

Europe's ageing population: “older” worker employment and HRM responses in the Hospitality Industry

Programme



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EUROPE'S AGEING POPULATION



- Population ageing is likely to be the most important of all demographic changes for the foreseeable future (Hollywood, Brown, Danson and McQuaid, 2003)
- It will have major implications for everyone in society (Harper, 2000).
- The population of Europe is ageing faster than any other continent (www.voanews.com)
- Europe has 19 of the world's 20 oldest countries in terms of population age (www.prb.org)
- There are three major trends which have caused population ageing in Europe

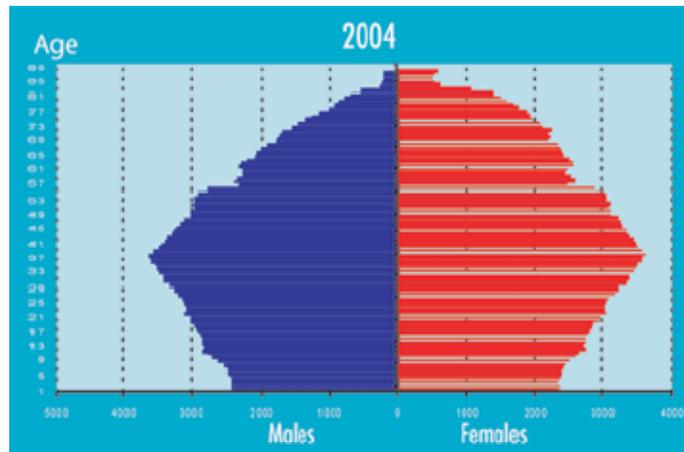
EUROPE'S AGEING POPULATION



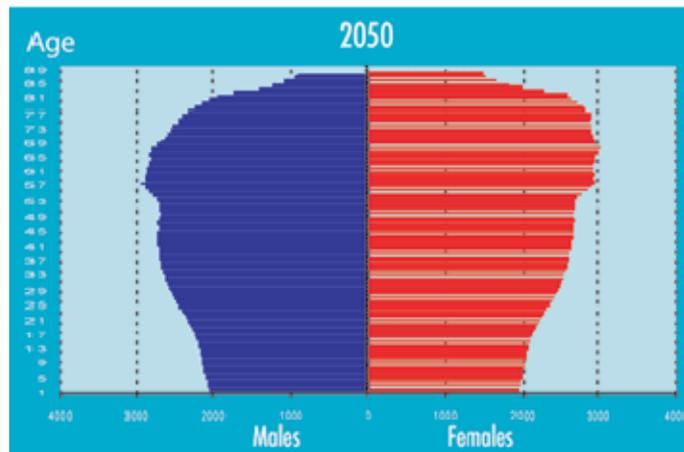
- 1. As the “Baby Boom” generation approaches the age of retirement, the percentage of “older” people in the population rises;
- 2. Birth rates have remained low for decades;
- 3. People are generally living longer and healthier lives
- (Commission of the European Communities, 2007)

- According to the OECD (2006), population ageing is one of the principal challenges facing OECD countries and the three Ps, namely Population, Productivity and Participation, are essential in order to address population ageing.

EUROPE'S AGEING POPULATION



Age pyramids for EU-25 population
2004 and 2050



Source: European Commission
Economic and Financial Affairs:
European Economy News
January 2006

“OLDER” WORKERS

- Much research on the employment of “older” workers uses the age-band of fifty and above to define an “older” worker (e.g., OECD, 2004; Loretto, Vickerstaff and White, 2005).
- However, it should be noted that old age is an imprecise term (Minois, 1989) and old age is a process which is socially and culturally constructed (Wilson, 2000), despite the fact that it is often conceptualized in biological or psychological terms.
- It is difficult to establish a time in a person’s life when he or she becomes old (Harris, 1990).
- Indeed, a person may themselves not realise they have become old as old age is sometimes more apparent to other people than to the individual concerned (de Beauvoir, 1996).

“OLDER” WORKERS



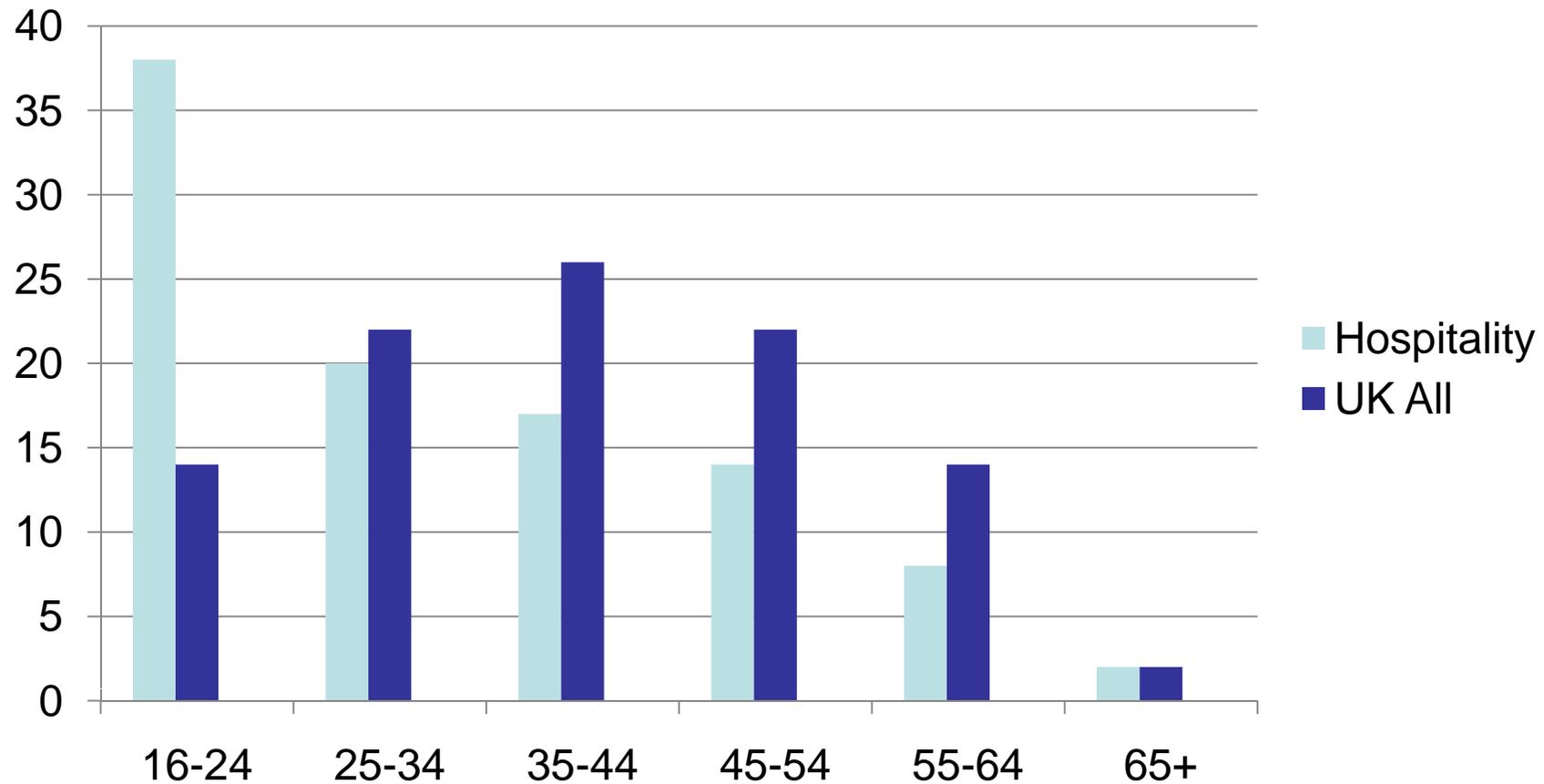
Source: [news.bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.com/news)

Employment in the HI: UK statistics



- The results of the 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS) confirm the fact that the hospitality industry in the UK employs a predominantly young workforce.
- 47% of workplaces in the Hotels and Restaurants Industry employed 25% or more employees aged 16 to 21 compared to 15% for all workplaces (Kersley et al, 2006).
- Of all workplaces surveyed for WERS 2004, 32% of workplaces had 25% or more of their workforce aged 50 and above. This compared to only 13% of workplaces in the Hotel and Restaurants industry (Kersley et al, 2006).
- Moreover, older employees, defined as those aged 50 and above, were absent from 14% of all workplaces compared to 40% of workplaces in the Hotels and Restaurants industry (Kersley et al, 2006).

HI workforce age profile (McNair and Flynn, 2006)



Employment in the HI: UK statistics



- The hospitality industry relies, to a large degree, on foreign labour.
- In 2005, the UK witnessed the largest entry of foreign workers in any one year and foreign employed migrants constituted 1.505 million people or 5.4% of the UK employed population (Salt and Millar, 2006).
- Under the Worker Registration Scheme for A8 nationals, the UK registered 195,000 A8 nationals in 2005, most (171,400) were from Poland (Salt and Millar, 2006).
- It is likely that many of these workers ended up in the hospitality industry, particularly in London and the south east of England (Salt and Millar, 2006).

SUPRANATIONAL AND NATIONAL INITIATIVES



- The European Union
- National initiatives
- The United Nations
- Other Initiatives

HRM POLICIES AND PRACTICES



- As HR practices and policies may inhibit the employment of older workers, the hospitality business should consider implementing the following fifteen practices (Jenkins, 2008b: 11-12):
 - 1. Ensure age-neutrality in recruitment and selection
 - 2. Develop and implement a recruitment strategy which uses a broad range of methods
 - 3. Develop and implement special initiatives to attract older workers into the workforce
 - 4. Collect and make use of statistics on the age of employees in the workforce and the age of applicants who were short-listed, rejected or appointed
 - 5. Offer age-awareness training to all employees and manager

HRM POLICIES AND PRACTICES



- 6. Train line managers on equality issues and how they should interpret and implement the workplaces' equal opportunities and/or managing diversity policy
- 7. Offer specific Information Technology training for older workers
- 8. Develop and implement a promotions policy which is age-neutral and encourage older workers to apply for promotion
- 9. Offer a greater range of flexible work patterns to all workers and offer greater flexibility in terms of retirement
- 10. Ensure age-neutrality where redundancies is concerned
- 11. Include a specific mention of age in the organization's equal opportunities or managing diversity policy

HRM POLICIES AND PRACTICES



- 12. Establish and support an age-diversity workgroup to advise on age-related matters
- 13. Develop and implement policy and practice on developing an age-diverse workforce
- 14. Ensure that all managers are aware of age-discrimination legislation and other major initiatives to address age discrimination in the workplace and that these are translated into improved policy and practice
- 15. Measure the effects of the organization's equal opportunities and/or managing diversity policies

Current and future research



- With **Jill Poulson**, AUT University, New Zealand
- Mixed methods approach
- Survey of managers' perceptions of "older" workers is completed
- Interviews being undertaken with HR managers and "older" workers
- Dissemination of results through journal publications in 2010 and 2011
- Stacey Roche, a PhD student at the University of Huddersfield", is investigating "The social identity of "older" restaurant workers" using a Comparative Discursive Approach