

FACTORS OF A LONGER WORKING LIFE AND RETENTION IN THE LABOR MARKET AMONG OLDER ADULTS

Project implementation period: 2020–2021

Objective of the research. To reveal factors relevant to the longer working life and retention in the labor market among older adults.

Tasks:

1. To examine features of retirement in Lithuania and to compare participation in the labor market among older adults in Lithuania and other European countries.
2. To analyze the factors hindering the retention in the labor market among older adults and to identify the most important factors facilitating a longer working life.
3. To assess the need of Lithuanian employers to employ older adults based on the type of activity, sectors and qualification.

Methods. Analysis of relevant sources, qualitative study and a quantitative cross-sectional study were conducted. A qualitative study fragment was conducted with enterprises representatives using a focus group discussion method and with older workers (older people in this study are defined as those aged 60 and over) using a semi-structured interview method. The quantitative part of the study was carried out using data from the Survey on Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). The qualitative research involved 14 representatives of an enterprises of different sizes, locations and activities and 14 older workers. The quantitative study analyzed data on 6,517 workers aged 60 and over, compared labor market participation of older workers in European countries and Lithuania, and identified predictors of early retirement.

Results and conclusions. More than a tenth of people aged 65–74 are active labor market participants in Lithuania, which is higher than the European Union average. Men of retirement age are working almost twice as often as women. The qualitative research has revealed factors of a longer working life and retention in the labor market among older workers. The poor health of older workers in Lithuania is considered to be a key factor limiting their participation in the labor market. The high prevalence of chronic diseases, multiple chronic conditions, subjectively perceived poor health, and psychological fatigue highlights the need for health promotion strategies for all age groups of workers. Psychosocial and ergonomic factors in the working environment are crucial to workers' decisions to retire or to stay longer. The workload and working conditions of an employee should be reviewed and adjusted by mutual agreement between the employer and the employee. The professional well-being of the older workers is linked with the possibility of flexible work arrangements, an opportunity for training, good relations with managers and colleagues, non-discriminatory work environment. Career planning could contribute to a more successful adaptation of older workers to a changing labor market. Although the majority of the enterprises in the study does not perceive a serious shortage of labor, they expressed the need to retain older, highly qualified professionals, and attributed the main obstacles to the lack of flexibility in legal and tax policies. Nevertheless, Lithuanian employers are not yet sufficiently prepared to encourage older workers to remain active in the labor market. Organizational policies to support longer working lives are not sufficiently developed.

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