work. These are followed by the industrialised economies of Europe, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore with approximately 50%. In contrast, only 10% of employers in Russia and China offer this opportunity to older workers.

#### *Fewer hours*

Along the same lines, only 28% of employers globally offer older workers the opportunity to *work fewer hours*, which would open up the opportunity for them to maintain workplace engagement while pursuing that whole new chapter of life. Once again, the United Kingdom leads the field with 71% of employers stating that they do offer this opportunity. Elsewhere, only the United States (49%), Sweden (50%), Germany (58%) and Canada (53%) are near to accommodating this opportunity. In the remaining countries, proportions fall off to less than a third, with China having only 7% of its (urban) employers offering fewer working hours to older workers. There are undoubtedly a number of reasons for the low proportions, linked to the *structure of work* for older employees, who traditionally work in the

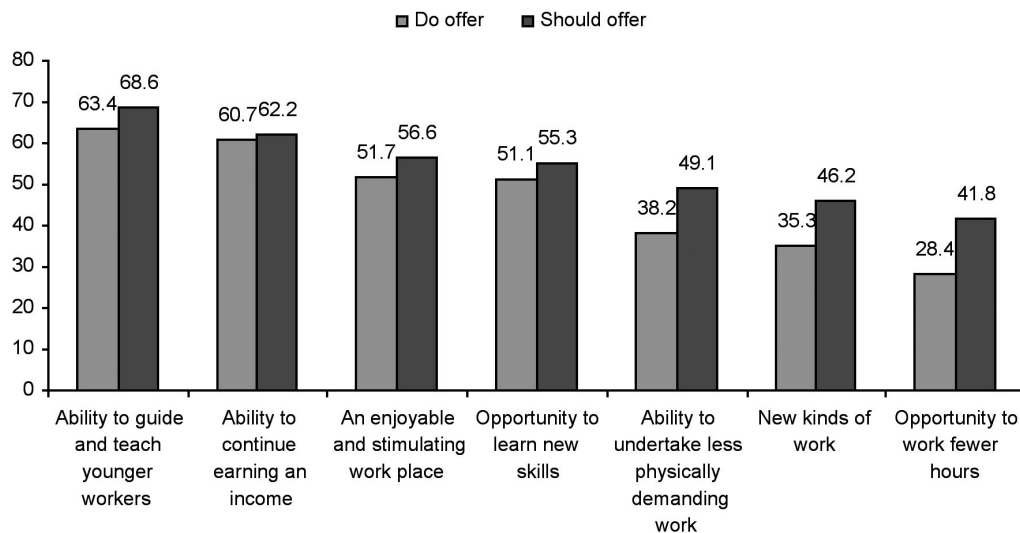


Figure 3: What organisations offer to older workers, percentage of respondents globally

older industries (Asia and South America and Eastern Europe), and to the attraction for *part-time work* as well as support for part-time work from trade unions (Germany and Sweden on the one hand, and France on the other hand).

#### Learn new skills

Approximately 50% of employers feel that older workers are less technologically oriented and slower learners, and therefore it is perhaps not surprising that this same proportion of employers offer older workers the opportunity to *learn new skills*. In the developed economies of Sweden, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, more than 80% of employers state that they offer older workers the opportunity to learn new skills. In most of the remaining countries, between a third and two thirds offer this, while again in China and Russia the proportions are lowest at approximately 15%.

#### Mentoring

Of course, the presence of older workers in the workplace is not sufficient alone to protect the corporate DNA. Older workers play a key role in the *mentoring* of younger workers. Perhaps employers are aware of this – 63% state at least that they offer older workers the ability to guide and teach younger workers. The advanced economies of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Sweden having approximately 80% of employers stating that they offer this to older workers. Two thirds of employers in almost all of the remaining countries/territories state that older workers are offered the ability to guide and teach younger workers. Russia brings up the rear with only 26%. Globally, around 10% of employers state that they offer nothing to older workers. While in the advanced economies of the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Canada almost no employers admit to offering nothing to older workers, at the other extreme, over one third of employers in China and over a quarter in Russia admit to this.

At the global level, a larger proportion of employers state that they *should* be offering older workers these opportunities compared with the proportion stating they *are* offering them. Interestingly, the most significant differences relate to providing opportunities to *work fewer hours*, pursue *new kinds of work* and the opportunity to *undertake less physically demanding work*.

#### The Decline of Early Retirement and the Retention of Older Workers

In the 1970s and 1980s, the developed world in particular saw the introduction and dramatic take-up of early retirement schemes. These were introduced to encourage older workers to leave the workplace before normal retirement age in order to make way for young employed persons. Globally, it would seem that while employers in the developed world are increasingly aware of the need to retain their older skills and expertise base, employers in transitional and developing countries are still have the demographic luxury of a large source of young labour. 40% of employers surveyed, the majority in transitional and developing economies, state that management feels more strongly that older workers leaving makes room for younger workers, while 49%, predominantly in the developed countries, state that management feels more strongly that older workers leaving means the loss of valuable knowledge and skills that are important to the organisation – the haemorrhaging of the corporate DNA.

Cross-nationally, there appears to be a strong link between demography and these perceptions of either making room for younger workers or losing valuable knowledge and skills. In the young populations of Asia and South America as well as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, where there is a constant pressure from large young cohorts to get into the workplace, the strong feeling among employers is that older workers

leaving makes room for younger workers. This feeling is particularly strong in Indonesia, where 87% of employers feel more strongly that older workers leaving makes room for younger workers. India and Malaysia are divided on this issue. The developed economies of Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore are more likely to retain older workers. In North America and Europe, along with the advanced economies of Asia, the feeling is one of loss of valuable knowledge and skills. For example, only 6% of private employers in the United Kingdom feel more strongly that older workers leaving makes room for younger workers. Surprisingly, private employers in Sweden are also divided on this issue and with 17% stating they are unsure which they feel more strongly.

*A variety of reasons are produced to justify not doing more to aid the retention of older workers.* In most countries, there is a cocktail of reasons for not doing more, ranging from *no need, no urgency, the expense, and the physically demanding work.* Everywhere except Saudi Arabia employers reported that older workers were more *expensive* than younger workers. However, when asked why they are not doing more to attract/retain older workers, employers do not overwhelmingly name the fact that they are too expensive. Only in Egypt do more than 50% of employers say that this is one of the reasons why they do not do more to retain/attract older workers. In North America, Europe, and in the advanced economies in Asia (Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore) along with China, most employers state that they *do not need* to attract/retain older workers or that it is not an urgent issue (see Table 5 in the Annex). Despite the pressing demographics and upcoming labour shortage, it seems that employers do not see the ageing workforce combined with early retirement of older workers as an immediate issue. In other countries, employers feel the work is too physically demanding for older workers and therefore they do not do more to attract/retain them – this is true in Saudi Arabia (oil industry), Malaysia, Brazil and Mexico.

#### *Recruit and retain*

The largest proportion of employers trying to *recruit* older workers (those aged 50 years and over) is found in the United Kingdom at 44 %. In Canada, Brazil, Japan, Hong Kong and the United States this is the case for approximately a third of employers, with less than 10% in Russia, Indonesia and China. Significantly larger proportions try to *retain* older workers with hard-to-replace skills, but there is no indication of the generality of this. Only in India, Malaysia and Russia are less than half the employers targeting these workers. In China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Poland and Russia, less than half of the surveyed employers say they encourage older workers to continue working, while almost 80% do so in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Hong Kong and Singapore. Older workers with hard-to-replace skills are prized by employers, who will try to retain them. But beyond 50 years of age, workers should not expect to be prized when seeking jobs. There are pockets of evidence that employers in some countries

encourage older workers to continue working, while few will encourage them to take early full retirement.

So if employers are not forcing them out, are they leaving of their own free will? It is still the case in the transitional economies much available work for older people is physically demanding – hence this is one of the reasons why employers in those economies do not do more to attract/retain older workers. In addition this will inevitably lead to health problems, which will force workers to retire regardless of their desires and aspirations to continue in work perhaps. Outside the developed attitudinally-advanced economies, relatively small proportions are offering older workers the kind of flexibility that will allow them to live out this life-stage as they would wish or need. Even where this is being practiced, large proportions of employers are still not doing so.

## Conclusions

Unlike large surveys, any conclusions based on a small sample must be somewhat speculative and so there are limits due to the usual deficiencies associated with questionnaire surveys and with collecting attitudinal data. There are limitations in using employers' perceptions as a measure of age discrimination. Discrimination is likely to be influenced by several factors including their educational and organisational backgrounds and their personal experience. We also do not know any personal information about the respondents (employers), such as their age and gender.

Bearing these limitations in mind, the Future of Retirement survey is one of the very few attempts to capture employers' attitudes and practices in the work place. The study has indicated that older workers' experiences of their workplace may be influenced by the size of the company. The study reveals that employers of small companies have higher levels of negative stereotypes and attitudes to older people, while larger firms are flexible about older workers both in the workplace and at the time of recruitment. This is reflected in the older age profiles found in larger companies.

In addition, in transitional and developing economies, there is still a supply of younger workers and thus much less need, both actual and perceived, to act to retain older workers. Interestingly, this is not reflected in the age profile of companies in these regions, which tend to be older than in Europe. It is reflected, however, in the employer's attitudes towards retaining older workers, and in their policies towards creating supportive environment for older workers. These being lower in the Middle East, Africa and Asia where there is still an abundance of youth.

Of particular interest is the case of Europe, which has large companies with younger age profiles, an upcoming labour shortage and recognition of the need to retain older workers, but low recruitment and encouragement of older workers,

and the highest encouragement of early retirement. Here employers' attitudes seem to be sliding out of sync with demographics. They are aware of the upcoming skills short-

age and the need to retain older workers, they have working environments which should enable them to do this, but they are still trapped in the early retirement concept.

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### Enquiries should be addressed to the Principal Investigator of the Future of Retirement Study

Dr George W. Leeson  
Oxford Institute of Ageing  
Manor Road Building  
Manor Road  
Oxford OX1 3UQ  
Email: [george.leeson@ageing.ox.ac.uk](mailto:george.leeson@ageing.ox.ac.uk)

## Annex: Additional Tables

Table 2: Distribution of employers by country and company size

Country	Company Type						Total
	Small		Medium		Large		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Brazil	151	50	58	19	91	30	300
Canada	76	25	55	18	170	56	301
China	125	42	100	33	75	25	300
Egypt	150	50	103	34	47	16	300
France	77	26	68	23	155	52	300
Germany	87	29	134	45	79	26	300
Hong Kong	118	39	83	28	99	33	300
India	101	32	111	36	100	32	312
Indonesia	50	17	50	17	200	67	300
Japan	83	28	78	26	139	46	300
Malaysia	149	50	98	33	51	17	298
Mexico	99	33	100	33	100	33	299
Poland	125	42	101	34	75	25	301
Russia	103	34	102	33	101	33	306
Saudi Arabia	154	51	96	32	50	17	300
Singapore	67	22	41	14	193	64	301
Sweden	85	28	35	12	180	60	300
Turkey	144	48	84	28	72	24	300
UK	50	17	60	20	192	64	302
USA	10	36	76	25	116	39	300
Korea	100	33	100	33	100	33	300
Total	2202	34	1733	27	2385	38	6320

Table 3: Distribution of mean old-age threshold by company size and geographical region

Regions	Company size	Mean	SD	N	F test
US/Canada	Small	57.5	8.03	174	3.077** P = 0.047
	Medium	56.3	8.52	125	
	Large	55.7	7.12	267	
Europe	Small	51.0	9.19	570	18.96*** P = 0.000
	Medium	51.5	8.79	505	
	Large	53.9	9.59	734	
Latin America	Small	56.8	10.48	233	2.109 P = 0.122
	Medium	54.4	11.90	149	
	Large	55.7	12.04	183	
Middle East/Africa	Small	54.8	9.19	246	2.043 P = 0.131
	Medium	56.3	8.13	163	
	Large	56.6	6.67	75	
Asia	Small	53.8	8.33	734	0.757 P = 0.469
	Medium	54.3	8.21	633	
	Large	54.2	6.96	926	

Note: Significant: \*p<0.10, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01

Table 4: Distribution of mean ages of typical retirement by gender and company size

Company size		Men	Women	T - value
Small company	Mean	59.48	56.15	14.36***
	N	1614	1523	
	SD	5.876	7.041	
Medium company	Mean	59.91	56.94	13.64***
	N	1411	1373	
	SD	4.914	6.479	
Large company	Mean	60.05	58.43	9.86***
	N	2167	2111	
	SD	4.775	5.912	
F value		5.646***	59.249***	

Note: Significant: \*p < 0.10, \*\*p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

Table 5: Percent distribution of employers' attitudes to older workers by company size and region

Category	Try to recruit older workers	Try to retain older workers with hard to replace skills	Encourage older workers to continue working	Encourage full early retirement
Total	23.0	61.6	55.8	16.2
Company				
Small	21.2	59.2	56.8	14.3
Medium	22.5	59.5	54.4	15.8
Large	25.1	65.4	55.8	18.1
Regions				
US/Canada	35.0	73.5	76.3	14.5
Europe	22.2	64.8	55.7	19.6
Latin America	31.7	62.8	70.1	17.7
Middle East/Africa	19.3	73.7	46.5	8.8
Asia	19.5	52.7	49.5	15.2