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Jenkins, Andrew Kevin

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**EUROPE'S AGEING POPULATION:
IMPACTS ON THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY AND HRM RESPONSES**

Andrew Jenkins
The University of Huddersfield
Queensgate
Huddersfield HD1 3DH
UK
e-mail: a.k.jenkins@hud.ac.uk

Population ageing will have major implications for everyone in society and is likely to be the most important of all demographic changes for the foreseeable future. Of all regions of the world, Europe will be the most affected by population ageing. These demographic changes will have repercussions for hospitality businesses throughout Europe which have traditionally relied on younger workers. From a business perspective, Europe's hospitality industry will need to attract "non traditional" employees such as those aged 50 and over. In order to utilise the skills and knowledge of individuals in this group, employers should address issues of age discrimination. This paper will recommend specific Human Resource practices in relation to the employment of older workers.

Key words: age, employment, age discrimination, HRM, Hospitality

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to discuss the issue of population ageing and its impact on the Hospitality Industry in Europe with a focus on the UK and Ireland. Specifically, the paper will examine the changing nature of Europe's population according to age, the possible effects of population ageing on employment in the Hospitality Industry and the Human Resource Management responses necessary to facilitate the employment of "older" workers. These responses relate to practices in relation to recruitment, selection, training, development, equal opportunities and managing diversity. Given the paucity of research on issues related to older workers in employment (Loretto and White, 2006) and age discrimination in employment (Jenkins, 2007), this paper represents a timely piece of research. It is not the intention of this paper to discuss, in any detail, the important but highly emotive issue of immigration, despite the fact that immigration may provide the hospitality industry with a readily available source of generally "younger" labour.

This paper is conceptual in nature. Therefore, it will present a discussion regarding Europe's ageing population, the impacts on the Hospitality Industry and HRM responses. The paper does not present primary data on the subject but does discuss the findings of empirical studies into "older" workers in employment and organisational responses, wherever possible related to the hospitality industry. The author of this paper has undertaken a number of empirical investigations into "older" workers in the hospitality industry and findings from these studies will be presented in this paper.

For the purposes of this article, an "older" worker refers to a person aged 50 and above as 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. Moreover, 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).

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) and will have major implications for everyone in society (Harper, 2000). Of all regions of the world, Europe will be the most affected by population ageing with the number of people in the 50-64 age group increasing by 26% in the period 1995-2015 (Taylor, 2001:1). This is due to falling fertility rates, increased life expectancy, the effects of the "baby-boom" and migration movements, (Commission of the European Communities, 2002). In terms of the fertility rate in the EU, figures for the crude birth rate for EU27 show a decline from 19.2% in 1960-1965 to 10.2% for 200-2005 (Eurostat, 2008). The declining fertility rate is the result of a complex interplay of factors that include higher rates of female participation in the labour market, women having children later in life, an increase in the number of childless women, more women in higher education, increased costs of child rearing and higher divorce rates (Hollywood, Brown, Danson and McQuaid, 2003). Increased life expectancy in the EU is one of the main factors affecting population ageing and it is forecasted that, for the UK, the life expectancy of a male will increase from 76.6 years in 2005 to 82.9 years in 2050 and for a female from 81.1 years to 86.6 years (Eurostat 2008).

In the UK, figures for 2006 show that the population aged 50-64 was 17.8%. The EU country with the highest percentage of people aged 50-64 in 2006 was Finland (21.1%); the lowest Ireland (Eurostat, 2008). In the UK, the median age of the population has risen from 34.1 years in 1971 to 38.6 years in 2004 and is forecasted to rise to 42.9 years in 2031 (www.statistics.gov.uk). There are 19.8 million people aged 50 and over in the UK (www.statistics.gov.uk). This represents a 24% increase since 1961 and the number is projected to increase by a further 37% by 2031 when the UK will possess almost 27 million people aged 50 and over (www.statistics.gov.uk). As the baby-boom generation of the Mid 1960s age, the working age population of the UK will become older and, by 2020, there will be 0.9 million (4%) fewer working people aged below 40 than aged above 40 in the UK (Shaw, 2006).

The decline in economic activity rates of men aged 50 and older in OECD countries over the last thirty years has been remarkable (Duncan, 2003) with participation rates for older males falling on average between 29% and 30% in OECD countries in the period 1970-1990 (Desmond, 2000: 241). As is the case with most OECD

countries, employment of people aged 50 and over in the UK declined sharply since the 1970s although in the period 1998 to 2002, the number of people aged 50 and over in employment in the UK increased by 650,000 (Disney and Hawkes, 2003). Employment rates for older people vary greatly between different parts of the UK with activity rates being considerably lower in Scotland, Wales and Northern England and considerably higher in Southern England (Brown and Danson, 2003). Furthermore, it is probable that employment opportunities will be influenced by occupation. Therefore, older professional and managerial workers may be able to work part-time past retirement whilst “manual workers with grotty jobs and few skills often lack the opportunity, or desire, to work past their 50s” (The Guardian, 02/12/03).

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. The main negative impact of an ageing population on GDP per capita growth relates to the decline in the size of the prime-working population (those aged 20-64) and an increase in the size of the older and younger age groups (OECD, 2006). Extending the working lives for older people would be one way of addressing this issue. In relation to productivity, a decline in the prime-working population can be reduced by a permanent increase in the labour productivity of all workers (OECD, 2006). By increasing labour participation rates for older workers, economic dependency ratios would be reduced, public finances would be increased and economic growth would be potentially enhanced (OECD, 2006).

EMPLOYMENT IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Although hospitality firms offer accommodation, food and drink and entertainment, the hospitality firm's main function is to provide a service to the customer (Kandampully, 2002). According to Mullins (1998:17-18) there are seven main characteristic features of services: the consumer is a participant in the process, there is simultaneous production and consumption, services are perishable, site selection is determined by customer demands, services are labour intensive, services are largely intangible and it is difficult to measure performance. Although it is claimed that hospitality services are intangible, this is not usually the case as tangible elements, such as the hotel itself, the bed, bathroom, the food and drink, and even elements of service delivery are tangible in nature. However, there is an increasing focus in the hospitality industry on intangibles and, therefore, the role and importance of human resources in the delivery of products and services (Baum, Amoah and Spivack, 1997). These features will affect the nature of employment in the hospitality industry.

As the consumer is a participant in the process, there is considerable interaction between the host (employee) and guest (consumer). Therefore, for the interaction to be successful, the employee will need to establish the needs and wants of the customer and deliver an appropriate service. As production and consumption are simultaneous, there is added pressure on the employee to deliver quality service. Quality is defined and judged by the customer and is strongly related to the people who deliver the service (Arrowsmith and McGoldrick, 1996). The encounter between the server and the served will mean that hospitality employees will need to perform “emotional labour” which will require the suppression of feelings in order to produce a belief in others that they are being cared for (Hochschild, 1983). This has resulted in many hospitality businesses focusing on service excellence and this emphasis is likely to continue into the foreseeable future (Olsen, Teare and Gummeson, 1996).

The success of hospitality businesses depends on its employees (Hornsey and Dann, 1984) and how it effectively manages its human resources (Teare, Farber Canziani and Brown, 1997). A hotel may possess the most developed technology, luxurious facilities and enviable location but without appropriate human resources the business will ultimately fail. As hotels become standardised, and as hotel corporations offer broadly similar products and services, the human element is argued to be crucial in achieving competitive advantage (Knowles, 1998). Therefore, the role of differentiating the hotel's intangibles, such as its staff, becomes critical in developing and maintaining competitive advantage (Lashley and Taylor, 1998).

A hospitality firm achieves competitive advantage when its actions create economic value in the industry and where few competing firms engage in actions which are similar (Barney, 2002). According to Porter (1990), competitive advantage is a result of the ways in which a firm organises and performs its activities. Porter (1996) terms these activities primary and support and these constitute the “Value Chain” which represents the conversion process from the beginning to the final product (Hannagan, 2002). Human resource management is recognised as a support activity within the chain. Therefore, according to Porter (1990), competitive advantage would be achieved by the firm adopting innovative approaches in developing new technologies, new or shifting buyer needs, the emergence of a new industry segment, shifting input costs and availability and changes in

government regulations. Whether a firm adopts a differentiation, cost leadership or focus strategy (McGee, Thomas and Wilson, 2005), the human resources will undoubtedly be important in any business but perhaps especially so in the hospitality industry with its focus on customer service (Mullins, 1998).

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. Thus 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). Furthermore, younger employees, defined as those aged 16 to 21, were absent from 37% of all workplaces compared to 16% of workplaces in the Hotels and Restaurants industry (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).

The hospitality industry, both in the UK and Ireland, relies, to a large degree, on foreign labour. This is not a new phenomenon as British employers have often sought to attract foreign labour (Braham, Rhodes and Pearn, 1981). 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 (citizens from countries that acceded to the EU on the 1st May 2004, namely Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), the UK registered 195,000 A8 nationals in 2005, most of whom (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). In addition to attracting thousands of A8 workers to the UK, work permits and first permissions were granted to 6,494 hospitality, hotels, catering and other services workers in 2005, representing 7.5% of all work permits and first permissions granted (Salt and Millar, 2006).

THE EMPLOYMENT OF OLDER WORKERS: SUPRANATIONAL AND NATIONAL INITIATIVES

The European Union has been instrumental in establishing a general framework for the equal treatment of older people in employment. Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty of 1999 enables the Council “to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” (Caracciolo, 2001). Following on from the Treaty of Amsterdam, EU Directive, 2000/43/EC, although dealing primarily with the principle of equal treatment between persons of racial or ethnic origin, states that “The right to equality before the law and protection against discrimination for all persons constitutes a universal right” (<http://europa.eu.int>). The Council Directive 2000/78/EC, issued on the 27th of November 2000, refers specifically to “older people”, stating that “The Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers recognises the importance of combating every form of discrimination, including the need to take appropriate action for the social and economic integration of elderly and disabled people” (point 6, page 1) and “The prohibition of age discrimination is an essential part of meeting the aims set out in the European Guidelines and encouraging diversity in the workforce” (point 25, page 2). As a result of EU Directive 2000/78/EC, Directive 2000/750/EC established a Community action programme “to combat direct or indirect discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation” from 1st January 2001 to 31st December 2006 (<http://europa.eu.int>). In 2006, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions produced a report entitled “Employment initiatives for an ageing workforce in the EU15” (written by Philip Taylor). This report uses case studies and national reports as the principal information sources on older workers in the EU. An accompanying report, “Age and employment in the new Member States” examines initiatives for the ageing workforce in the new Member States and acceding countries.

A variety of policies exists towards older workers in European Union countries with The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Italy and Portugal having provisions which prohibit age discrimination (McDonald and Potton, 1997). In the Netherlands, for example, discrimination is specifically mentioned in Article 1 of the Constitution: “All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in equal circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, or sex or on any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted” (Dutch Constitution, Article 1). An updated age discrimination law came into effect in the Netherlands on the 1st of May 2004 (<http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int>). Spain appears to have the most developed provisions for protecting older workers’ rights (McDonald and Potton, 1997). Although most EU countries do not have specific legislation on age discrimination, many countries have state constitutions or labour laws which cover age discrimination (<http://www.eiro.eurofound.ie>).

The United Nations has also been preoccupied with the problem of age discrimination in employment. In a report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, 8th-12th April 2002, Article 12 states that "Older persons should have the opportunity to work for as long as they wish and are able to, in satisfying and productive work, continuing to have access to education and training programmes" (United Nations, 2002a:3). In terms of recommendations for action, the Second World Assembly on Ageing identified a number of initiatives which needed to be taken. These include promoting a favourable attitude of older workers amongst employers, increasing the awareness of the benefits of an ageing work-force, paying special attention to ageism and women's employment, making appropriate adjustments to workplace environments, increase labour-market participation of older people, promoting self-employment for older persons and developing a more flexible approach to retirement (United Nations, 2002a). Following-on from the Second World Assembly in Madrid, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations held a meeting about ageism in society and employment at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing, Berlin, 11-13th September 2002. The report states that "Older persons are a valuable resource and make an essential contribution to society" (United Nations, 2002b:1) and that priority should be given to "encouraging labour markets to respond to ageing and take advantage of the potential of older persons" (United Nations, 2002b:2). In 2006 the United Nation's Economic and Social Council produced a report on the "Major developments in the area of ageing since the Second World Assembly on Ageing", addressing a range of issues including labour markets and older workers. The report concluded that early retirement in developed countries remains a problem and in Europe the primary concern is to "reverse the trend towards early retirement" (United Nations, 2006: 8).

THE EMPLOYMENT OF OLDER WORKERS: HRM POLICIES AND PRACTICES

According to Baum (2006) Human Resource Management consists of a three-part cycle: first, attracting an effective workforce which entails an understanding of labour markets, recruitment and selection, HR planning, flexible employment patterns and retention; secondly, development which includes performance and appraisal, education, training and development and thirdly maintaining an effective workforce which includes rewards, welfare, teamwork, empowerment, employment relations, grievance and discipline and equality and diversity. Cascio (2003) states that all managers should be concerned, to some degree at least, with five activities to manage people in the workplace: staffing, retention, development, adjustment and managing change. Together these activities constitute the HRM system and all activities are interrelated (Cascio, 2003). Nickson (2007: 16) states that the HRM cycle consists of attracting an effective workforce, maintaining an effective workforce and developing an effective workforce.

There are a number of different methods for attracting candidates to available jobs. These include traditional media advertising, such as newspapers, magazines and radio, recruitment agencies, head-hunters, internal advertising, internet and word-of-mouth (Cooper, Robertson and Tinline, 2003). Recruiting people to existing or new positions is crucial in the hospitality industry and the importance of "good" service quality has focused on the need to attract the "right" type of employee (Nickson, 2007). As the successful interaction between employee and customer is paramount in the hospitality industry, management will seek personnel who have the right embodied capacities and attributes which can be "aesthetically geared" to produce a particular style of service (Warhurst, Nickson, Witz and Cullen, 2000). This phenomenon, termed "Aesthetic Labour", has been defined by Warhurst, Nickson, Witz and Cullen (2000:4) as "a supply of embodied capacities and attributes possessed by workers at the point of entry into employment". This type of labour seems to be particularly prevalent in the "style" labour market of hospitality organizations and is an intentional managerial response to recruit, select and train the "right" employees (Witz, Warhurst and Nickson, 2003). According to Warhurst and Nickson (2007), the employer will attempt to recruit and select the "right" employees as this is easier than having to train employees once they have been appointed. In choosing the "right" kind of employee to enhance company image and deliver service quality, potential discriminatory practices may take place (Nickson, Warhurst and Dutton, 2005). This may result in the exclusion of certain people from the "style" labour market, such as older employees, and this exclusion will be the result of employers' recruitment and selection processes, assessing whether or not the person is aesthetically acceptable, but also self-selection where the potential employee does not apply for jobs where aesthetic labour is deemed important (Nickson, Warhurst, Cullen and Watt, 2003). One of the most obvious signs of aesthetic labour is "sounding right" and "looking good" (Nickson, Warhurst, Cullen and Watt, 2003). As looks and age are closely tied it is probable that women will experience ageism in a way men do not (Granleese and Sayer, 2006). Thus women may experience the triple jeopardy of age, gender and looks (Granleese and Sayer, 2006).

Organisations may choose to fill a vacancy from the internal labour market, that is, from inside the organisation, or from the external labour market (Beardwell and Holden, 2001). Recruiting from the internal labour market offers a number of advantages as it is less expensive and it guarantees tacit knowledge from candidates (Kersley et al, 2006). However, internal labour markets can limit the acquisition of knowledge and experience from other organisations, be inflexible and potentially unfair and discriminatory (Kersley et al, 2006). A number of selection methods are available when choosing between candidates. These include interviews, psychological testing, integrity testing, work sample tests, self assessment, peer assessment, references and educational achievement (Cooper, Robertson and Tinline, 2003). As the interview offers the opportunity to directly assess a candidate's behaviour, it is a popular method of selection (Searle, 2003). A survey of 81 hotels by Lockyer and Scholarios (2004: 130) revealed a "general lack of systematic procedures" for recruitment and selection although the one-to-one interview was the most frequently used selection method.

In order to gain and sustain competitive advantage, it is necessary that an organisation invests in training and development. Increasingly, in an ever more competitive world, training and development is important for the individual, the organisation and the nation (Nickson, 2007). Whilst training represents a bounded activity with the aim of improving an employee's skills and knowledge necessary to perform work tasks and roles, development focuses on achieving potential by growing and developing an employee (Robinson, 2006). Therefore, development represents an improved situation for an individual in realising mental and physical potential (Wilson, 2005). Given the changing nature of employment, there is greater demand for education and training that address the vocational needs of the firm and the personal development needs of the individual (Caldwell, 2000). But not everyone has the same access to training. In particular, older workers often receive less training than younger workers (OECD, 2006). This limited access to training will further negatively affect the retention opportunities of older workers (OECD, 2004). As far as vocational training is concerned, it is vital that all workers have the same access to such training as older workers tend to have fewer qualifications than younger workers (OECD, 2006). In relation to age-awareness training, this may raise the individual's consciousness of the issue and its value is further multiplied by raising the collective awareness, thereby resulting in collective action (Thompson, 2006). But workplace learning is not necessarily about motivating, enriching and emancipating employees. It can be a vehicle for debasement, de-motivation and coercion (Rainbird, 2000). Moreover, training and development may serve a social function, helping workers form friendships thus distracting them from the alienating work which they perform (Grugulis, 2006).

Given the academic and managerial focus on Human Resource Management for the last quarter of a century, the actual meaning of HRM should, perhaps, now be agreed but this is not the case (Guest, 1998). HRM remains a concept which is difficult to define with any degree of confidence (Worsfold, 1999) and "conceptual-theoretic ambiguity seems intrinsic to HRM" (Keenoy, 1999: 1-5). Furthermore, the more HRM is investigated, the less convincing it is (Keenoy, 1999). In many respects, HRM is no more than a collective noun for the policies, processes and techniques to manage the employment relationship (Keenoy, 1999). Notwithstanding definitional ambiguities, it is important to realise that HRM is no panacea for solving employment problems (Storey, 2001). However, HRM remains a highly persuasive narrative which gives form and meaning to a complex world (Storey, 2001). The concept of HRM has inspired practitioners and academics but it is a term shrouded in rhetoric with relatively little analysis having been undertaken to establish its applicability in the workplace (Hollinshead and Leat, 1995).

HRM can be seen as an attempt to influence power relationships in an organisation (Jacques, 1999). Its power over workers means that, paradoxically, the more employees are valued as an important resource, the more the desire to exploit this resource to the full (Legge, 1999). As HRM was firmly established within a manufacturing paradigm, it is questionable whether some of its features apply to service organisations (Hoque, 2000). Managing people in the workplace will invariably be a challenging, dynamic and complex task (Anderson, 2004). Moreover, the realities of workplace employment relations are often very different to the rhetoric of HRM and organisational employment policies. According to Lyon and Glover (1998), HRM provides a business-orientated explanation of the problems inherent in employing older workers, calling into doubt the commitment of older people and valorising youth. Furthermore, there is nothing intrinsic about HRM which makes it a positive force in challenging oppression and discrimination, although it may offer increased opportunities for encouraging equality (Thompson, 2003). It should be remembered, however, that ageist attitudes towards older workers existed long before the emergence of HRM as a management phenomenon (Lyon, Hallier and Glover, 1998).

One of the few articles to discuss the views of older workers in the Hospitality Industry in relation to workplace equality is Jenkins' (2008a) study, based on twenty three interviews with older workers in ten hotel workplaces within a hotel chain, eleven in the ROI and twelve in the UK. The main findings from this study indicate that

older workers are a heterogeneous group with diverse opinions about equality. Indeed, many respondents did not identify themselves as older workers. Findings from the research suggest that older workers were generally enthusiastic about training, were generally less interested in promotion, depending on personal circumstances, and there was evidence of structural discrimination taking place with older workers being excluded from certain areas, such as Housekeeping, because of a perception that the heavy physical nature of the work made such work unsuitable for older workers. Furthermore, there was evidence to suggest that segmented internal labour markets (Collinson, Knights and Collinson, 1990) operate which disadvantage, or sometimes benefit, older workers.

Jenkins' (2008b) paper on age discrimination in hotel workplaces, based on interviews with ten Human Resource Managers in hotels, five in Ireland and five in the UK, revealed a number of policies and practices which may, potentially, be discriminatory towards older workers. Firstly, the company website proved to be a popular method used in the recruitment for all positions in the UK and Ireland. This may place older people at a disadvantage as internet access, computer ownership and computer skills tend to be lower amongst older people. Secondly, both in the UK and Ireland, Human Resource managers stated that colleges were an important source of recruitment for their properties, particularly in relation to the recruitment of casual staff. Again this may disadvantage older applicants as an overwhelming majority of students at colleges and universities in Ireland and the UK are under the age of twenty-one. Furthermore, the use of word-of-mouth recruitment could, potentially, disadvantage older people as existing hospitality workers, who tend to be under twenty five, may inform friends of vacancies in the property. With regards to selection, as experience was considered essential by some managers, this may place older workers at an advantage. Appearance was considered crucial and candidates were assessed on appearance during the interview. This may disadvantage older applicants. The importance of good social skills may indirectly benefit older workers as Human Resource managers, in the UK and Ireland, commented that older people had good/better social skills. Evidence of indirect discrimination against older employees included the widespread use of internet recruitment, a focus on local colleges when recruiting, a focus on work flexibility in some properties, a desire to recruit Eastern European workers and few special initiatives to attract older employees into the workforce. Moreover, the lack of recognition regarding the importance of age by some managers in equality issues may serve as a barrier to the employment and advancement of older worker equality.

CONCLUSION

Discrimination based on age is not a new phenomenon. People have experienced discrimination because of their age for hundreds of years. In some societies the "old" were venerated but, in general, they were treated with hostility (Minois, 1989). This hostility continues to the present day and negative views of older people represent a challenge to the fair and equitable treatment of older people in society, employment and other spheres of life.

It seems that, compared to younger adults, older workers are disadvantaged in the labour force and this is due to stereotypical views about older employees (Harris, 1990). A report on ageism in Britain by Age Concern England, based on interviews with 1843 people throughout the UK, revealed that more people had suffered from age discrimination than any other form of discrimination (Age Concern England, 2005). Folger and Cropanzano (1998) believe any form of injustice to be detrimental to organisations and employees. Furthermore, an OECD (2004) report into ageing and employment policies in the UK identified age discrimination as a widely perceived problem.

Europe's population is ageing. This will have consequences for the Hospitality Industry. In order to plan for the changing demographic composition of the population, notwithstanding legislative initiatives at a national and supranational level to address the problem of age discrimination in employment, the hospitality industry will need to examine its views on older workers as they are disadvantaged in the labour force and this is due to stereotypical views about their abilities (Harris, 1990). Furthermore, 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 managers

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
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

Given current economic problems affecting the European Hospitality Industry, it is important that the issue of older worker employment is not forgotten. Older workers have a valuable role to play in the future of the European Hospitality industry. Much of the hospitality industry is style obsessed, particularly designer bars, boutique hotels and celebrity-chef restaurants and the industry seems to be particularly ageist. Indeed, "employers seem determined to discriminate when it comes to age" (Clark, 2000:24). It is time that hospitality employers address the problem of age discrimination, challenging stereotypical attitudes towards older workers in their organisations and examine Human Resource policies and practices which inhibit the employment and development of older workers.

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