

“YES OR NO? WHAT DO LITHUANIAN UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE THINK ABOUT EMPLOYMENT IN ELDERLY CARE SECTOR?”¹

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The aim of the research is to investigate unemployed young people's opinions about work and the workplace in the elderly care sector in Lithuania. The key theoretical concepts of the study are public service motivation (PSM), work meaningfulness and gendered approaches. Quantitative research methodology was chosen to gather the empirical data. The respondents of the survey, which was carried out in 2022, were young unemployed people (aged 18–29) registered in the Lithuanian Employment Service database. The rationale for this analysis is the growing demand for labour force in the elderly care services, and fairly significant proportion of NEET youth in Lithuania and other EU countries. Various initiatives globally, and particularly in the countries of Europe reveal that, in order to find ways to attract this underutilised workforce to the elderly care sector, this could be one of the employment alternatives for young unemployed people. Therefore, the attitudes of the young unemployed people towards workplace in elderly care can be utilised searching how to improve effectiveness of employment services. Our study revealed that young unemployed people in Lithuania agree that work in elderly care sector is a valuable and meaningful work to the society, however they see work in elderly care as physically and emotionally demanding, unqualified and low-paid. If youth would have to work temporarily in elderly care, they would prefer working for more independent elderly people.

Keywords: unemployed youth; opinion; elderly care sector; workplace; profiling.

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INTRODUCTION

Population aging result in growing demand for elderly care services, therefore the demand of labour force in this sector grows as well (The 2021 Ageing Report 2021; Le Bihan, Martin and Knijn 2013; ILO and OECD 2023). According to the data of the State Data Agency (2024), in Lithuania in 2023 there were 150 care institutions for the elderly, of which 62 were established by the state (counties) and municipalities, and 88 – by public organizations, parishes and private founders. On average, of 81% of long-term care workers in EU countries (Eurofound 2020), and approximately 83% from 53 million home care workers worldwide are women (Maybud 2015). Women accounted for 78.5% of all persons working in the health care and social work sector in 2021 in Lithuania (Eurostat 2021), while according to the survey conducted in 2016, as many as 98.6% of the employees in home care were women (Žalimienė, Blažienė, and Junevičienė 2020). Hence, there are no substantial changes in gender composition of the workforce in elderly care, and still existent feminisation of the sector requires gender focus when analysing demand and supply of workforce in this area (Mažeikienė and Dorelaitienė 2011; Pease 2011; Hussein, Ismail, and Manthorpe 2016).

Similar as in many countries, this sector in Lithuania is characterised by a heavy workload and low pay of social and care workers, as well as insufficient organisational support, and ageing of labour force (Blažienė and Žalimienė 2020; Okunevičiūtė Neverauskienė, Žalimienė, and Junevičienė 2021). The sector suffers from the high staff turnover ratios, and basically is not attractive to young workers, due to low wages, high emotional workload, or low career prospects (Santana *et al.* 2015; Montgomery *et al.* 2017; OECD 2020; Nozal, Rocard, and Sillitti 2022). Not surprisingly that the demand for the studies in searching for solutions of how to integrate young people into the elderly care labour market is increasing. According to the statistic sources, the proportion of the young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is rather visible in the EU for some years, and in Lithuania, this proportion range at 13–15% over the last ten years (Eurostat 2024). However, research reflects that young people of generations Y and Z are not willing to work in elderly care, unless the work environment meets their needs and wishes (Sutcliffe and Dhakal 2018; Kocak *et al.* 2020; Gallagher *et al.* 2022; Orfao, del Rey and Malo 2023; Vazquez-Rodriguez, Garcia-Alvarez, and Moledo 2023). Andrews (2008), Connell, Nankervis, and Burgess (2015) suggested that the industry should find ideas and advantages for how to attract workforce of these generations to the elderly care services. Job in elderly care could be an employment alternative for young people, who are motivated by relationships at their work. Or in generally it could serve as a perfect start of a career, as the entry barriers into this sector is very low, and it is accessible for persons with no previous work experience. During the school-to-labour market transition period, when young people struggle with a challenge to find out their

first job, elderly care could be a solution (Global Health Workforce Network 2020; Haikkola 2021; Irwin 2021; Emmanouil *et al.* 2023). Elderly care sector requires diversified skills, ranging from high education workers (i.e., social workers, nurses, psychologists, etc.) to the assistants of nursing or social workers', who only need a short-term training.

The investigation of young unemployed people's attitudes towards employment in the elderly care sector may help to assess the rational extend of the strategy to increase effectiveness of employment services by targeting specifically this job seekers group to work in the elderly care sector. Currently, to be able to address the needs of a particular person and increase work motivation, the employment services are using various profiling strategies/tools, which means targeting appropriate services, measures and programmes considered to be the most suitable. These tools have been used by employment services in the USA and Australia since the end of the twentieth century (Eberts and O'Leary 1996; Job Seeker classification instrument (JSCI) 1998). In European countries, such as Germany, Sweden, Belgium and Austria it was introduced slightly later, in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Desiere, Langenbucher, and Struyven 2019). In Lithuania, these tools are still in the stage of development, nevertheless the EU employment policies emphasize the positive profiling consequences for the placement outcomes of the job seekers (The Council of the European Union 2010). Profiling strategy may help for the young people looking for a first job to discover a service in the elderly area as their mission, as it is designed to reveal the most suitable activities (jobs) for the unemployed, and are tailor made to their individual needs and motivations (Desiere 2019). Hasluck (2017) points out that the differentiation and profiling of clients requires to dispose of a certain information and indicators about the workforce. Countries use different types of profiling systems. Data for profiling can come from a variety of sources, including surveys (Berger, Black, and Smith 2001; Black *et al.* 2003); hence, investigation of young unemployed people's attitudes towards work in the elderly care sector could be one of them.

While there is a lot of research on young people's attitudes towards work, or their expectations of the workplace in general, relatively little is known about the particular group of the young unemployed persons attitudes toward the work in elderly care. As the elderly care sector will face huge demand of labour in the future, the answer to the question of whether it is realistic that young unemployed people, men and women, may prefer the work in elderly care, become important for society in general and for labour offices pursuing employment services in particular.

The aim of the research is to investigate unemployed young people's opinions about work and the workplace in the elderly care sector in Lithuania.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Public service motivation (PSM), work meaningfulness and gendered approaches are utilized as theoretical background of the study.

The application of these three approaches shape the multi-layered framework to analyse the opinions of unemployed youth toward the workplaces in elderly care. Vandenamele (2008) claims that PSM influences the attractiveness of public sector employment opportunities, and the research carried out by Wright and Christensen (2010) revealed that PSM increased the likelihood that the next job the person will choose will be in the public sector. This concept is promising for the analysis of young people's attitudes from several perspectives. First, the surveys show that elderly care is not an attractive workplace in general, because of relatively low salaries, as well as physically and emotionally demanding work. However, studies predicate that PSM increases job satisfaction. Thus, individuals with PSM may experience job satisfaction in elderly care, as well despite the mentioned unattractive aspects of the job. Vandenamele (2007, 547) defines public service motivation as "the beliefs, values and attitudes that go beyond self-interest and organizational interest, ... and that motivate individuals to act accordingly whenever appropriate". Public service motivation as a multidimensional construct includes a variety of interrelated components (Kim 2016; Bozeman and Su 2015; Ritz *et al.* 2020); it can be described as "a reliance on intrinsic rewards over extrinsic rewards" (Houston 2000). Intrinsic rewards refer to the satisfaction that someone gets while performing a task, for instance, a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of self-worth. While extrinsic rewards are those rewards that are given to a person by someone else, for instance, a pay raise, a promotion, job security, and status and prestige (Houston 2000, 714–715). When formulating the questionnaire, *person-organization fit* and *person-job fit* approaches of PSM were invoked (Christensen and Wright 2011; Perry and Hondeghem 2008; van der Voet and Steijn 2021), which allows to assess the attractiveness of workplace, according to organisational and job peculiarities. The person – organization fit approach to public service motivation refers to the alignment between an individual's values, beliefs, and motivations, and the values, culture, and mission of the organization, particularly within the public sector. In this context, person – organization fit approach suggests that individuals are more motivated to work in public service roles when they perceive a strong connection between their personal motivations and the organization's goals, especially if those goals are aligned with serving the public or contributing to society (Vandenamele 2007; Christensen and Wright 2011). The person – job fit approach in the context of public service motivation refers to the alignment between an individual's motivations, values, and personal attributes, and the characteristics of the job they perform in the public sector. When a person's values and motivations match the requirements and rewards of their job,

they are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction, perform better, and remain committed to their work (Vandenabeele 2007; Bright 2021).

Research on job choice often emphasise the salary as one of the main factors in the choice of employment or an occupation. However, the subjective evaluations of the job, such as its meaningfulness to the individual, also play a role in these choices (Hu and Hirsh 2017; Assmann *et al.* 2020). As noted above, elderly care jobs, as a rule, do not offer good salaries. However, there are other job characteristics which could compensate for this disadvantage. The concept of *work meaningfulness* suggested the explanation. This concept refers to how much an employee perceives their job as being inherently meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile (Hu and Hirsh 2017). This sense of meaningfulness is based on the individual's personal assessment of the job's importance, both to themselves and society. Jobs that are seen as more meaningful tend to offer a stronger sense of purpose and significance (Pratt and Ashforth 2003; Grant 2008). Steger, Dik, and Duffy (2012) point out that work meaningfulness can be associated with various reasons: a desire to serve the greater good; making sense of one's self and one's work environment; finding a sense of purpose in one's work.

Population change, globalisation and labour market dynamics are long-term challenges that can have a direct impact on the career choices for both men and women (Hussein, Ismail and Manthorpe 2016; Pearson 2022). By the other hand, in elderly care, women are the most common employees. As elderly care is still a gendered job, it can be assumed that women might have more motivation to work in elderly care or see meaningfulness of care work more often than men. It is possible young men are reluctant to identify with this activity, as in the most of cultures a care work is still associated as feminine area (Maslauskaitė 2004). So, the gender perspective is important in analysing the results, especially in the context of the need for profiling the unemployed persons, as performed by the employment offices.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research methodology was chosen to gather the empirical data. The questionnaire was designed to examine the workplace characteristics based on two main groups of questions, according to “person fit organisation” and “person fit job” concepts (questions on the characteristics of the workplace and questions on the characteristics of job in elderly care). The characteristics of the nature of work, working conditions, public meaningfulness of work and prestige were included in the questionnaire. Closed-ended questions and open-ended questions were used: the first type of questions provides a view from the perspective of the researcher, and the list of possible answers is limited by the experience of researcher; while the second type of the questions can help to get more options of the answers and to provide new insights or perspectives (Zull 2016).

Respondents, sample size and selection. The respondents were young unemployed people (aged 18–29) registered in the Lithuanian Employment Service database. The general set was 29 321 persons as of 1 May 2022. Among the larger regions of the country (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys), the highest proportion of young unemployed individuals (compared to all unemployed) was observed in Vilnius, Kaunas, and Klaipėda counties, while the lowest proportion was seen in Šiauliai and Panevėžys counties. The highest relative share of registered young unemployed people was in Kaunas county, where they accounted for as much as a quarter of all unemployed individuals. In smaller regions (Marijampolė, Telšiai, Alytus, Tauragė, Utena), Telšiai stood out, with the proportion of young unemployed individuals (among all unemployed), reaching about one-fifth of the total between 2020 and 2022, slightly above the national average. The lowest share of young unemployed individuals was in Utena county, where it reached only 12.4%, in 2022.

A two-stage non-probability sampling design was applied for the analysis of data. The first step was to determine the number of respondents in the territorial services, by means of quota sampling based on the number of registered unemployed people in the individual territorial services. The second step was the selection of respondents in the Employment Service offices by non-probability convenience sampling, i.e. questionnaires were distributed to those respondents who came to the Employment Service office for counselling and agreed to take part in the survey.

In total, 54 of the 60 territorial employment service offices in the country agree to participate in the survey. Around 20% of the unemployed that were contacted refused to complete the questionnaires. 684 respondents aged 18–29 years, or 1.74% of the registered unemployed of this age group participated in the survey. 43.1% of them were male, and 56.9% female, with a mean age of 24.3 years. 31.1% of the respondents had higher education, 31.4% had vocational education, 25.3% had secondary education and 12.1% had primary or elementary education.

The organization of the survey.

Empirical data collection took place in 2022, in cooperation between the Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences and the Methodology and Monitoring Unit of the Employment Service Under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania Budgetary authority. The specialists of the Employment Service distributed printed questionnaires to the young people who came in for a consultation. Respondents filled in the questionnaires themselves, and returned them to the Employment Service specialists.

The distribution of the questionnaire. The questionnaires were delivered by hand and e-mails to clients of the Employment Service.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS/PC software. Descriptive statistics was performed to analyse the empirical data, including overall and correlation percentages, and mean results. Chi-square (χ^2) criterion was used to assess the

interdependence of qualitative attributes. The results were considered statistically significant when $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strong family care tradition

The attitude towards phenomena depends on the context they are embedded. Lithuania is considered to be one of the countries with a strong tradition of family care, which is even enshrined in the constitution, as the duty of children to take care of their old parents. According to the survey data, 87% of respondents agreed that children have the duty to take care of their old parents (*Table no. 1*). Nevertheless, (only) about one in ten respondents agreed with some reservations or disagreed with regard to this duty. No statistically significant difference was found between men's and women's assessments ($p = 0.068 > 0.05$).

Table no. 1

Respondents' views on whether children should take care for their old parents (in per cent)

	Do not have to take care of their parents	Have to take care if they get paid for this	Have to take care in any case	Other
Male	3.1	10.1	85.3	1.4
Female	2.9	5.5	88.6	3.1
Total	3.0	7.5	87.2	2.4

Another survey, carried out in 2017 about attitudes of the older age group of Lithuania citizens toward family care responsibility, to a lesser extent, yet also justify this family care tradition: 58% of population aged 50–65 agreed with the statement that children should take care of their old-age parents in any case (Žalimienė *et al.* 2019). This is in contrast, e.g., with the Nordic countries, where family members do not feel as strongly committed of caring for elderly family members (Puthenparambil and Kroger 2016).

The workplace characteristics that young unemployed persons prefer

The respondents were invited to evaluate the general importance of suggested work place characteristic relevant for them. More than half of the respondents of the survey distinguished top five desirable work place characteristics, such as good working conditions, good pay, career and professional development opportunities, transparent pay and flexible working hours. Other work place features suggested in the questionnaire were considered as not so important for the majority of respondents. (*Table no. 2*).

Table no. 2

**Desirable work place characteristics for the young unemployed persons seeking for a job
(in per cent)¹**

Characteristics of a desired work place and job	Male	Female	Total
Working conditions	74.4	76.1	75.4
Remuneration	74.0	73.5	73.7
Career opportunities	64.2	68.6	66.7
Transparent remuneration for the job	59.8	66.8	63.8
Flexible work schedule	45.8	60.5	54.2
Match between work and education profile	33.5	36.6	35.2
Possibility to work remotely	26.7	27.7	27.3
Intensive use of IT at work	31.0	21.0	25.3
Straightforward work	24.7	21.6	23.0
Job doesn't require direct contact with customers	21.2	17.5	19.1
Job requires direct contact with customers	16.0	19.9	18.2
Work related to helping people with social problems	11.7	14.2	13.1

There are only some workplace areas where the differences between male and female respondent's evaluations are statistically significant. The male and the female evaluations differ only in the frequency of ratings for flexibility of the work schedule ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), with the latter job characteristic being more important for women than for men. It is no surprising distinction, taking into account the Lithuanian Gender Equality Index, and the domain of time allocation to care and domestic work and social activities. Gender inequality in this area, in 2017, in Lithuania was 50.6, compared to 65.7 in the EU average (European Institute for Gender Equality 2020). There were also differences in the assessment of a desired job between males and female's respondents, according to the nature of work related to helping people with social problems ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$), with the latter job characteristic being more important for women than for men. These results reflect the deeply ingrained social and cultural norm in society that professions related to caregiving and nurturing are more suited to women. Moreover, such indicators as people's "desire to help others, benefit society..." are attributes to public service motivation, according to Wright and Pandey (2008, 503–504). However, if linking this job characteristic with preferences to work in public sector, only for about 13% of respondents is inherent PSM in this survey.

More attractive work characteristic for young unemployed, especially male, is intensive use of IT. About third of the male and fifth of female unemployed

¹ The questionnaire included the following question and answers: "Imagine that your goal is to find a job. What characteristics would you look for in a job?" (Mark your answer on a scale where 1 is 'Not important' and 4 is 'Important').

young respondents indicated they prefer a job with intensive use of technologies at work ($p = 0.021 < 0.05$). Responses presented in *Table no. 2* reflect the attractiveness of remote and technology-related jobs for young unemployed people. The implementation of modern technologies and digitalisation in elderly care are recognised as ways of facilitating working conditions in the modern society (Lindberg *et al.* 2013; ILO 2018). Looking through the lens of the person-job fit approach, it is likely that the implementation of technologies can not only improve working conditions in the care sector, but also turn it into an attractive workplace for young people.

While studies show that educational attainment influences workers' expectations towards the workplace (e.g., Moore, Grunberg, and Krause 2015, etc.), analyses of the data according to the level of education were carried out. Our research confirms the link between education and young people's expectations for the workplace. Statistically significant differences were found in the following work place characteristics: simplicity of the job ($p=0.018 < 0.05$); work adequacy to educational background ($p=0.000 < 0.05$); transparent remuneration for the job ($p=0.000 < 0.05$); intensive use of IT at work ($p=0.000 < 0.05$); possibility to work remotely ($p=0.000 < 0.05$); good working conditions ($p=0.000 < 0.05$); career development opportunities ($p=0.000 < 0.05$) (*Table no. 3*). In all cases, a higher proportion of respondents with a university degree identified these job characteristics as important, with the exception of the simplicity of the job functions. Hence, it goes in line with results of other authors surveys, for instance, Moore, Grunberg, and Krause (2015); they found that workers with university degree have higher expectations for their workplace, concerning the career development and job security, as compared to workers with lower levels of education.

Table no. 3

**Expectations toward the workplace characteristics, according to the level of education
(in per cent)**

Characteristics of a desired workplace and job	Higher education	Vocational education	Secondary, primary education
Working conditions	82.4	75.0	69.1
Remuneration	78.8	72.8	70.2
Career opportunities	77.6	66.7	57.1
Transparent remuneration for the job	78.8	56.8	56.5
Flexible work schedule	51.2	57.2	53.8
Match between work and education profile	47.3	35.7	24.2
Possibility to work remotely	30.3	26.5	25.2
Intensive use of IT at work	29.8	23.4	22.8

Straightforward work	14.6	26.5	26.8
Job requires direct contact with customers	17.9	20.0	17.1
Job doesn't require direct contact with customers	16.8	18.0	22.3
Helping people with social problems	8.7	15.2	15.6

The job designed to help people with social problems is more often inherent for young unemployed respondents with higher education. However, no statistically significant differences were found between the respondents with different educational backgrounds in evaluating this job characteristic.

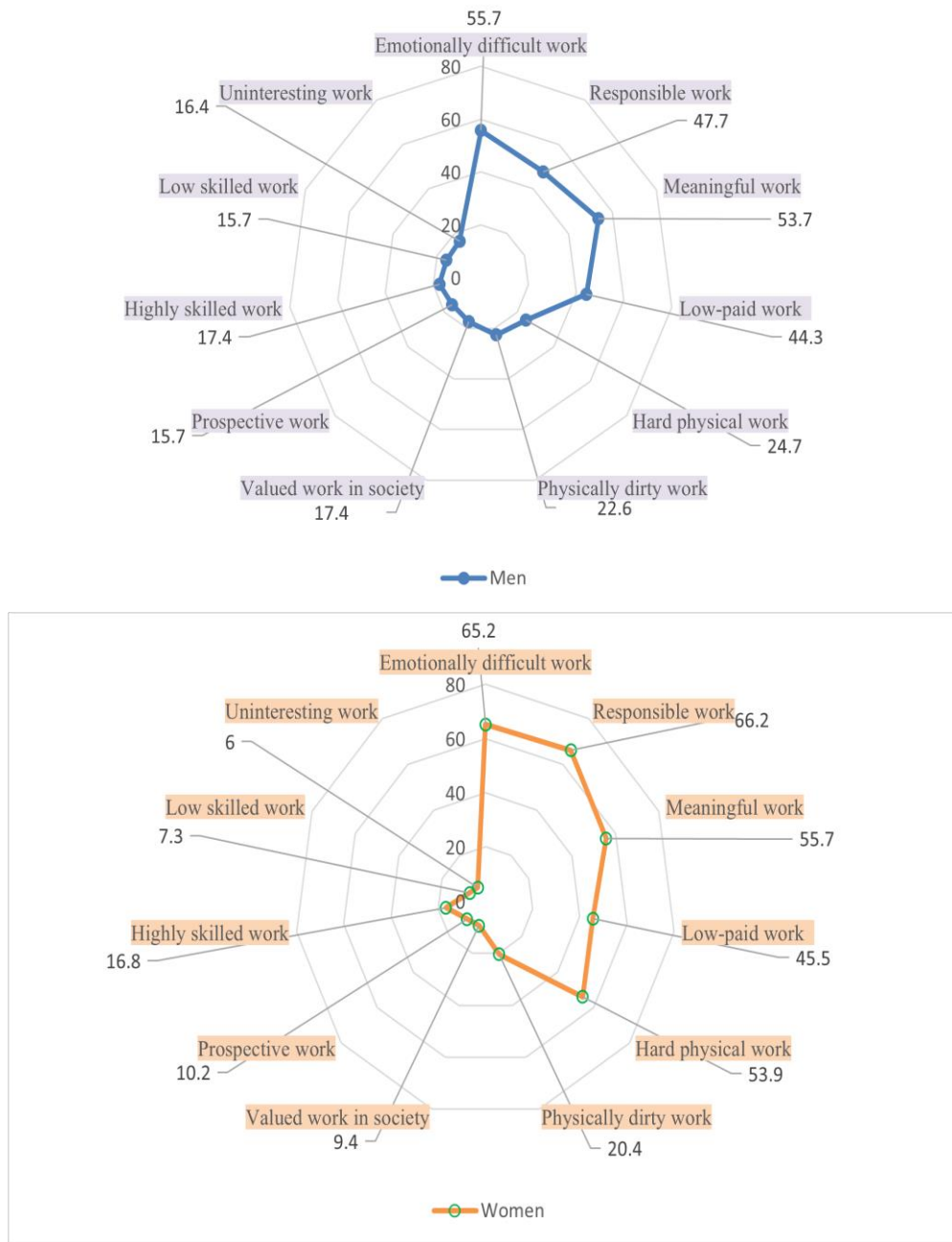
YOUNG UNEMPLOYED PERSONS IMAGE OF THE WORKPLACE IN ELDERLY CARE

Another part of the questionnaire was intended to gather information about how the young people imagine work in elderly care, and whether this work has some features attractive for them. Generally, the answers endorse findings of Nolan *et al.* (2002), who described work in elderly care as a Cinderella's job, which is emotionally, physically demanding and low paying. At the same time, it should be mentioned, that more than half of the respondents acknowledged the meaningfulness of this work, which, according to Hu and Hirsh (2017), is a determinant factor for a job choice decision. Hence, recognising the meaningfulness of elderly care work increase the chances that young unemployed people prefer to work in this sector.

Figure 1 provides profiles of the images of the workplace in elderly care, looking through the lens of male and female respondents. Male and female respondent's imaginations do not differ across such most important indicators as meaningfulness of work and remuneration; however, assessments more or less differ in many other aspects. Twice bigger share of female respondents stresses physically demanding nature of care work, and twice bigger share of male respondents is stressing monotony and low skilled nature of this activity.

Figure 1

Profiles of elderly care work through the lens of male and female respondents (in per cent)



In order to motivate the respondents to provide more extensive and deeper reflections on work in elderly care, they were asked to complete two statements. The first sentence to complete was 'I might work in the elderly care sector if...'. The piece of responses doesn't surprise: young unemployed people most often finish the sentence by saying that what is important to them is a good salary or good working conditions, or flexible, convenient working hours, career and training opportunities. Another part of responses tinged them by personal wording or feelings. These respondents reflected their fear of working with old people, whom they describe as boring, helpless and sickly, which makes them feel fearful of not being able to communicate or harming those in their care, unable to find emotional and psychological strength to work in what they perceived to be a psychologically challenging environment. The answers to this open-ended question suggest that young unemployed people could be encouraged to work in the elderly care sector by offering them an opportunity to perform only the functions that don't require a very close contact with the elderly, or by providing them a knowledge and support how to manage in different situations.

The second statement that the research participants were asked to finish was 'I would not like to work in the elderly care sector because...'. The answers to this question can be also separated in the two parts. One part of answers show that the participants focused on such characteristics as hard physical and emotional work, high levels of responsibility and unattractive environment, because of illnesses and disabilities of elderly people. Other respondents felt that their education was too high to work in the sector, confirming the findings of other studies that work with elder people is often seen as very simple, not requiring higher levels of qualifications (Firth-Cozens and Cornwell 2009). Some of research participants expressed doubt about their personal suitability for such work, because they did not think they were patient enough, or, indeed, too sensitive to elderly care work environment.

Overall, the opinion of young unemployed persons about work peculiarities in elderly care revealed by our study correlate with the results of other studies. For example, a review of research by Cummings, Adler, and Decoster (2005) found that a large proportion of social work students believed that working with older people was unskilled, uninteresting and low paid. According to the research carried out in Scotland by Montgomery *et al.* (2017), young people believe that working in the social care sector requires vocation, empathy and enthusiasm that cannot be learned. The research (*ibid*) also revealed young people's perception that working with older people require high professional commitment, at the same time, this commitment is rewarded with inadequately low pay and poor working conditions.

THE MOST ATTRACTIVE SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN ELDERLY CARE

Institutionalized patterns of activities define the socioeconomic conditions and peculiarities of work. Therefore, it can be assumed that the sector's institutional structure may influence job decision. The research participants were asked to imagine situation when they are asked to choose a temporary work in elderly care. Would they agree, and if yes, what type of the institutions or services they would prefer to work in for the time? Responses to this situation suggest that more than half of respondents would reject such a temporary work in any type of institution. By the other hand, 14 to 35 per cent of respondents suppose they would try this work, and most desirable place for them would be a day care centres for leisure of elderly, e.g., institutions that do not associate much with illness or a disability. Accordingly, such services as palliative care homes or nursing homes were least preferable. These results may support Bergman *et al.* (2014) insights, that nowadays young people might avoid working with older people, in order to distance themselves from thoughts of their own old age.

Table no. 4

The share of the respondents by their willingness to temporary working in various elderly care institutions (in per cent)

	Might be willing	Are not willing	Have not decided/no answer	Total
Day care center for the elderly leisure	34.7	51.0	14.3	100.0
Retirement homes	29.6	56.0	14.4	100.0
Home help service	28.9	55.3	15.9	100.0
Day care center for the elderly with Alzheimer's disease, etc.	20.8	65.5	13.7	100.0
Nursing hospitals	19.3	65.6	15.2	100.0
Palliative care home	13.9	67.0	19.1	100.0

In general, the answers to this question contribute to the respondents' earlier thoughts that reflect young people's fear and lack of self-confidence in the provision of care for sick, disable elderly.

CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that the majority of young unemployed people, both men and women, see work in elderly care as physically and emotionally demanding, unqualified and low-paid, which is the opposite of what they expect their desired job or work place to be.

By the other hand, we find that, according to *person fit organisation* or/and *person fit job* indicators, there was not a big segment of respondents having positive attitudes towards a work in elderly care, which could be less or more attributed to the having PSM or some prosocial motivation. About one sixth of respondents preferred to have a job where they can help solve people's social problems, and from 14 to 35 per cent of research participants responded they might be willing to try temporary work in elderly care. One tenth of them supported the statement that work in elderly care is valuable work for society, and about half of the respondents considered the work in elderly care as meaningful.

Young people are particularly intimidated by direct, physical contact with sick elderly people, and if they would have to work temporarily in this sector, they would prefer working for more independent elderly people. The responses reflect the attractiveness of distance services or technology related work for the young unemployed persons too.

Although there were no statistically significant differences between male and female assessment of work and working in this sector, according to the majority of indicators, female respondents were more likely to view this work as challenging, responsible and physically demanding, less likely as monotonous, uninteresting or low-qualified.

Statistically significant differences were found in terms of evaluation of the workplace according to the level of respondents' education. The respondents with higher education were more likely to be demanding about many workplace characteristics, such as good salary or working conditions, favourable career prospects, but less demanding addressing prosocial profile of work tasks.

Profiling of the unemployed young people is a reasonable practice for the employment agencies concentrating on differences between clients having and not having positive attitudes towards work in elderly care sector, both for men and women.

Practical implications of the research

Here are some of the implications: to add a rule-based and statistical tools based profiling with separate tool based on opinion survey of jobseekers. To suggest that employment service offices profile the young unemployed, in order to be able to detect who of them should be referred to work in elderly care rather than in other employment areas. It is recommended for the employment services to continuously carry out surveys of young unemployed people's (newly registered) views on working in the elderly sector, thus identifying those who find working in the elderly care sector meaningful, and are relationship building oriented. A survey on views could cover 3–4 indicators reflecting favourable attitudes of young unemployed people towards work in elderly care, namely meaningfulness of work in this sector, favourable attitude towards work related to helping people with

social problems, willingness to work in different service sectors of elderly care, and satisfaction with the willingness to provide remote services to the elderly.

Limitations

As the convenient sampling method was used in the current research study, it might have influenced the choice of participants with certain characteristics (e.g., participants with more positive or more negative attitudes towards the elderly), which prevents the generalisation of the survey data to the entire unemployed youth population aged 18–25. The questionnaire included three groups of questions about the nature of the work, the working conditions and organisation, and the social meaning of work. However, more aspects of PSM could have been included, which would have allowed for a broader understanding of the content of this motivation.

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Scopul cercetării este acela de a sonda opiniile persoanelor tinere și fără ocupație în legătură cu munca și locul de muncă în sectorul îngrijirii persoanelor vârstnice din Lituania. Conceptele teoretice cheie ale studiului sunt motivația serviciului public (PSM), semnificația muncii și abordarea de gen. Pentru culegerea datelor a fost aleasă metodologia de cercetare cantitativă. Respondenții sondajului, care a avut loc în 2022, au fost tineri șomeri (cu vârste între 18 și 29 ani), înregistrați în baza de date a Serviciului pentru Angajare în Lituania. Rațiunea acestei analize este cererea în creștere de forță de muncă în sectorul îngrijirii persoanelor vârstnice corelată cu cifra semnificativă a tinerilor NEETS în Lituania și în alte țări UE. Diferite inițiative la nivel global și în special în cadrul UE arată că, pentru a identifica modalități de atragere a acestei forțe de muncă neutilizată către sectorul îngrijirii persoanelor vârstnice, aceasta ar putea fi o alternativă pentru persoanele tinere fără ocupație. În acest sens, atitudinile persoanelor tinere fără ocupație față de locurile de muncă în sectorul îngrijirii persoanelor vârstnice ar putea fi utilizate în procesul de îmbunătățire a eficienței serviciilor de angajare. Studiul de față a arătat că tinerii fără ocupație din Lituania au fost de acord că munca în sectorul îngrijirii persoanelor vârstnice este una cu semnificație importantă pentru societate, pe care totuși o privesc ca fiind fizic și emoțional solicitantă, necalificată și prost platită. Dacă tinerii ar trebui să lucreze temporar în sectorul îngrijirii persoanelor vârstnice, ar lucra mai degrabă cu persoane în vârstă mai independente (fizic).

Cuvinte-cheie: șomajul tinerilor; opinie; sectorul îngrijirii persoanelor în vârstă; forța de muncă; crearea de profiluri.

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