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Older workers in labour market revitalisation

I. B. Durakova^{1✉}, E. A. Mitrofanova², I. V. Grigorov³

^{1,3} Voronezh State University, 1 University sq., 394018, Voronezh, Russian Federation

² State University of Management, 99 Ryazansky ave., 109542, Moscow, Russian Federation

Subject. The paradigm of successful professional ageing involves the prolongation of the ability of older workers to participate in work processes and provides arguments for supplementing age-related deficiencies through such functions as selection, compensation, and optimisation. These functions have proved their effectiveness in practice, but in a number of cases it is difficult to implement them. Difficulties arise both on the part of the employer and the employees. If employees, acting as supply in work relationships, do not feel confident about their abilities, employers (acting as demand) feed this lack of confidence with workplace ageism. The development of a concept for the labour market revitalisation by including older workers in the policy for the formation of labour force supply and demand and justifying step-by-step the possibility of prolongation of the working ability is a significant component of the implementation of the Russian strategy in the best interests of older citizens.

Objectives. The article attempts to form the notion of labour market revitalisation through the justification of the possibility to preserve the residual work capacity of older employees and to study the factors affecting the prolongation of the active working period. The idea was to structure the employees by their age and identify the timespan of the appearance of “faults” in the body and then, according to the results, present different conditions that allow preventing cognitive ageing. The options included methods of overcoming health-related biomedical risks, minimisation of discrepancies between an individual’s work ability and objective requirements for the work, as well as changes to their lifestyle.

Methodology. To achieve our goal, we used general and empirical research methods. Analysis and synthesis were used as a method of obtaining new knowledge. The analysis allowed forming an idea of the elements of labour market revitalisation through the expansion of in the structure of employed older workers and identifying the conditions that make it possible. The analysis also helped to reveal the biochemical blood composition of patients of a clinical hospital. The determination of the main points of the analysis elements and the process of their aggregation allowed, using synthesis, formulating a single comprehensive view of the specified approach to labour market revitalisation. Using the method of groupings and classifications, we identified, first of all, six groups of patients for the determination of the timespan of the appearance of body “faults” that lead to premature ageing. Second, we identified three groups of factors affecting the prolongation of the active working period. The survey in this research was used to obtain and further systematise the respondents’ opinions on the realities of employing older colleagues. The method of graphic modelling allowed formulating the conclusions based on the visualisation of the results of the conducted survey.

Results. The article presents the structured provisions justifying the possibility of revitalising the labour market by taking into account three groups of factors that will help to determine the threshold for the premature ageing of older workers and taking measures to prolong their active working period if these factors are considered by employers, the healthcare system, and employees themselves. The suggested

idea promotes the conclusions of scientists claiming that the performance of workers representing a phenomenon known as “silver tsunami” in the academic world can be not only efficient but also successful. The introduction of provisions on the retention and preservation of older specialists into the personnel policy and organisational culture of economic entities will allow employers to perform staff nudging in order to eliminate ageism as well as create an inclusive environment and personnel ecosystem.

Conclusions. The transformation of the labour market with an increased number of employed older workers creates a situation that is subject to interdisciplinary research. In our case, it includes organisational behaviour, personnel management, labour economics, biology, and medicine. The analysis methods used in the article allowed, first of all, understanding the idea of the expansion of staff diversity in the organisation due to older workers and the need to develop an inclusive policy taking into account this group of employees; second, they allowed justifying the possibility of preserving the residual working capacity of older workers through the study of three groups of factors affecting the prolongation of the active working period. The groups of factors include diseases, work, and lifestyle. Third, they allowed representing working capacity as a category that directly depends on the employee’s functional age determined by their health. With a timely establishment of the ageing threshold (the period of discrepancies between the calendar age and the functional age), we can identify the signals about the body’s abnormalities and the beginning of its deterioration. Fourth, they allowed considering the version of ageism, which stigmatises older workers as being incapable of work, to be controversial, and creating working conditions that allow supporting the cardiovascular and musculoskeletal systems of employees. Fifth, they allowed determining the reasons for the lack of work-life balance and the formation of the “enemy image” regarding the profession and workplace, as well as develop recommendations for the behaviour style at work, at home, and in social situations.

Keywords: labour market revival, employment of older workers, factors affecting the active working period, health, work, lifestyle.

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Introduction

“A rising tide lifts all boats”

B. Gross and M. A. El-Erian¹ were among the first to explain the specifics of a new state and dynamics of the global economy of the post-crisis period, thus encouraging researchers to understand the new reality of explaining what was happening. On the whole, the resulting term “new normal” means that the existing reality is long-term, and to make decisions on actions within its format, one needs to accept it as new normal without resisting changes or the obligatory order of things.

Regarding the labour market, a statement about the *reality* of the situation means that possible actions related to labour supply and demand, which previously were ignored or not taken into account, have been reconsidered, and relevant motion paths have been identified and

substantiated in the list of significant paths. One such path is defined by a J. F. Kennedy’s saying which later became an aphorism, “A rising tide lifts all boats”.

The “tide”, meaning the required expansion of the workforce capacity in the labour market, presupposes several possible channels. First of all, it is *young people* with a corresponding education. The advantage of this channel is long-term employment and the employer’s ability to make plans when they have the required contingent available who are capable of learning and developing in case of a correctly structured system of personnel management in an organisation. However, counting on young employees is becoming more and more risky. There are several reasons for that. Indeed, the scenario of natural and mechanical population movement is changing. Revolutionary transformations are being found in demography more and more often in addition to the usual evolutionary ones that are associated with the dynamics of birth

¹ Economists present the world’s largest mutual fund Pacific Investment Management Company (PIMCO), USA, California.

and mortality rates, of which the latter is higher. Structural breaks occur due to large-scale natural disasters, wars, and pandemics that influence the rate of natural population decline, including young people. The culture of spatial movement has also been transformed: the movement of young people is becoming more and more driven by exogenic economic and political causes. This means that there is an artificial migration of working-age contingents that decrease the capacity of supply in national labour markets.

Endogenic causes of migration are also subject to change. Talented young people decide to leave in order to obtain knowledge and skills in universities abroad and to supplement their portfolios with information on fluency in foreign languages and their practical application. Interest in other cultures, and freedom of choice regarding their behaviour and life orientation are also important for many young people. Today young people are not tied to their parents' home. Several generations no longer live together under the same roof. The evolution of family relationships has resulted in new models of marriage partnerships, and young spouses quite often choose to live in different cities and even countries due to work or career reasons or other motivational preferences. Another risk of focusing attention on young employees is their expected transition from material to the so-called postmaterial values. It does not mean that young workers refuse high wages. Their needs often include the avoidance of "postponed" rest and accumulation of funds for future expenses. The "here and now" motto implies an orientation towards the correct work-life balance. Accordingly, the most significant advice and recommendations for the new generations are not vertical (parents, superiors) but horizontal, including peers, friends, and acquaintances, often those online. The risk of employers putting their hopes only on youth is also justified by young people's commitment to the organisations and professions associated with the service industry. This increases the devaluation of manual and engineering

professions and, as a result, leads to their deficiency in the labour market.

Second, immigrants are a channel for the "rising tide" of the workforce. The desire of the immigrant workforce to take vacant positions often do not correlate with their professional capabilities. A lack of necessary professional competencies, including confident use of computer technologies, communication skills, and foreign languages, and a complicated introduction into a foreign culture, and organisational culture as well, reduces the chances of immigrants to find employment quickly.

Transformations with the capacity to supply workers who are suitable for modern requirements show that new channels for their attraction are being searched for, among which the *third* one in the list of the specified channels can be represented by older workers.

The scientific discussion regarding older staff includes various perspectives of the problem indicating the revitalisation of the labour market. Most often it considers the employment conditions of older workers, which include the country's economic development and associated situations regarding workforce supply and demand, changes in the characteristics of a workplace depending on employees' gender, level of education, and health condition, as well as institutional reforms and regulations creating conditions or preventing older workers from participating in the labour market (U. Walwei, 2018). For instance, the highest level of employment of older workers for both males and females was found in Sweden. The highest growth of the percentage of employed older people was found in Germany and the lowest in Italy. According to the average age, Israel has the youngest population and at the same time the highest percentage of staff over 65 years old. (Ulrich Walwei & Deller, 2021). In Finland the structural reorganisation of working contingents will result in staff over 50 years old having the greatest percentage and the staff under 25 years old the lowest. (Ilmarinen et al., 2003).

Attempting to justify the possibility of the labour market revitalisation due to older workers, the authors of the article hold the position of “three components” that help to remove the barriers to recruiting, developing, and retaining this category of staff, thus ensuring a stable “rising tide” of the workforce who, according to the aphorism, can lift “all boats” in an economy that needs human resources.

Methodology

Diseases as a barrier to preservation of working ability

Working ability is a dynamic phenomenon, whose components change throughout a person’s life. It is a result of interaction between individual resources, including health, functional abilities, education, and skills, as well as working conditions and society. Therefore, measures aimed at retaining the residual work capacity should take into account various factors, since, besides biological ageing, it is necessary to consider at least three other factors: *diseases, work, and lifestyle*.

“Everyone ages, but at different rates.” This is one of the laws of gerontology. In their studies researchers mention different notions of age, such as chronological, psychosocial, organisational, and others. The level of deterioration of a functional structure or a living organism is characterised by the *chronological age*. The *functional age* represents the dynamics of physiological functions and functional resources, i.e. the functional capability of a person. Therefore, the ability to work depends directly on the functional age, which in turn is determined by how healthy the person is. (Grigorov, 2022).

Based on the biochemical blood tests performed during periodic health examination, we determined seven age groups: 35–45, 46–55, 56–60, 61–65, 66–70, 71–80, 81 and older. In each group we assigned experimental and control samples, which in turn were divided by gender. It was determined that the most vulnerable period, when there is a discrepancy

between the chronological age and the functional abilities of a person, is 35–44 years old. This is the *ageing threshold*, i.e. the time when the first signs of physical deterioration start to appear. (Kholyavka & Rakhmanova, 2021). Our study demonstrated that an increased level of total cholesterol and glucose was observed in half of the patients over the age of 35. These together are a serious risk factor of atherosclerosis. The disease usually develops over decades. Pathologies reduce the functional age on average by 5 years.

We determined the main medical and biological risks and barriers in the work of older employees, which present a problem for their employment related to a hazardous industry or mental work due to behavioural and cognitive changes. Among these risks are changes due to natural ageing in the composition of the human microbiota that lead to age-related diseases and a decrease in the performance of older staff; age-related atrophy of some body structures, organs, and tissues resulting in the loss of functions; and accelerated involutinal processes in the body’s functions which affects the work of almost all organs and systems (Rakhmanova, 2023). An increase in the amplitude of deviations from homeostasis caused by stress factors (for example, failure of biorhythms, physical activity, heat or cold shock, etc.) poses a problem for the activities of older staff in those fields where quick adaptation to various working conditions is required.

Work conditions in the revitalisation of the labour market

It was found that performance problems facing older employees result from the difference between the individual ability to work and the objective performance requirements. Besides the tensions occurring in the workplace, there are also individual factors: physical and mental state, family problems, including the sandwich generation issue, when a person has to take care of both grandchildren and elderly parents, etc. It was determined that it takes older employees

more time to adapt to new working conditions, but they demonstrate better performance than younger ones. They suffer more from overwork under time pressure, but are more accurate and punctual otherwise. They are less hindered by such unfavourable work conditions as noise, pollution, smoke, fumes, or heat. Older employees to a larger extent understand the health and life risks and do not neglect protection at work as they are not ashamed by their own appearance in special protective clothes, shoes, goggles, and masks. Starting with the age of 45, we observed a growth in artistic and analytical abilities in individuals working in intellectual and educational areas.

Working ability can be maintained by means of flexible working hours, occupational safety, and hygiene management (Durakova & Mayer, 2022). To maintain the musculoskeletal system, it is necessary to minimise static positions, install transformer desks, and provide mini-breaks for recovery. Use natural flooring materials (joints). Cardiovascular system (avoiding night shifts), sensory system (hearing, vision): fallback warning systems for alarms, as well as light and vibration signals. Balance: marking for steps and ramps, lighting for workplaces. Availability of healthy food in the organisation. Hereditary and body state diagnosis; a healthy lifestyle and psychological self-regulation, medication and therapy that slow down general and staff ageing and prolong the period of active ageing.

Work on yourself or wait for a miracle?

Career longevity is hardly possible without adjusting the lifestyle. Obesity in *middle* age is associated with lower cognitive ability and faster cognitive ageing in *old* age. It also reduces the lifespan on average by 6–7 years. Therefore, the energy intake should be gradually reduced to 30 % in the age range from 30 to 70.

It was established that the work-life balance does not necessarily characterise the equality of elements but presents a harmonious scenario, a healthy and measured proportion that allows

maintaining a good quality of living. Weakened competitiveness of older workers and their lower tolerance level are caused by their poorer health, psychosomatic issues, and burnout syndrome that are due to the following: the role of a victim or a person with many duties and constant stress because of conflicts of interests at work and outside work. There appears an “enemy image” associated with their profession and workplace and dissatisfaction from the performance of duties outside work which only increases with age due to new family roles or difficulties related to their performance together with their functions in an organisation.

The study identified three basic causes of role conflicts accompanying the lack of work-life balance and hindering the performance of older workers. They are the following: wrong time budgeting due to prioritising one role over the others; overpressure due to the need to perform several roles at the same time; and behavioural peculiarities leading to the incompatibility of certain roles. Accordingly, we suggest two models of conflicts: “Work interferes with private life” and “Private life interferes with work”.

An individual assessment of the value of free time varied depending on an employee’s level of education, their profession, and social class. Representatives of higher status groups mostly preferred cultural and sport activities in their free time. Passive and group activities were more typical for the lower status groups. We proved the hypothesis of “transfusion” (secondary effect), which means that the behaviour in the workplace and outside it is identical. The subjective attitude towards colleagues, self-alienation, avoidance of communications, and isolation were also reflected in their social behaviour. Passive free time behaviour combined with a sedentary routine nature of work results in a cumulative body deteriorating effect through limitations and additional stress. Employees with the opposite behaviour are enthusiastic, they participate in corporate events, are open to business and sociocultural

discussions, expand their circle of contacts, feel depressed less often, and thus prolong their professional life.

Results of the sample study

A survey of a sample population of 203 respondents, including both working males and females aged 18 to 75, allowed making some assumptions on the state of subjective physical health and measures aimed at its preservation and promotion in the workplace. The answers to the questions were systematised and presented in the following table and figures 1, 2.

Based on the results of subjective health assessment (Table), three conclusions were drawn. First of all, the number of respondents who rated their physical health as “good” and “satisfactory” was similar: 76.2 % females and 73.7 % males in the group aged 25–29 and 62.5 % females and 71.4 % males in the group aged 55–59. Second, the number of both males and females aged 60–65 who rated their health as “poor” or “very poor” decreased. However, in the group aged 65–75 these values were higher. Third, the assessment of their health was more varied among female than male respondents (Fig. 1).

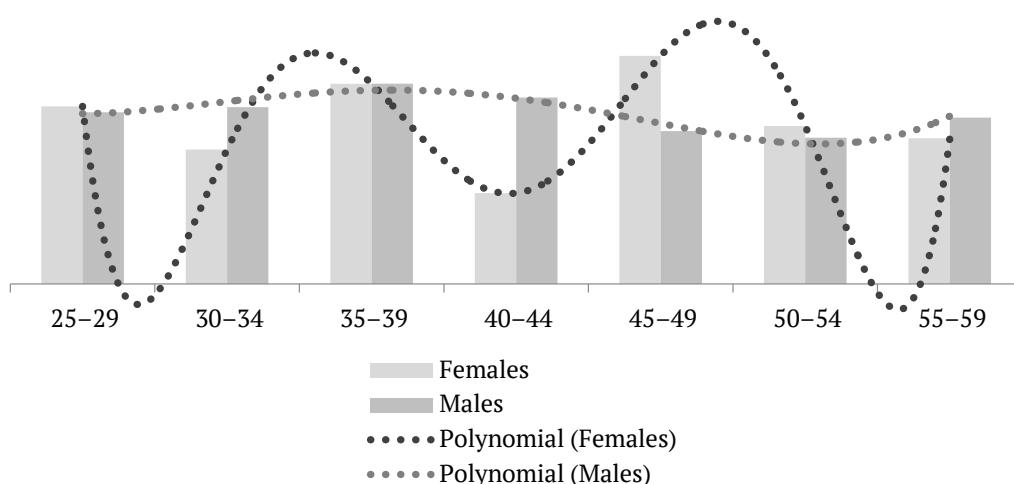


Fig. 1. Variations of the results of subjective health assessment according to survey results

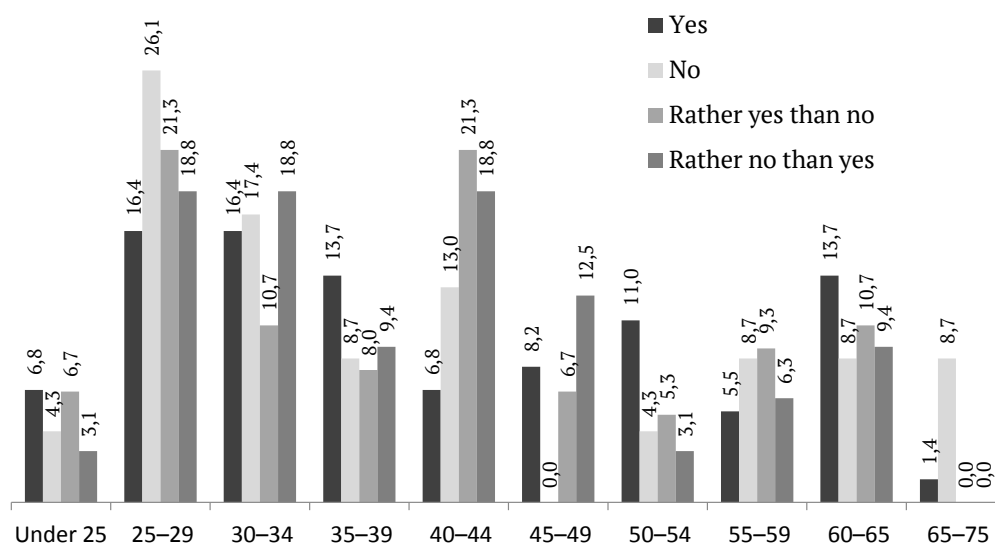


Fig. 2. Satisfaction with the measures aimed at preservation and promotion of health in the workplace, in % of respondents

Subjective Health Assessment in Sampling Population

Subjective Health Assessment	Share of Subjective Health Assessment, %									
	Age groups, y. o.									
	under 25	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–65	65–75
	Females									
Very poor	14,3	14,3	7,1	0,0	20,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Poor	14,3	9,5	35,7	14,3	40,0	0,0	33,3	37,5	9,1	88,7
Satisfactory	42,8	57,2	57,2	57,1	20,0	88,9	33,4	25,0	81,8	11,3
Good	28,6	19,0	0,0	28,6	20,0	11,1	33,3	37,5	9,1	0,0
	Males									
Very poor	0,0	5,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	14,3	0,0	50,0
Poor	0,0	21,1	25,0	14,3	20,0	33,3	37,5	14,3	8,3	0,0
Satisfactory	60,0	42,0	50,0	57,1	53,3	33,4	50,0	28,5	50,0	50,0
Good	40,0	31,6	25,0	28,6	26,7	33,3	12,5	42,9	41,7	0,0

It can be assumed that, first of all, despite the age-related negative dynamics of objective health (Grigorov, 2022; Kholyavka & Rakhmanova, 2021), employees did not mention an increase in subjective issues; second, variations in different age groups of female assessments, unlike male assessments, were expressed by the “heterogeneity phenomenon”, and third, a shift towards positive assessments were observed in the age group 60–65.

The survey results also determined the level of satisfaction by the measures aimed at preservation and promotion of health in the workplace (Fig. 2).

First of all, the number of respondents who were satisfied (answers “yes” and “rather yes than no”) and dissatisfied (answers “no” and “rather no than yes”) with these measures was approximately the same, with the exception of the age group 50–54 years old in which the number of those dissatisfied was about 2 times higher. Second, with older age, there was both a decrease in the number of positive assessments of these measures (from 37.8 % in the age group of 25–29 years old to 14.8 % in the group of 55–59 years old) and a decrease in negative assessments (from 44.8 % to 14.9 %, respectively).

Discussion

The academic discussion regarding the revitalisation of the labour market includes various aspects of this issue. On the one hand, modern specialised literature talks about the need to prolong the active working period due to the demographic situation, which indicates the ageing of the population and its significant mechanical movement (Akdede & Giovanis, 2022; Egdell et al., 2020). On the other hand, researchers substantiate the advantages and disadvantages of the new variants of retirement age (Dvorakova, 2022). There are different notions on the working life of older workers as well as the risks and barriers associated with its continuation after retirement (Aidukaite & Blaziene, 2022; Csoba & Ladancsik, 2022; Sousa et al., 2021). Scientists share their visions in relation to the actions of employers and HR departments aimed at the development of older staff (Axelrad & Luski, 2022; Boehm et al., 2021; Durakova et al., 2022; Martins Silva et al., 2021; Mok et al., 2022; Oget, 2021) and also study the differences between the work performance of older and younger members of working teams (Asavanirandorn et al., 2022; Cui et al., 2022; Viviani et al., 2021). Another topic is the study of the motivation of older workers regarding the

continuation or suspension of their professional activity (Al-Jubari & Mosbah, 2021; Cui et al., 2022). The timely recovery of older staff for more prolonged employment is also a relevant aspect of the issue. (De Luca et al., 2021; Ruggiero et al., 2022).

Conclusions

The conducted study allowed formulating the following results:

– The obvious need for the revitalisation of the labour market can be satisfied with an inflow of qualified young people, which in reality is hindered by the demographic situation, the new model of young people's behaviour, and their values. Immigrants are also a source for dealing with the issue of labour supply, but their introduction into an unfamiliar labour process performed in a foreign culture often takes a lot of time. Older workers who have become in demand for prolonged employment, especially in demographically old countries, must have an opportunity and desire to participate in the labour process.

– The desire and ability to be employed in economic entities depends on the employer's attitude who prevents ageism in their organisation as well as on the health and social situation of older workers in economic entities.

– The prospects of using an older workforce must be studied, and it is reasonable to develop research programs in accordance with the state of the labour market of their country, the

possibility of its regulation, regulatory state acts that motivate older workers to successfully perform professional activities, as well as the transformation of workplaces in accordance with employees' gender and level of education.

– The main factors contributing to or hindering the participation of an older worker in professional activities are diseases, or so-called "faults" in the body, working conditions, and lifestyle.

– Based on the established period of a discrepancy between the chronological age and the functional abilities of a person, the ageing threshold and associated medical and biological risks and barriers can be determined.

– In accordance with the body functions involved in the performance of work (musculoskeletal and cardiovascular systems, hearing, vision, and balance), targeted assistance can be provided (reduction of static postures, avoidance of night shifts, light and vibration signals, etc.).

– Unlike the traditionally presented scientific versions, work-life balance does not always mean the equality of the components; most often it is a measured proportion that allows maintaining a good quality of life.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare the absence of obvious and potential conflicts of interest related to the publication of this article.

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Irina B. Durakova, Dr. Sci. (Econ.), Full Prof.,
Voronezh State University, Voronezh, Russian
Federation

E-mail: durakova@econ.vsu.ru

ORCID: 0000-0001-9529-1960

Ivan V. Grigorov, Postgraduate Student,
Voronezh State University, Voronezh, Russian
Federation

E-mail: grigorov_ivan@mail.ru

ORCID: 0000-0002-6634-598X

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Экономика труда и управление персоналом

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Работники старших возрастов в ревитализации рынка труда

И. Б. Дуракова^{1✉}, Е. А. Митрофанова², И. В. Григоров³

^{1,3} Воронежский государственный университет,
Университетская пл., 1, 394018, Воронеж, Российская Федерация

² Государственный университет управления,
Рязанский пр., 99, 109542, Москва, Российская Федерация

Предмет. Парадигма успешного профессионального старения предполагает продление способности работников старших возрастных групп участвовать в трудовых процессах и аргументирует восполнение дефицитов, возникающих с возрастом, через такие функции, как отбор, компенсация и оптимизация. Доказавшие на практике свою действенность, эти функции в ряде случаев трудно реализуемы. Сложность возникает как со стороны работодателей, так и со стороны работников. Если работники, выступая как предложение в трудовых отношениях, испытывают неуверенность в своих силах, то работодатели (представители стороны спроса) подкрепляют эту неуверенность эйджизмом на рабочих местах. Разработка концепции оживления рынка труда через включение в политику формирования спроса и предложения рабочей силы возрастных работников, поэтапное обоснование возможности продления их трудоспособности являются значимыми составляющими реализации российской стратегии действий в интересах граждан пожилого возраста.

Цели. В статье реализована попытка сформировать представление о ревитализации рынка труда через обоснование возможности сохранить остаточную трудоспособность работников старших возрастов и исследовать факторы, влияющие на продление профессионального долголетия. Идея состоит в структурировании занятых в соответствии с их возрастом, определении временного диапазона появления «поломок» в организме и представлении согласно результату вариантов условий, позволяющих остановить когнитивное старение. В наборе вариантов – методы преодоления связанных со здоровьем медико-биологических рисков, минимизации расхождений между индивидуальной способностью к работе и объективными требованиями к ее выполнению, а также изменения образа жизни.

Методология. Для достижения цели использовались общенаучные и эмпирические методы исследования. В качестве способов получения нового знания были применены анализ и синтез. Анализ позволил сформировать представление об элементах ревитализации рынка труда через расширение в структуре занятых работников старших возрастов, идентифицировать условия, при принятии во внимание которых это возможно. С помощью анализа выявлены также биохимические составляющие крови пациентов клинической больницы. Выделение сущности элементов анализа, процесс их агрегирования позволили посредством синтеза сформулировать единое целостное представление об обозначенном подходе оживления рынка труда. Посредством метода группировок и классификаций определены, во-первых, шесть групп пациентов для выявления периода появления «поломок» в организме, ведущих к преждевременному старению; во-вторых, три группы факторов продления профессионального долголетия работников. Анкетный опрос в исследовании был использован для получения и последующей систематизации мнений респондентов о реалиях занятости их возрастных коллег. Метод графического моделирования позволил

формулировать выводы на основании визуализации результатов проведенного анкетирования. **Результаты.** В статье представлены структурированные на разделы положения, обосновывающие возможность ревитализации рынка труда через принятие во внимание трех групп факторов, учет которых работодателями, системой здравоохранения и непосредственно сотрудниками предполагает определение порога преждевременного старения организма работников и принятие мер к продлению их профессионального долголетия. Изложенная идея продвигает выводы ученых о возможности не только результативной, но и успешной работы персонала, представляющего явление, обозначенное в мировой научной практике как «серебряное цунами». Включение в кадровую политику и организационную культуру хозяйствующих субъектов положений об удержании и сохранении возрастных специалистов позволит работодателю осуществить наджинг персонала с целью исключения эйджизма, формирования инклюзивной среды и кадровой экосистемы.

Выводы. Трансформация рынка труда с увеличением в структуре занятых работников старших возрастов формирует ситуацию, подлежащую междисциплинарному исследованию. В нашем случае это организационное поведение, управление персоналом, экономика труда, биология и медицина. Используемые в статье методы проведения анализа позволяют, во-первых, получить представление о расширении кадрового разнообразия за счет возрастных сотрудников и необходимости разрабатывать инклюзивную политику с учетом этих контингентов. Во-вторых, аргументировать возможность сохранения остаточной трудоспособности работников старших возрастов через исследование трех групп факторов, влияющих на продление профессионального долголетия (в группе факторов – болезни, работа, образ жизни). В-третьих, представлять работоспособность как категорию, которая напрямую зависит от функционального возраста работника, определяемого состоянием его здоровья. При своевременном установлении порога постарения (периода расхождения календарного и функционального возрастов) можно определить сигналы о нарушениях в организме и старте его угасания. В-четвертых, признать дискуссионной версию эйджизма, стигматизирующую работников старших возрастов как нетрудоспособных, и формировать условия труда, позволяющие поддерживать сердечно-сосудистую и костно-мышечную систему занятых. В-пятых, определить причины дисбаланса работы и частной жизни работника, причины формирования «образа врага» относительно профессии и рабочего места, а также разрабатывать рекомендации по стилю поведения на работе, в семье и социуме.

Ключевые слова: возрождение рынка труда, занятость возрастных работников, факторы профессионального долголетия, здоровье, работа, образ жизни.

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Дуракова Ирина Борисовна, д-р экон. наук, профессор, Воронежский государственный университет, Воронеж, Российская Федерация

E-mail: durakova@econ.vsu.ru
ORCID: 0000-0001-9529-1960

Григоров Иван Васильевич, аспирант, Воронежский государственный университет, Воронеж, Российская Федерация

E-mail: grigorov_ivan@mail.ru
ORCID: 0000-0002-6634-598X

Митрофанова Елена Александровна, д-р экон. наук, профессор кафедры управления персоналом, Государственный университет управления, Москва, Российская Федерация

E-mail: elmitr@mail.ru
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4508-4458

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