

# Evaluation of the Current States of Older Employees: The Case in Ankara

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## Abstract

This study was performed on the older employees who work in small and medium sized enterprises in Ankara in Turkey. This study involved a survey consisting of 16 questions that applied to the employees. 61 females and 103 males within a total 164 employees who were aged over 55 participated in the survey. Current situations which were about the demographic structures, working conditions, problems of workplace and health problems of the employees, were determined by the survey. 63% of the employees consist of workers who were previously entitled to pension. Moreover 64% of the employees were aged 55-59, 27% were 60-64 and 9% were over aged 65. There are no female employees aged over 65. All of the retired employees stated that their salaries were insufficient to meet the needs. 13% of the participants were white-collar worker, 50% of them have worked in the jobs needing physical power. 20% of the participants said that they benefited from their previous experiences. 69% of the employees complained about a chronic disease. There were no employees who work although it is prohibited due to the health problems. 14% of the employees stated that they will continue to work even if they have adequate financial means and none of them were female. It is observed that generally older employees encounter many problems. It is observed that

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it would be wrong that older employees were isolated from their work environments by improving their opportunities. Absolutely it should be exploited from the personal experiences of these employees.

**Key Words:** Older Employee, Retired, Work Life, Graduate, Workplace Problems

## **1. Introduction**

Older people are defined as persons who are aged 65 and over in many sources, especially the World Health Organization. Older people are defined as persons who are aged 60 and over in the studies of the United Nations. The earliest old age pension in Turkey starts at the age of 55 and varies until the age of 65, according to the age that people started to work. In this study, older employee was accepted as aged 55 and over, and the survey was applied to 164 employees that were selected from the people who were still working. Many studies which were related to the working life of the older employees, have been performed previously.

In the study of Mor-Barak and Tynan (1993) it is revealed that the age is the criteria for the employee selection. In the study, it is shown that how the older people could find the job according to their qualifications. Furthermore, the researchers aimed to guide the employers about how they would benefit from these people by the results. In the other study, are identified the positive and negative sides of the older employees and how it was benefited from the experience of these employees. As a result, the older employees were not evaluated completely negatively or positively, and revealed are some of the superior features as well as inadequacies of the older employees (Bal et al, 2011). Many difficulties are existent in the employment of older employees. On these topics, Brooke and Taylor (2005) performed a study which investigated the 4 different case studies, in Australia and United Kingdom. The difficulties in the employment of the older employees were examined in the study. The study has indicated what the companies lost in rejuvenating the staff. The older employees are exposed to some accidents. In a study related to this subject is indicated that the results relating to injuries and accidents to which the employees were exposed aged 55 and over were presented (Ragers and Wiatrowski, 2005). The experiences of the older employees can make a huge contribution to the workplaces. In the study performed with the university

staff on this subject, it was aimed that the older employees return to the work life to benefit from their experiences. For this purpose, it was provided that the employees keep working by presenting some additional advantages (Fisher, 1993). The experiences rise based on the increasing age in the workplace. The experiences provide people to develop a specific point of view against the problems (Coleman, 1995). The problems of the older employees have been tried to be revealed in the previous studies which were performed in Turkey. Arpacı and Kalıncara (2011) have stated that the older employees were selected from the retired people. These employees have been seen as low-cost labor. Hastürk and Kılıçtepe (2009) determined that the people who do not have social security or have insufficient retirement pension to keep life standards have been obliged to work. Moreover many problems of the older employees were determined that they were not working as sufficiently as in the job requiring physical power, negative effect of the health problems, current retired people were seen as low-cost labor, non-assimilation to new job in increasing age, older employees have been forced to work because of their increasing age, progressive of existing diseases of older people employed in unhealthy conditions and psychological problems caused by working conditions.

## **2. Methods**

This study aimed to determine the current situations and the problems of the older people who were employed in Ankara in Turkey. The samples of the research were the employees aged 55 and over who work in small and medium sized enterprises in Ankara. 61 females and 103 males within a total 164 employees who were aged over 55 participated in the research. The survey form was used to obtain data. For the survey 16 questions were prepared by the researchers. The questions have consisted of two main sections which determine the demographic structures and the current problems and the opinions of the participants. The answers were shown with numbers and percentile. Open ended questions were evaluated and it was tried to express a general approach.

### 3. Results

From all the responders, 37% of the aged 55 and over employees who participated in the survey were female, 63% were male. While the ratio of the male and female employees who were aged 55-59 was very close to each other, this ratio increased after the age of 59 for male. There were no female workers aged over 65, besides that 9% of the all participants who were aged 65 and over were male (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Age Distribution of Older Employees

Age	Number			%		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
55-59	51	54	105	31	33	64
60-64	10	34	44	6	21	27
65+	0	15	15	0	9	9
<b>Total</b>	61	103	164	37	63	100

**Source:** Authors' own calculations

When the educational status of the employees was compared, only 14 of the 164 samples had undergraduate and postgraduate education (Table 2). By contrast with, 65 employees had primary education or none, and 56 employees were high school graduates.

**Table 2.** Educational Status of Older Employees

Educational Status	Female	Male
Primary Education and Before	20	45
Secondary School	14	15
High School	22	34
Undergraduate and Postgraduate	5	9
<b>Total</b>	61	103

**Source:** Authors' own calculations

From all the participants, 133 of them were married, 20 females and 11 males within a total 31 people were single. 86% of the married female and 15% of the married males stated that their partners worked.

From the financial point of view, 14% of all the participants indicated that they had decent financial stability, but they would continue their working life. It is interesting that all of the commentators on these topics are male workers. 63% of the employees have been still working although they were previously entitled to pension and 14 of them were female and 90 were male. When all employees were questioned, 87% of the males were entitled to pension and continued to work or returned to work life after retirement. In terms of the female employees, this ratio was 23%.

The rate of participants who defined manner of work as "desk job" was 13%. 67% of the employees who answered this had undergraduate and postgraduate education, 29% of them were high school graduates. The rate of participants who defined manner of work as "jobs needing physical power" was 50%.

The number of participants who said their previous knowledge and experiences were beneficial in the workplaces was 33 and the rate was 20%. From all the respondents, 50% of the participants stated that they felt fear of losing their jobs.

The participants were asked whether they had a chronic illness without asking what the illness was, 69% of the participants answered "yes" to this question. However, none of these workers stated that they were prohibited from working because of their health problems and they indicated that this situation did not prevent them to work.

For the question, "except you, how many people are there in your family that contribute to the household income?", 30% of the participants answered as "1 person", 35% of them as "2 people", 26% of them as "3 people" and 9% of them as "4 people and more".

It is determined that all of the employees who participated in the survey had social security.

The participants were asked whether their working environments were appropriate or not in terms of noise, humidity, heat, dust and lighting. 65% of the participants stated that the work environment has suitable conditions, and 26% of participants did not answer this question.

From the respondents questioned, 67% of the participants stated that their workplace was qualifiable in terms of the occupational safety, 33% of the participants did not answer this question, besides no one gave any negative opinion for this subject.

The participants were asked whether they had an occupational accident, 4% of them answered "yes" to this question. When the severity of the

occupational accident was asked, all of them commented that it was minor occupational accidents. None of the employees had any major occupational accident.

#### **4. Conclusion**

We have tried to explain the current situations of the older employees who were aged 55 and over by the survey.

It is determined that the number of the older employees aged 55-65 who have to work has non-significant difference in terms of sexuality and 86% of these employees did not want to work if they achieved financial sufficiency.

The rate of the employees who said that people benefited from their experiences in the workplaces was very low. In fact, it must be paid attention to this, personal experiences of the employees which have been gained for many years should be beneficial for developing professional perspective. Thus, it will contribute to increase the productivity. The rate of the employees who feared losing their jobs and felt obliged to earn a living for the family was half of all participants. This is a socio-economic problem which needs to be examined carefully. It seems that the contribution of male employees to the household budget is inevitable. While the male, whose partner is working, rate is 15%, this ratio in women is 86% and it is the best indicator for this situation. All of the employees have social security either because of their previous retirement or from their current work. This situation is socially promising. The participants evaluated their workplaces in terms of various criteria like humidity, heat, noise, dust, and lighting. It is observed that 65%-67% of the participants stated the work environment has suitable conditions in terms of ergonomics and the occupational safety. The rate of the employees who did not want to answer this is remarkable, the absence of an answer shall not be considered as entirely negative. There can be various reasons for not responding. It should also not be ruled out whether or not the participants are competent enough to fully understand the content of the problem. None of the employees had major occupational accidents. In this case, the effects of legislation and state control on occupational health and safety cannot be denied in recent years.

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