

THE IMPACTS OF AN AGING POPULATION :

FIELD SURVEY OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS ... *[outline of purpose, methods, measures and sample to be used]*

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As you know--

OUR POPULATION IS AGING.

--It is estimated that 51.4 million people in the U. S. will be 45 years of age or older by 1960-- 8½ million more than there were in 1950.

WHAT WILL BE THE ROLE OF THESE OLDER PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY?

WHAT PART WILL THEY PLAY IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY?

--If present predictions are borne out, 26 million of these people will be active members of the labor force by 1960-- some 4 million more than in 1950.

CAN INDUSTRY AFFORD TO ASSIMILATE A LARGER PROPORTION OF OLDER WORKERS?

CAN IT AFFORD NOT TO ASSIMILATE THEM?

SHOULD PRESENT EMPLOYMENT AND RETIREMENT POLICIES BE CHANGED TO MEET THESE CHANGING CONDITIONS?

For instance--

IS THERE A FEASIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO A FIXED CHRONOLOGICAL AGE FOR RETIREMENT?

--It is well known that individuals grow old at different rates. One man may be old at 45. Another at 70 may have the vigor of an average man of 50.

What is the significance of this fact for the utilization of older workers in industry?

The impartial methods of scientific research are now being brought to bear on these and related problems:--

The Institute of Industrial Relations at the University of California is conducting a five year study on THE IMPACTS OF AN AGING POPULATION to help answer such questions as those above. Occupying a central position in the overall study is a field survey of industrial workers:--

THE FIELD SURVEY

PURPOSE. The purpose of the Field Survey is to investigate, among industrial workers, the individual differences in aging as distinct from those of age.

We have reason to believe that, although age is measured in years, aging is best measured in terms of physiological and psychological factors in the individual. Such measures are being developed at the Institute.

METHOD. In order to find out how useful these techniques may be in industry we must apply these measures to a large number of industrial workers and relate the findings to measures of the individual's work performance his overall value to the company.

If, among workers approaching the usual retirement age, the more valuable ones turn out to be "younger" physiologically and psychologically, then further studies could determine how these procedures might best be put to practical use.

It may well be that these methods can select out older workers whose abilities and desire to work are likely to remain unimpaired for some time to come.

In the present survey, about two hours' time is required of each worker studied to complete the tests and obtain necessary supplemental information. Ultimately, the time required for testing will probably not exceed thirty minutes per worker.

The survey is set up to test from two to eight workers simultaneously.

THE MEASURES.

Physiological. The physiological measure is a short breathing test taken under conditions of rest and of mild exercise. It is known as the Perfusion Test; specifically, it measures the rate of elimination of carbon dioxide in the respiration.

Based upon research conducted by the Army Air Forces in World War II, and developed by Dr. Hardin Jones of the Donner Medical Physics Laboratory, this test is considered to be the best brief measure of physiological age that is known. Preliminary work suggests that it may serve as a useful and inexpensive method for determining a person's physical capacity for continuing work as he approaches the usual retirement age.

Psychological. It is a well-known adage that "A man is as old as he feels." The psychological measure of aging is based upon an objective evaluation of the individual's perceptions, motivations, and attitudes, as they relate to himself, his age, his work, and his future.

In the Field Survey a great deal of supplementary information is obtained from the worker to aid in establishing this objective evaluation. Such information includes the attitudes of older workers toward younger workers and of younger workers toward older, the nature and adequacy of the worker's plans for his retirement, and the attitudes of the worker's immediate supervisor toward the use of older and younger workers in the jobs under his supervision.

It is believed that this supplementary information will help to throw light on a variety of management-worker problems relating to age, as, for example, the influence of the interaction of older and younger workers on plant morale, and the most effective utilization of older workers within the plant.

THE SAMPLE. The present survey requires the testing of about 1000 workers. Approximately one-third of this number have already been tested through the cooperation of employers in the San Francisco Bay area.

Specifications for the remaining 650 or 700 workers to be included in the sample follow:

- (1) They must be males.
- (2) They must come from the industrial area in and around Los Angeles.
- (3) They must be obtained in groups of 15-100 workers, one or more groups per plant, and each group to consist of men in a single job classification (or in two or more closely related job classifications).
- (4) Preferably 50%, but a minimum of 10%, of the workers within each group must be 50 years of age or older.
- (5) Workers are needed for whom some sort of production records are available. In some instances company ratings may be substituted for such records.

WE BELIEVE THIS STUDY TO BE AN IMPORTANT ONE.
WE EARNESTLY SOLICIT YOUR COOPERATION IN HELPING US TO OBTAIN THE
REMAINDER OF OUR SAMPLE OF WORKERS.

THE OVERALL STUDY: THE IMPACTS OF AN AGING POPULATION

You may be interested in knowing more about the Institute itself and the setting in which the Field Survey has developed:--

The purpose of the overall project is broadly to investigate the consequences of an aging population on our society and to evaluate the current methods for dealing with these consequences.

One readily apparent consequence is the insistent, strong pressures for means of assuring economic security in old age which have been brought to bear upon our legislatures in recent years. Observers have become increasingly concerned over the social and political problems resulting from the appearance of a large, vocal, and partly segregated group of people who no longer feel themselves part of the community about them. Others have questioned the mounting burden on our economy of the combined effects of increasing life spans and fixed retirement at age 63 or 65.

The facilities of the Institute are well suited for the study of problems so broad in scope as these. The Institute brings together in one organization the skills and techniques of all the social sciences. Its staff consists of regular members of teaching departments of the University who prefer to spend part of their time on interdisciplinary research projects of practical importance.

Nearly two years were spent at the Institute in preliminary analysis of the problems of old age before the present research design was completed. From this preliminary work a series of interrelated researches have emerged, of which the Field Survey is one.

Other researches carried out in the overall study include the following:

A study conducted by a group of economists, concerned with developing accurate information on the income and asset position of those over 65. The aid of the U.S. Bureau of the Census was secured and the Institute now has available the best up-to-date figures on the income and assets of the aged sector of our population.

A second study, now completed, undertook to improve the accuracy of the demographic studies of our population so that we might have better forecasts of the future age composition of the population.

A third study has been concerned with the development of governmental policies toward the older person. Two similar studies have been concerned with an analysis of employer and union policies toward the older worker.

A sixth study, conducted by a group of political scientists and sociologists, has been investigating the political and sociological problems which have resulted from an increasing proportion of older people in our population.

The seventh study is the Field Survey which this memorandum explains in more detail. It is under the direction of a team of economists, psychologists, and a medical research specialist.

The eighth and final study of the overall project, under the direction of a group of psychologists, will investigate more intensively the psychological problems faced by the older person.

Thank You Very Much