ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS INFLUENCING CANADIAN EMPLOYERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD OLDER WORKERS

by

Ellie Diane Berger

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Graduate Department of Community Health
University of Toronto

ABSTRACT

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The objectives of this thesis are to ascertain Canadian employers' current attitudes toward older workers and to determine which factors influence their attitudes toward them. These objectives are tested using data collected from 559 Canadian employers who responded to the *Options 45+* Employer Survey. Six independent variables, found to be relevant in the literature, and explored here, include both organizational characteristics (industrial sector, company size, and proportion of older workers in the organization) and employers' personal characteristics (age, sex, and education). Frequency distributions indicate that employers were predominantly positive in their attitudes toward older workers. A principal components factor analysis using unweighted data yielded three attitudinal dimensions: 'age-related decline'; 'experiential attributes'; and 'reliable and productive'. Using one-way ANOVAs and t-tests, indicators of employers' attitudes on one or more dimension(s) include the following: company size, employers' age, and employers' sex.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont.)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Cont.)

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES (Cont.)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aging of the Canadian population will be associated with an increasing proportion of older individuals in the workforce in the near future (Marshall, 1995). Specifically, there will be a large increase in the number of individuals between the ages of 45 and 64 within the next 15 years. In 1990, individuals in this age group represented 20 percent of the population, and this is expected to increase to 28 percent by the year 2015 (David, 1993). Furthermore, both source population growth (age 15 years and over) and the increase in labour force participation rates are presently slowing down (McDonald & Chen, 1994). Quadagno and Hardy (1996) have also recognized that in the United States there has been a trend toward early retirement and intermittent labour force participation, including more part-time work. They also noted a decline in labour force participation by men aged 55 and over that has been occurring since the 1980s. Similar trends have been noted in Canadian literature (Schellenberg, 1995). In addition, due to the expected decline of younger entrants into the labour force, employers may soon experience growing pressure both within the organization and from government and society to retain and retrain their older workers (Foot & Gibson, 1994). Although it has been noted that current high unemployment rates may eventually challenge this assertion, the retention of more experienced and knowledgeable employees should still be the foremost concern of employers.

It has also been demonstrated in the literature that ageism represents a structural

barrier to productive aging – the increased involvement of older individuals in both paid employment and community service (Walker & Taylor, 1993). It was recognized by these authors that "prospects for productive aging in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are constrained severely by age discriminatory practices in different sections of the labor market and sectors of employment. In other words, there is a direct conflict between ageism and productive ageing: the former must be overcome if the latter is to become a reality" (Walker & Taylor, 1993, 77). Therefore, if the goal is to retain older employees in the workforce for as long as possible, an examination of employers' attitudes must take place.

"To combat age-related issues in employment, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of employers' perceptions" (Gibson, Zerbe, & Franken, 1993, 272). Policies, programs, and practices are often implemented based on the ideologies and values held by employers (Marshall, 1995). Thus, it is often employers' beliefs and attitudes that limit older workers' employment (Gibson, Zerbe, & Franken, 1992). It is critical that employers, governments, and researchers act responsibly and effectively to design and implement policies, programs, and practices to respond to the needs of the aging workforce.

Literature pertaining to employers' attitudes toward older workers is inconsistent. While some studies have concluded that employers have negative attitudes toward older workers (Rosen & Jerdee, 1995; Gibson, Zerbe, & Franken, 1992), others report increasingly positive attitudes (Marshall, 1996; AARP, 1989; Taylor & Walker, 1995). Furthermore, many studies indicate that while older workers may be viewed positively in

certain areas (e.g. knowledge, mentoring), they are perceived negatively in other areas (e.g. adaptability to new technology, higher costs).

The purpose of this research is not only to describe employers' attitudes regarding older workers, but also to explain which organizational and/or employers' personal characteristics influence attitudes toward older workers. Therefore, this study has two central research objectives:

Objective 1: To ascertain Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers.

Objective 2: To determine which factors influence Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers.

These objectives will be addressed by analyzing data derived from the *Options 45+* Employer Survey. The first research objective was developed to identify the direction (positive or negative) of employers' attitudes toward older workers. Specific hypotheses pertaining to each of the research objectives will be asserted at the conclusion of Chapter II, after the literature review. The second research objective involves an investigation into how employers' attitudes are influenced by characteristics of the organizations (industrial sector, company size, and proportion of older workers in the organization) and the employers (age, sex, and education) participating in the survey. As there is currently limited Canadian research on this issue, this study will fill a large void in the existing body of literature.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter presents an introduction to the current study and the two central research objectives. The second chapter contains a summary and analysis of the literature regarding both negative and positive attitudes held by employers. Next, a description of the possible determinants of

employers' attitudes toward older workers is presented. This includes a discussion of the variables that I have explored in this study. Specifically, I examine how industrial sector, company size, proportion of older workers in the organization, and employers' age, sex, and education influence employers' attitudes. A conceptual model, which I created based on these potential relationships, is then presented.

In Chapter III, the methods used to address the research objectives of this study will be discussed. In Chapter IV, descriptive results are presented for the organizational characteristics and the sociodemographic characteristics of the employers who responded to the survey. Secondly, Chapter IV presents the results of the analyses concerning the first and second research objectives. Conclusions, limitations of the present study, and future directions for research will then be addressed in Chapter V. Implications for policies and practices are also examined in order to reveal how these results will be used to improve current work environments. A review of the literature pertaining to employers' attitudes and older workers is presented next.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, the current literature on the nature of employers' attitudes toward older workers is reviewed. The first section describes various dimensions of negative attitudes that have been documented in research. This section is followed by one which depicts positive dimensions of employers' attitudes cited in the literature. Indicators of employers' attitudes that are investigated in this study are then examined in the literature. Research pertaining to the following variables is reviewed: industrial sector, company size, proportion of older workers in organization, and age, sex, and education of employer. Limitations of existing studies are then presented, which is followed by a summary of the literature and a discussion on how this study is designed to address the gaps identified in current research. A conceptual model is then presented which suggests potential relationships among the dependent and independent variables identified in the literature review.

A. Negative Attitudes Toward Older Workers

It is fascinating to trace the evolution of attitudes toward older workers over time. When baby boomers were first entering the labour force, they were viewed as lacking values and ethics, while older workers at the time were believed to be mature, stable, and loyal (Kanter, 1994 cited in Marshall, 1995). Some research indicates that as the baby

boomers are approaching the older worker status, employers' attitudes are becoming more negative. These attitudes can emerge as a result of programs, practices, and policies which employers are increasingly required to implement. For example, employers are experiencing "higher compensation costs as more people reach the upper levels of pay scales; rising health care and pension costs; seniority and tenure systems that make it hard to replace people; and uncertain returns from 'experience' in light of pressures for innovation and change" (Kanter, 1994, 7-8 cited in Marshall, 1995, 62).

A similar finding was reported in a large study conducted by The Centre for Studies of Aging (now called the Institute for Human Development, Life Course, and Aging). The Centre was involved in seven case studies concerning Issues of an Aging Workforce (IAW). Studies were conducted in the Montreal garment industry, New York garment industry, Bell Canada, Prudential Life Insurance Company of America, Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada, Slater Steels, and NOVA Corporation. The last four of these case studies mentioned are especially relevant to this thesis (See Table 1). An examination of these four reports indicates a fiscal concern by managers about escalating health care benefits that may result from the aging of the workforce (Marshall, 1996). This concern was identified by 84% of managers at Sun Life, 71% at Prudential, 77% at NOVA, and 57% at Slater Steels. It is interesting to note that managers from Slater Steels felt the least strongly about the increasing costs of older workers, yet had the largest proportion of older workers of the organizations surveyed. Perhaps the realities with respect to health care costs that coincide with an aging workforce are not as

Table 1 Summary of Positive and Negative Attitudes of Employers' Toward Older Workers Reported in the Literature

AUTHOR	YEAR	SAMPLE SIZE	METHOD	INDUSTRY SAMPLED	COUNTRY	KEY FINDINGS
AARP	1989	400	surveys	cross-section of four major industrial sectors	United States	Positive attitudes remain high aside from adaptability to new technology and cost issue
AARP Rosen & Jerdee	1995	887	employee vignettes	cross-section of subscribers to *Harvard Business Review*	United States	Negative Attitudes - older women stigmatized most - no difference with respect to technology
Centre for Studies of Aging - Prudential	1995a	246	case study, manager surveys	insurance company	Company based in United States – Canadian Study	Generally positive attitudes
Centre for Studies of Aging - Sun Life	1995b	37	case study, manager surveys	insurance company	Canada	Generally positive attitudes
Centre for Studies of Aging - Slater Steels	1996b	14	case study, manager surveys	specialty steel company	Canada	Generally positive attitudes

AUTHOR	YEAR	SAMPLE SIZE	METHOD	INDUSTRY SAMPLED	COUNTRY	KEY FINDINGS
Centre for Studies of Aging - NOVA	1996c	165	case study, manager surveys	natural gas services and petrochemical company	Canada	Generally positive attitudes (most positive of all IAW case studies)
Gibson, Zerbe & Franken	1992	651	survey, case studies, archival research	cross-section	Canada	Negative Attitudes - technical obsolescence - older workers less able to adapt and retrain
Gibson, Zerbe & Franken	1993	811	survey	cross-section including white collar, blue collar, and sales & service sector	Canada	Positive attitudes - age-specific attributes assigned to both older and younger workers - age of employer interviewed significant - industrial sector important
Taylor & Walker	1994	304	survey	cross-section of most major industrial sectors	UK	Evidence of attitudes becoming more positive - still ambivalence over key characteristics
Taylor & Walker	1995	5	case studies	cross-section	UK	Positive attitudes in case studies described for analysis

detrimental to companies as may be perceived by many employers.

Stereotypes are "mental pictures of people based on their membership in a group" (AARP, 1994, 8). Employers' first impressions of older workers can often be based on unwarranted negative stereotypes. Negative views and stereotypes concerning older workers often stem from a widespread belief in age-related diminished abilities or changes in health (NACA, 1991; Centre for Studies of Aging, 1996a). For example, older workers' perceived poor health has been linked to higher rates of absenteeism, loss of work-related stamina, higher medical costs, higher risk of work-related accidents, lower productivity, and inability to learn new skills (Peterson & Coberly, 1988 cited in Centre for Studies of Aging, 1996a). These negative stereotypes will be examined in greater detail in this section.

One recent study conducted in Canada indicated that employers' attitudes reflect stereotypical and inaccurate perceptions of older workers' capabilities (Gibson, Zerbe, & Franken, 1992) (See Table 1). This study concluded that employers perceived older workers to be less able to perform in the current labour market, more expensive to employ, more difficult to integrate into the corporate culture, and less competent in searching for jobs. The IAW study also reported on the importance of several factors to managers in encouraging the recruitment and employment of older workers (Marshall, 1996). The overall ranking of the characteristics for the four case studies revealed that the most important factor in not recruiting older workers was lack of computer literacy, followed by lack of other appropriate skills, lack of appropriate qualifications, concerns about health of employees, and pay-back period on training. Also, in general, older

employees were perceived by managers to have problems adapting to different work settings.

It has also been reported in the literature that older workers are more likely to be resistant to change, in poorer health, less creative, less interested in technological change, and less trainable (Guillemard & Walker, 1994). In addition, older workers are seen as being more prone to accidents, having lower physical capacities, and staying with the company for a shorter period of time, as compared to younger workers. However, many of these stereotypes have been challenged in the literature (Davies & Sparrow, 1985; Rolander, 1988; Ramirez, 1989) including the belief that older workers are not as capable of learning as younger workers (Taylor, 1989). In fact, research indicates that learning ability, intelligence, memory, and motivation do not decline with advancing age (Canadian Network for Experienced Workers, 1996). Furthermore, although older workers' lack of formal education has helped to place them at a disadvantage in the past, this barrier will soon be minimized as the higher-educated baby boom generation become older workers (Devereaux, 1995). Also, with respect to productivity, McEvoy and Cascio (1989) found no relationship between job productivity and worker's age in a review of 100 studies. Another study found stable productivity levels or even heightened productivity with increasing age (Canadian Network for Experienced Workers, 1996).

A study by Rosen and Jerdee (1995) of 887 employers using employee vignettes, was done in the United States to determine the extent to which age stereotypes influence employers' decisions in the workplace (See Table 1). This study suggested that older workers were perceived as less flexible and more resistant to change than were younger

employees. Furthermore, in response to the hypothetical vignettes, employers indicated that they would be more likely to encourage older workers to accept a buy out from the company if downsizing were necessary, and were less inclined to assign older workers to entertain clients or engage in work-related travel. Employers also suggested that they would be less likely to send older workers to retraining seminars, even if there were problems with their performance. Rosen and Jerdee (1995) concluded that employers' response to the hypothetical employee vignettes reflected subconscious age stereotypes. This suggests an ideology held by employers that may be difficult to change. This study did note that positive attitudes were generally displayed when respondents were questioned about particular policies for older workers, indicating the absence of conscious discrimination. However, even subconscious ideologies can guide employers' behaviours, and consequently harm older workers (Marshall, 1995).

Another perception of employers cited in the literature concerns the notion that older workers are absent from work to a larger degree than are younger workers (Charness, 1995). However, research has demonstrated that unavoidable absenteeism due to health-related reasons is similar for both old and young workers, yet when an absence from work is avoidable or voluntary, older workers are actually absent less frequently (Davies & Sparrow, 1985 cited in Charness, 1995). Furthermore, Charness (1995) indicated that because older workers have a much lower job turnover rate than younger workers, retraining older workers should actually help a company more than the training of younger workers would.

Stereotypes about aging and older workers often place older employees at a

disadvantage, as many people generalize negative traits and qualities that they believe older people possess (Taylor, 1989). Furthermore, there is the danger of a self-fulfilling prophecy: "When managers assume that older workers' performance will decline, they may withhold promotions, limit training investments and even avoid providing candid performance feedback. To the extent that high-performing senior employees recognize that their good work is no longer linked to organizational rewards, they may adopt a 'why try?' attitude" (AARP, 1994, 10). It is also plausible that employers' (and other workers') own fear of aging fosters prejudice toward older workers. On the other hand, attitudes could become more positive as employers age. It is anticipated that this is the case. Thus, the possibility of an aging effect presents itself. The next section will discuss the existence of positive perceptions of older workers.

B. Positive Attitudes Toward Older Workers

Many recent studies reflecting on employers' attitudes toward older workers show attitudes to be positive. Rosen and Jerdee (1995) found that "age made virtually no difference in the case designed to examine what is often believed to be one of the most pervasive stereotypes about older workers – inability to learn new technology" (9-10). In the IAW summary report it was noted that employers' attitudes toward older workers are generally positive, contradicting much of the earlier literature reviewed in the IAW project (Marshall, 1996). The IAW research noted a similar finding to Rosen and Jerdee (1995) with respect to technological and organizational change, with NOVA's attitudinal results being the most positive overall. While Slater Steels had the highest percentage of

managers believing in older workers' adaptability to organizational change of the four case studies (77%), they also had relatively negative beliefs concerning older workers' aversion to receive training, adaptation to new technology, and ability to be trained (57%) (Marshall, 1996). The managers surveyed in the four case studies strongly believe that older workers are productive employees (91-100% agreement) and can keep up with the pace of work (86-92% agreement). However, negative attitudes are still held in some respects. These negative attitudes concern older workers' perceived inability to do heavy physical work (29-46% agreement) and belief that they have a larger number of work-related accidents (61-86% agreement), as compared to younger workers.

A comparative study between France and the UK reported that most employers surveyed revealed positive attitudes toward older workers (Guillemard & Walker, 1994). The only negative attitudes reported in this study included views toward new technology and increased conservatism of older employees. A similar finding was noted by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) in 1989 (See Table 1).

Taylor and Walker (1994) conducted a survey of 304 employers in the UK and noted a "recent turnaround in official and some employer attitudes towards this [older worker] group" (569) (See Table 1). These researchers also describe a plan introduced by the government (*Getting On*) to encourage employers to hold more positive attitudes toward older workers. Unfortunately, although the attitudes reported were generally positive, Taylor and Walker (1994) noted that this was not being reflected in practice. Retaining older workers, employing a larger number of older workers, or designing more flexible work arrangements to meet the disparate needs of an aging workforce were not a

priority for these employers.

Another study also recognized that age discrimination in employment ultimately affects the recruitment of older workers. The International Foundation for Employee Benefit Plans discovered that while 86% of Fortune 2000 companies indicated they "valued" older workers, only 23% of these companies actually had corporate policies that promoted the hiring of older workers (Capowski, 1994 cited in Hansson, DeKoekkoek, Neece, & Patterson, 1997). Furthermore, the organizations that did have these policies had few programs and practices to facilitate their achievement. However, a more recent investigation (Taylor & Walker, 1995) involving five case studies, recognized that some employers are altering their policies, programs, and practices to encourage the hiring of older workers (See Table 1). It was concluded that "changing the attitudes of managers and workers and clearly communicating the need for change are key conditions for the successful introduction of initiatives targeting the older worker" (Taylor & Walker, 1995, 145).

Older workers have also been cited as superior to younger ones with respect to skill, experience and work ethic (AARP, 1995). A study that included 811 employers from Alberta also found that older workers were viewed as having more individual initiative, stability, and experience than younger employees (Gibson, Zerbe, & Franken, 1993) (See Table 1). These researchers also recognized that previous studies had found that older workers were perceived as more dependable, honest, and less likely to quit or miss work for personal reasons (Rosen & Jerdee, 1976; Singer, 1986 both cited in Gibson, Zerbe & Franken, 1993). However, this study also noted that in the United

States, and many other modernized societies, older individuals are generally met with negative attitudes, and are often perceived as less capable in relation to creativity, productivity, development, and motivation.

Bird and Fisher (1986) conducted a study to compare the prevalent attitudes of employers with those surveyed 30 years earlier, and found no overall improvement in attitudes (cited in NACA, 1991). It is anticipated that progress has finally occurred since this study was performed. Thus, the existence of a period effect presents itself, where I hypothesize that attitudes have improved in more recent investigations into employers' attitudes. Thus, the findings remain complex and often contradictory.

C. Summary and Issues for Further Analysis

How are older workers perceived in Canadian work environments today? It is apparent from the literature that contradictory findings exist pertaining to employers' attitudes toward older workers. Many studies indicate that attitudes are generally becoming more positive. However, it is clear that even studies that contain reports of mostly positive employer attitudes still have negative employer attitudes toward older workers on specific dimensions. There continues to be evidence of employers with prejudicial recruitment and employment policies, programs, and practices with respect to older workers. By looking at this ambiguity in findings as a challenge that needs to be disentangled, particular explanations can be developed. I have focused my investigation on six potential indicators of employers' attitudes toward older workers, which I believe, based on the literature, will provide the most insight into the contradictory findings on

employers' attitudes that were reported in the literature. The following six indicators are addressed: industrial sector, company size, proportion of older workers in organization, and age, sex, and education of the employer surveyed. There is a lack of age-specific literature pertaining to the latter two variables. Thus, the variables I am examining are either informed by the literature or intended to fill the gaps in previous research.

D. Analysis of the Variables to be Investigated in This Study

i. Industrial Sector

The IAW research noted a difference in attitudes toward older workers depending on the industrial sector investigated (Marshall, 1996). This was especially true with respect to technology: "reservations about the ability of older workers to adapt to new technology were greater in the garment industry than in other white collar and industrial sectors" (*v*). Thus, although the general finding was that employers believed that older workers could adapt successfully to new technology, when examining variations between industries (e.g. construction and service sectors) the image became more complex.

Another finding was noted in the IAW project (Marshall, 1996). In an industry where older workers engaged in heavy physical labour (Slater Steels) only 29% of managers agreed that older workers could not do heavy physical work, whereas at Sun Life, where older workers are not exposed to physically demanding tasks, 46% had negative attitudes. A similar finding was noted with respect to accident rates for older workers. At Sun Life and Prudential, companies with lower physical risk of accidents, only 14% felt older workers had fewer accidents. However, at NOVA and Slater Steels,

the rates were higher (31% and 39% respectively). These findings could suggest that when employers or managers have first-hand experience with older workers in specific areas, such as heavy physical labour, they are more inclined to view older employees positively. Furthermore, these findings also contradict a widespread belief in the literature that employers in industries with physically demanding jobs view older workers more negatively.

In a comparison study of French and British organizations, Guillemard and Walker (1994) recognized that although differences among industries were not extensive, production and construction industries were more likely to recognize problems with diminishing productivity and enthusiasm for new technology among older workers. In contrast, service sector organizations viewed the necessity to improve working conditions for older employees as more problematic.

The literature also indicates that variations in attitudes are found among blue-collar, white-collar, and sales and service employers (Gibson, Zerbe, & Franken, 1993). In this study of 811 employers in Alberta, it was revealed that white-collar employers were more concerned with older workers' potential for development; thus, more negative attitudes were revealed for older workers in this industrial sector. The researchers also suggested that "the negative impact of an age-related bias should be limited to occupations requiring age-stereotypical attributes for successful job performance" (Gibson, Zerbe, & Franken, 1993, 278-279). This literature review has revealed that this is not always the case.

Taylor and Walker (1994) conducted a study of 304 organizations in the UK and

discovered variations among industries as well. They noticed that in the service sector, employers were more likely to report that older workers were productive and creative, and less likely to report difficulty in training them, as compared to the production and construction sectors. Furthermore, the service sector was more likely to be recruiting older workers and providing job flexibility, whereas the production and construction sectors were more likely to be improving their training programs for existing employees. In addition, it was reported that the employers from the service sector were improving attitudes toward older workers more than those in the manufacturing sector. Taylor and Walker (1994) suggested that older workers who are searching for high skill or technologically-driven jobs would face the most discrimination from employers. It follows that these attitudes held by employers will have less significance to older workers applying for jobs with low skill and technology. These are not encouraging findings. Will older workers increasingly become segregated into low skill/technology jobs?

It has been acknowledged in the literature that older workers are segregated into certain industrial sectors. According to Betcherman and Leckie (1995), the association between jobs requiring intense physical labour and young workers is not as prevalent in the 1990s as it was earlier in history. It was noted that due to the increasing significance of technology, physical strength and stamina are not as vital to many occupations as they once were. Furthermore, blue-collar occupations as well as jobs in the goods sector are classified as the "old economy", and thus are diminishing in demand and opportunities for new, younger workers. Consequently, due to relatively slow growth, these workforces are aging and creating a more pronounced age composition than would be

expected under normal growth conditions. In contrast, occupations that are rapidly expanding will tend to have a larger proportion of younger workers. This research suggests a relationship between industry and proportion of older workers that could prove very interesting in future research.

Due to trends within various industries or within the economy in general, older workers have either benefited or suffered in their occupations. Tomasko (1987) noted a decline in the manufacturing industry since 1970 which largely affected the job status of older workers (cited in Quadagno & Hardy, 1996). Major downsizing in this industry occurred as a result of plant closings and layoffs. Consequently, employees aged 55 and over in the goods-producing industries in the United States declined from 36% to 30% (Doeringer, 1991; Sum & Fogg, 1990 both cited in Quadagno & Hardy, 1996).

Industrial sectors appear to differentially recruit employees based on "extra-functional" criteria, such as physical appearance. It has been documented in the literature that physical appearance is an increasingly important characteristic in today's labour market (Betcherman & Leckie, 1995). Qualities such as attractiveness and youthfulness, which often go hand in hand, will play an even larger role as the economy continues to shift to service-sector employment, such as the hospitality industry. However, perhaps the importance of appearance will not pose as large a challenge for older workers as anticipated. Who defines what is attractive? Society's norms and values will certainly be transformed, at least to some degree, when the majority of baby boomers become older workers themselves. It is very unlikely that this powerful segment of society will accept themselves as unattractive without a fight.

Based on the literature, it is hypothesized that in my current study, employers in industries involving a high degree of technology and physical labour (e.g. production and construction sectors) will be less positive in their attitudinal judgements concerning older workers, as compared to other industrial sectors. Although the emphasis on physical labour appears to be declining, knowledge of the current attitudes of employers will be necessary to properly assess this finding.

ii. Company Size

An American study of 400 employers recognized that the size of the company investigated does play a role in employers' attitudes (AARP, 1989). Specifically, employers in larger companies display the least positive attitudes toward older workers. Perhaps in smaller companies, where employers have more first-hand experience with older workers, they may be more likely to recognize older employees' capabilities. The literature indicates that the proportion of older workers in a given company has been tied to the size of the company (Doeringer & Terkla, 1988). It was found that while small and medium organizations provided flexibility to their employees with respect to employment and retirement practices, large organizations had a more bureaucratic structure which more often encouraged early retirement and failed to retain or rehire older workers. Thus, older workers were disproportionately located in smaller organizations. This study, conducted in Massachusetts, concluded that non-bureaucratic, smaller firms offer the best job opportunities for older workers.

It has been recognized in the literature that small companies likely have workers

with lower levels of education and skill, lower rates of pay and unionization, a greater degree of part-time work, multi-function job classifications, and limited benefits (Armstrong, 1991 cited in Eakin, 1997). Furthermore, "even though small businesses are providing jobs for growing segments of the labor force, most small businesses are likely to offer fewer and less comprehensive fringe benefits than larger businesses. The gap between small and large firm coverage has not narrowed . . ." (Small Business Administration, 1985 cited in Brown, Hamilton, & Medoff, 1990, 43). This study indicated that employees in larger organizations (500 or more employees) receive higher wages and better employee benefits than workers in smaller organizations (fewer than 500 employees) receive. Thus, older workers in smaller organizations may not receive certain benefits (e.g. sick leaves), compared to their peers employed by larger firms. Data showed that only 36% of small firms provide paid sick leave benefits, in contrast to 91% of large firms surveyed, or have health insurance plans (55% coverage in small firms versus 100% coverage in the large firms surveyed) (Brown, Hamilton, & Medoff, 1990). However, as noted previously in this section, other research has demonstrated that smaller firms offer better job opportunities to older workers, and thus they are disproportionately located in these firms (Doeringer & Terkla, 1988).

As the workforce ages, health concerns will become increasingly important, and employment in smaller organizations (with fewer employment benefits packages offered) may become less attractive to older workers. However, it is also vital to remember that compensation is only one of several measures of a job's desirability. There are other variables, such as employer-employee camaraderie (which may be more easily

engendered in smaller workplaces), that likely influence job desirability. Therefore, the relationship between company size and employers' attitudes toward older workers is not straightforward. Further investigation into this variable is warranted. Based on the literature reviewed in this section, it is hypothesized that employers from small companies will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than will those from larger companies.

iii. Proportion of Older Workers in Organization

"Employers from firms comprising of large numbers of older employees tended to have more favourable attitudes towards older workers" (Slater & Kingsley, 1976 cited in Guillemard & Walker, 1994, 5). On the one hand, this is an encouraging finding as a large number of older workers located in a given work environment may be perceived positively by their employers. On the other hand, older workers who are dispersed throughout the labour force may not be perceived as favourably. Is age-segregation in organizations, and consequently in industries, the future outcome? A vicious circle could be the end result, as "a major consequence of segregation in terms of age is the continuation and strengthening of negative stereotypes of older workers" (Warr & Pennington, 1994, 342). This potential danger must be examined in greater detail to understand the interaction between the proportion of older workers in any given organization and the industry studied.

In an early study, Kaufman and Spilerman (1982) conducted an analysis of the

American labour force and revealed that a U-shaped age distribution existed in the secondary labour market, indicating a lack of prime-aged individuals and an over-representation of both young and old workers. These latter two groups are either too young to commit themselves to a specific occupation, or are taking jobs in this sector after retiring from their lifetime careers. Using Canadian data, Chen (1987) did not find this pattern relevant for female workers in the secondary labour market. He recognized that the distribution of women in these occupations would be more widespread across all age groups, in comparison to male participation, as middle-aged homemakers may decide or be forced into this sector of the labour market as well. Therefore, these secondary occupations, such as food service workers or gas station attendants, contain an interesting combination of employees. In analyzing occupational-age structures, Chen (1987) also concluded that there was a greater proportion of young men and women in occupations that were organized around emerging technology.

In an examination of occupational-age patterns, Betcherman and Leckie (1995) describe five ideal age distribution types, following the categories proposed by Kaufman and Spilerman (1982) (See Table 2). Betcherman and Leckie (1995) use these age distribution types to describe patterns in various occupations and industries. In Table 2, I have summarized these occupational and industrial age distributions and types.

According to Betcherman and Leckie (1995), occupations located in the construction and wholesale sectors are generally the only jobs in the Type 1 pattern (uniform age distribution). Occupations where youth are over-represented (Type 2

Table 2 Occupation / Industry Age Distributions and Types

	OCCUPATION	INDUSTRY
Type 1 Uniform age distribution	occupations in the logging and construction sectors	logging, construction
Type 2 Youth over-represented	clerical occupations, some service occupations, material handling occupations, electronic and other communications operators	retail trade, food, and beverage services
Type 3 Prime-age groups over-represented	some managerial occupations, natural sciences, engineering, social science, and mathematics occupations, production occupations	mining, manufacturing, communications, utilities, finance, business services, government services, education, health and social services
Type 4 [illegible]	some managerial occupations, occupations in religion	agriculture, fishing, trapping, transportation, real estate
Type 5 Prime-age groups under-represented	occupations in arts and recreation, sales occupations, some service occupations	accommodation, amusement and recreation, personal and household services

pattern) are primarily low wage jobs and in the secondary labour market. Prime-age workers (Type 3 pattern) are over-represented in highly paid occupations, where job security and the working environment are generally good. These occupations with high job valuation include industries such as public administration, health, education, social services, financial services, many manufacturing jobs, and most managerial, professional, and production crafts, and trades occupations. Most significant to this study, older workers are over-represented (Type 4 pattern) in occupations found in the agriculture, fishing, trapping, logging, and traditional manufacturing industries (such as tobacco, leather, textiles, and clothing). It is clear that in these industries, older workers are over-represented, largely due to economic trends, which have led to decreased employment opportunities in occupations where growth has not occurred for several years. Finally, Betcherman and Leckie (1995) note that the Type 5 pattern (prime-age groups under-represented) is generally found in the secondary labour market, similar to the Type 2 pattern. In summarizing determinants of age distribution patterns, Betcherman and Leckie (1995) indicated that the value of a particular occupation largely determines the age of the individuals found working in it. Thus, youth are found to be concentrated in "bad-job" segments of the labour force, while prime-aged individuals dominate the "good-job" sectors. Thus, it becomes increasingly difficult to disentangle the relationship between the proportion of older or younger workers in specific organizations and the industry in which these organizations are located. In my current study, it is hypothesized that employers from organizations with larger proportions of older workers will have more positive attitudes toward older employees than will those from companies

with smaller proportions of older workers.

iv. Age of Employer

Gibson, Zerbe, and Franken (1993) conducted research on intergroup differentiation and recognized that a clear preference was continuously demonstrated for ingroup members. They discovered that older employers were more positive in their views toward older workers, and younger employers were more positive toward younger workers. Similarly, according to Social Identity Theory, individuals generally favour members of their own group in order to maintain a positive image of themselves in comparison to members outside of the group (Tajfel, 1982 cited in Gibson, Zerbe, & Franken, 1993). From this, it can be hypothesized that older employers will have more favourable attitudes toward older employees in their workplace, as compared to the attitudes of younger employers.

Additional research has supported this notion. It was indicated that "younger employers tended to have less favourable attitudes towards older employees than did older employers" (Slater & Kingsley, 1976 cited in Guillemard & Walker, 1994, 5). Furthermore, it was identified in the IAW study that older employers typically perceived older workers more positively than did younger employers (Marshall, 1996). This finding was also reported by Warr and Pennington (1993) in the UK (cited in Taylor & Walker, 1994).

Finkelstein, Burke and Raju (1995) conducted a meta-analysis of studies examining age discrimination in employment settings, both real and simulated, and also noted the presence of an "in-group bias". However, they noted that while younger

respondents felt more favourably toward younger workers, older respondents felt similar about both younger and older workers.

Rosen and Jerdee (1995) found contradictory evidence in this area. They discovered that "older managers were tougher, more punitive, and less supportive than their younger counterparts" (10) toward older workers. These authors suggested that "it should not automatically be assumed that older workers will fare better under older managers; training to accommodate a diverse workforce, among whom are older workers, should not overlook older managers" (Rosen & Jerdee, 1995, 10).

Marshall (1996) recognized that "as the workforce ages, [employers'] attitudes towards older workers may become even more positive" (*v*). It is possible that a "cultural shift" may occur in attitudes toward older workers in response to the transition to an aging society. This would have enormous implications for the future of older workers. Therefore, if older employers do in fact have more positive views than their younger counterparts, older workers would experience significant improvements in attitudes as employers themselves continue to age. While the majority of literature has indicated that older employers have more positive attitudes toward older workers, as compared to younger employers, this area requires further investigation in order to assess the nature and extent of these attitudes in the current work environment. This will be addressed in the current study.

In the next two sections of this chapter, issues are discussed where there is a lack of research regarding the variables in question. For example, although sex of the employer surveyed has not been investigated in terms of its relationship to attitudes about

older workers, examining this domain of the literature allows for inferences to be made and parallels drawn that may then become the focus of current research. Thus, although the following sections do not refer to age-specific literature, they were included to examine whether sex and education of a given employer can affect his or her openness to diversity.

v. Sex of Employer

It is apparent from the literature that the sex[1] of an employer can have an effect on his or her managerial style (Dobbins, 1986; Larwood & Lockheed, 1979; Reskin & Ross, 1992). However, the magnitude and type of effect existing has been disputed in the research. One study reported that while male leaders' style of authority is based on a norm of equity, female leaders respond to workers based on a combination of equity and equality (Dobbins, 1986). Using the example of poor behaviour by a worker, the norm of equity dictates that a manager will respond to his or her subordinate based on the cause of this poor behaviour. In contrast, the norm of equality is based more on equal treatment or overall fairness and "likableness". Dobbins' reported that male and female leaders were equally affected by the cause of poor performance (he anticipated that this norm would be more prevalent in male leaders). Furthermore, female leaders were more affected by the "likableness" of their subordinates than male leaders. Dobbins (1986) reported another interesting finding: "female leaders responded less harshly toward female poorly

[1] In my study, the term "sex" refers to biological characteristics, whereas the concept "gender" entails a socially-constructed category. Data limitations in the Employer Survey predisposed me to use "sex", not "gender" as the variable investigated in my study.

performing subordinates than toward male poorly performing subordinates, while male leaders responded equally toward male and female subordinates" (522). Intergroup differentiation behaviour or Social Identity Theory, discussed previously in this chapter, might provide a useful framework for understanding female leaders' responses to their female subordinates.

Dobbins (1986) suggested that specific training programs could be developed in organizations to alter the manner in which male and female leaders respond to their employees. However, if leadership styles are related to socialization, which Dobbins (1986) suggests, then it may be a challenge to change these leadership styles. Despite this challenge, changes can be resolved if the proper programs are created which meet the diverse needs of all employers.

Although Dobbins' (1986) study only examined the behaviour of leaders and their poorly performing employees (and not overall leadership styles), it was reported that female leaders respond to employees based on both the norm of equality and the norm of equity. This could suggest that there are a large number of female employers with positive attitudes toward older workers. Furthermore, female employers could develop close emotional bonds with their employees (related to "likableness"), which could heighten their perceptions of older workers. Due to the scope of this thesis, these specific theories will not be tested. However, based on this literature, it is hypothesized that female employers will have more positive attitudes toward older workers, as compared to male employers.

According to Larwood and Lockheed (1979), women are not given the same

opportunities and power in their managerial roles as men. "The 'managerial woman' is not typically legitimated by the organization or by her peers; her ideas are neither heard, accepted, nor enacted" (Larwood & Lockheed, 1979, 663). This study also suggested that in order for women to legitimate themselves, they should enter occupations that are the most receptive to women in higher management. Although this suggestion (made 20 years ago) may seem insulting to both men and women of the 90s who are constantly challenging sex-typed occupations, it does suggest that consideration should be given to the possible correlation of sex and industrial sector. Furthermore, although Larwood and Lockheed's (1979) study is not a recent investigation into managerial styles, it may still hold true for many older female managers who were confronted with substantial challenges throughout their careers. From this study, it could be hypothesized that the struggles that women were constantly confronted with, in order to gain increased respect, could have influenced them to become more empathetic to the needs of other disadvantaged groups, such as older workers.

In a more recent study of the significance of employers' sex, it was recognized that "women managers were concentrated near the bottom of chains of command; they tended to supervise workers of their own sex, consistent with conventions that women should not supervise men; they were substantially less likely than men to exercise decision-making authority; and their involvement in decision making was largely confined to offering input into decisions that men made" (Reskin & Ross, 1992, 359). Thus, it may be suggested that due to limited authority, female employers may have less hands-on experience with older workers (similar to the findings noted in relation to

employers in larger organizations), which may in turn influence their attitudes.

Reskin and Ross (1992) also suggest an interaction between sex of the employer and the industrial sector investigated. They indicate that "women were almost twice as likely as men to hold governmental jobs (23.5% vs. 12.3%) but only 60% as likely to be self-employed or work in family businesses (18.5% compared to 31.5%)" (Reskin & Ross, 1992, 350). Thus, these confounding variables could be investigated in greater detail in future analyses to uncover the reality that older workers are facing.

vi. Education of Employer

According to psychodynamic theory, in relation to education, individuals with higher levels of education tend to be more secure personally and thus are more able to tolerate diversity (Lipset, 1981 cited in Weil, 1985). Another theory proposed in the literature hypothesizes that although education is a measure of social status, the correlation simply illustrates the effect of class (Weil, 1985). However, using multivariate analysis, this last interpretation was not demonstrated to be as accurate as the first one. Education was still found to have a significant effect on tolerance for diversity, even after economic status was considered. Therefore, it seems plausible that the first hypothesis is relevant, and thus can be tested pertaining to attitudes concerning older workers.

A variable related to education of the employer surveyed, is the industry in which the employer (or worker) is located. Certain industrial sectors or occupational categories restrict their entry based on one's level of educational attainment. In addition, Betcherman and Leckie (1995) and Chen (1987) have noted that certain occupations,

such as law or medicine, require a greater number of years of education, and thus these occupations will naturally have a smaller proportion of younger workers (aged 15-21). Therefore, the high level of education in this group, combined with the finding that employers in organizations with larger proportions of older workers have more positive attitudes toward older employees (Slater & Kingsley, 1976), suggests that employers with these characteristics will be particularly hospitable to older workers. In addition, if employers themselves are more educated, they may also be older, and as discussed earlier in this chapter, older employers will likely have more positive attitudes toward older workers than would younger employers.

E. Summary and Limitations of Existing Studies

This chapter has identified a lack of consistency in the findings concerning employers' attitudes toward older workers. It was hypothesized that the disparity in reporting on employers' attitudes can be attributed to variations in industrial sector, company size, proportion of older workers in the organization, and age, sex, and education of the employer. Previous researchers have suggested reasons for the inconsistency in reporting attitudes, however they have not investigated all of these variables in their research. For example, there is a lack of research concerning employers' sex and education as indicators of attitudes. Therefore, research involving the influence of all of these variables on employers' attitudes toward older workers is warranted to overcome this inconsistency and fill this gap in the literature.

There is a lack of Canadian literature concerning employers' attitudes toward

older workers. While extensive research on age discrimination and employers' attitudes toward older workers has been performed in England (Taylor & Walker, 1993a; 1993b; 1994; 1995; 1997; Walker, 1997; Walker & Taylor, 1993), similar research has not been generated in a Canadian context. Furthermore, many studies on age discrimination have originated in the United States, where the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) is legislated. Thus, the relationship between Canadian older workers and their employers requires attention to develop meaningful, effective program and policy-related responses that meet the needs of the aging workforce. While Gibson, Zerbe, and Franken (1992; 1993) have engaged in Canadian research on employers' attitudes toward older workers, their studies contain results that are exclusively from employers in Alberta. Thus, a cross-national study on employers' attitudes, involving regional differentiation, differences in company sizes, and disparate industrial sectors has yet to be completed. The present study will make an important contribution to filling this large void in the literature.

This literature review has suggested reasons and evidence in linking each of the independent variables with the dependent variable. That is, industrial sector, company size, proportion of older workers in the organization, and employers' age, sex, and education can now be linked to employers' attitudes toward older workers. Some of these relationships have been identified and discussed more explicitly in the literature, while others, including employers' sex and education have been inferred from other research pertaining to organizational behaviour and workplace studies. Although previous research did not indicate that a direct link exists between these latter two

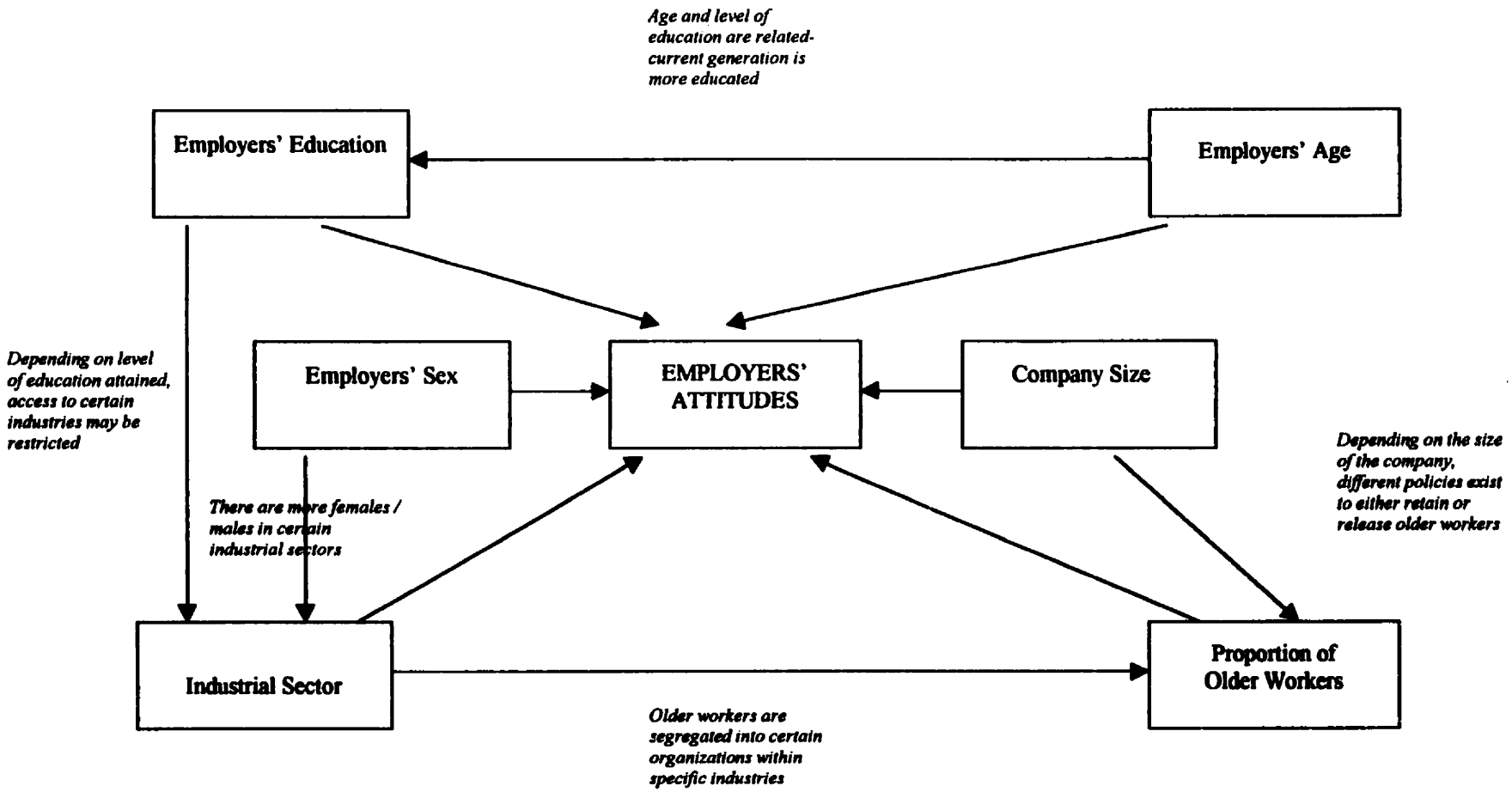
variables and employers' attitudes, I intend to investigate this possibility in my research. I have created a conceptual model, emanating from the literature review, which suggests the relationships among the dependent and independent variables (See Figure 1).

The relationships between the dependent variable (employers' attitudes toward older workers) and each of the independent variables explored in the literature, are demonstrated in the conceptual model with arrows from the independent variables to the dependent variable. The additional interactions are displayed with directional arrows among the independent variables. These relationships, which are briefly explored in this chapter, are suggested for future research. The relationships among the independent variables will now be reiterated.

An interaction is first asserted between industrial sector and the proportion of older workers in an organization. The literature indicates that certain industries, such as those with slow growth, will have more older workers than other industries (Betcherman & Leckie, 1995). Furthermore, industries that require extensive physical labour, such as construction, may have workers that tend to retire at earlier ages when they can no longer physically do their jobs, and thus possess fewer older workers (Betcherman & Leckie, 1995; Chen, 1987; Kaufman & Spilerman, 1982).

A second linkage suggested in the literature is between industrial sector and sex of the employer surveyed. Data show that women are often segregated into certain occupations within particular industries (Chen, 1987). Although this linkage may appear rather straightforward, it would be quite interesting to discover if they combine to influence employers' attitudes.

Figure 1 Conceptual Model of the Indicators of Employers' Attitudes Toward Older Workers



Third, the literature also has indicated that the size of the company could have an effect on the proportion of older workers in that organization. It was suggested that small organizations have a larger concentration of older workers than larger organizations (Doeringer & Terkla, 1988).

Next, it is asserted that the age of an employer can affect his or her level of education. The youngest segment of the workforce will not be as highly educated as other segments where more years of education are required to enter an occupation (Betcherman & Leckie, 1995). Furthermore, in the past older workers have not been as educated as their younger counterparts. This is expected to change, as approaching generations are becoming increasingly educated (Statistics Canada, 1998).

Finally, a relationship between employers' education and industrial sector has been suggested after analyzing the literature (Betcherman & Leckie, 1995; Chen, 1987). It is anticipated that, depending on the level of education an individual has acquired, he or she will have unequal access to industrial sectors. Thus, it appears that these confounding variables would assist in uncovering employers' attitudes toward older workers. Due to the scope of this thesis and limitations in the data set (which are described in the concluding chapter of this thesis), only the direct relationships among the dependent and independent variables are tested in this study. The hypotheses for my research study will now be examined.

F. Hypotheses

It is clear that the literature review only represents the beginning of an analysis into the complexity inherent in employers' attitudes toward older workers. Further research is warranted. Each of the factors analyzed in this chapter requires further investigation in order to determine the reality for older workers in the Canadian labour force today. My current research will investigate the relationship between each one of the independent variables and the dependent variable – employers' attitudes toward older workers. Thus, based on the literature reviewed in the previous section, one hypothesis can be tested in relation to the first research objective, and six hypotheses can be tested in relation to the second research objective. To reiterate, the first objective of this study is to ascertain Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers. The second research objective is to determine which factors influence Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers. Table 3 lists all of the research objectives and the hypotheses for the current study. The methods used to investigate the two research objectives and test the seven hypotheses will be explored in the next chapter.

Table 3 Hypotheses for Present Research Study

Research Objective 1 **To ascertain Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers.**	
Hypothesis 1a	Canadian employers in positions of responsibility to recruit and supervise others have positive attitudes toward older employees in the workplace.
Research Objective 2 **To determine which factors influence Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers.**	
Hypothesis 2a	Employers from less technological and physically demanding industrial sectors will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than those in technologically advanced and physically demanding companies.
Hypothesis 2b	Employers in small companies will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than will employers in larger companies.
Hypothesis 2c	Employers in organizations with a larger proportion of older workers will have more positive attitudes than will those with smaller proportions of older workers.
Hypothesis 2d	Older employers will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than will younger employers.
Hypothesis 2e	Female employers will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than will male employers.
Hypothesis 2f	Employers with higher educational attainment will have more positive attitudes than will those with lower educational attainment.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study involved secondary data analysis of an employer survey undertaken by The Institute for Human Development, Life Course, and Aging of the University of Toronto, in partnership with **One Voice**, the Canadian Seniors Network. Three surveys were created in relation to the *Options 45+* employment initiative for workers aged 45 and older, as a result of funding by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). The Employer Survey, conducted during the period between January and June of 1997, was designed to meet the following three objectives: (1) to identify employers' awareness of older worker issues; (2) to obtain information concerning their attitudes toward older workers; and (3) to identify workplace policies affecting older workers. The data obtained from the Employer Survey have been analyzed to address the objectives of this study.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methods used to meet the objectives of this study. The first section of this chapter describes the research design used in this study. A discussion of the benefits and limitations of using secondary data analysis is contained within this section. Following this section is a description of the Employer Survey and its implementation. Next, the measurement techniques that were used to test the dependent and independent variables are described. The dependent variables that will be investigated in this study are dimensions of employers' attitudes toward older workers. The independent variables explored include the following: industrial sector, company

size, the proportion of older workers in the organization, employers' age, employers' sex, and employers' education.

The final section in this chapter describes the three phases of data analysis that were used to meet the two research objectives and test the seven hypotheses of this research study. Recall the following research objectives and hypotheses:

***Objective 1*:** To ascertain Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers.

Hypothesis 1a: Canadian employers in positions of responsibility to recruit and supervise others have positive attitudes toward older employees in the workplace.

***Objective 2*:** To determine which factors influence Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers.

Hypothesis 2a: Employers from less technological and physically demanding industrial sectors will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than those in technologically advanced and physically demanding companies.

Hypothesis 2b: Employers in small companies will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than will employers in larger companies.

Hypothesis 2c: Employers in organizations with a larger proportion of older workers will have more positive attitudes than will those with smaller proportions of older workers.

Hypothesis 2d: Older employers will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than will younger employers.

Hypothesis 2e: Female employers will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than will male employers.

Hypothesis 2f: Employers with higher educational attainment will have more positive attitudes than will those with lower educational attainment.

In the first phase of analysis, frequency distributions were generated on the

independent variables in order to create a sociodemographic profile of the survey respondents. This phase was also designed to meet the first research objective. This phase involved the generation of descriptive frequencies on items pertaining to the dependent variables. In the second phase of analysis, an analytical objective was created to aid in testing the second research objective. Thus, it is explained how factor analyses were generated to identify key factors and thereby reduce the number of variables that are used to test the second research objective of this study. Factor analyses were performed after realizing several theoretical associations existed among several of the attitudinal items. The third phase of analysis involved one-way analysis of variance (ANOVAs) and t-tests to investigate the indicators of employers' attitudes toward older workers. A description of the research design used in this study will now be presented.

A. Research Design

Secondary analysis has numerous advantages, such as the ability to perform research on a larger scale than I would have been able to do on my own. Researchers with limited access to funding support for independent larger studies can contribute to the literature by conducting secondary data analysis of existing databases. Therefore, using a survey that has been previously funded is a large advantage. In addition, secondary analysis does not necessitate the same degree of consideration to intricate details of instrument construction (Norusis, 1990). For example, to construct a survey takes long periods of time. It is necessary to carefully select the wording and the scales used on a survey. Also, extensive pre-testing of the respondents is often involved to ensure the accuracy,

completeness, and appropriateness of the response items. Therefore, the utilization of secondary data analysis greatly reduced the time frame in which this study could be completed.

It is also important to recognize that there are limitations when performing secondary data analysis. First, the survey may not have been designed to specifically address the research objectives of a particular investigation. Thus, certain variables that may have been important to consider may not be available in the database or may not conform specifically to the needs of the study. In addition, in secondary analysis, problems may arise in relation to the wording or content of specific questions utilized. However, in my study, the inclusion of additional variables and possible alterations to the survey instrument were only identified after thorough investigation was done using my current research objectives. Thus, the Employer Survey was an excellent starting point in my research. Secondary data analysis enabled me to identify opportunities to modify the questionnaire for future research. This will be discussed in more detail in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Additional methodological concerns may arise in doing secondary data analysis, such as those in relation to the sample chosen. For example, another researcher may not agree on the criteria for sample selection used in the Employer Survey. These sampling criteria did meet my objectives; for example, the significance of both industrial sector and company size were central to my investigation. Therefore, I anticipated that using the Employer Survey would be the best way to meet the objectives of my current research. Any limitations of using secondary data analysis were insignificant in comparison to the

many advantages that using the Employer Survey represented to my research study.

B. Description and Implementation of the Employer Survey

The Employer Survey was mailed out to 1,980 Canadian organizations, randomly sampled in equal proportions from four regions (Ontario; Quebec; Western Provinces, including British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, and the Yukon Territories; and Atlantic Provinces, including Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island). Two company sizes (larger companies consisting of 20 or more employees and small companies with less than 20 employees) and five industrial sectors (Sales and Service, including Retail, Services, Wholesale and Finance/ Real Estate; Construction; Manufacturing; Transportation/ Communication/ Public Utilities; and Agriculture and Resources, including Mining) were sampled. Organizations were selected randomly from a sample of private sector Canadian companies, purchased from Dun & Bradstreet Canada. Government agencies were not included in this sample.

In order to increase the response rate, employers received a follow-up reminder letter, a reminder telephone call (ensuring surveys were delivered accurately and encouraging respondents' compliance), another reminder letter including a replacement questionnaire, and a final reminder letter. The method of constructing and implementing the questionnaire incorporated many of the approaches suggested in Dillman's Total Design Method (Dane, 1990; Dillman, 1983). A total of 559 questionnaires were returned to the Institute for Human Development, Life Course, and Aging by June of

1997, that were completed either by the vice-president of human resources, in the case of larger organizations, or the president or owner, in the case of small organizations. The Employer Survey was purposefully aimed at the individuals responsible for the hiring of employees.[2] A personalized cover letter was included in the mailing of the Employer Survey in order to increase the probability that the appropriate respondent was selected. Therefore, in this study, an employer is defined as the individual responsible for the recruitment and supervision of older workers, who completed the Employer Survey at the organization sampled. In congruence with the majority of literature on older workers, employees aged 45 and older are defined as older workers in this study. The achieved response rate for the Employer Survey was 38% with 504 unusable questionnaires.[3]

Based on the stratified random sampling method used in mailing the questionnaires for this study, a representative sample across regions and industrial sectors was also achieved. Although small and larger companies were also sampled proportionately, larger companies were over-represented in the achieved sample. In congruence with the sampling design, the data were weighted in specified analyses by geographical region, company size, and industry, in order to accurately represent the population of Canadian organizations.[4]

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[2] See Underhill, Marshall, & Deliencourt (1997) for a more detailed description of the methodology used in the Employer Survey. However, please note that my research includes 20 additional questionnaires that were received since the completion of the 1997 report. Thus, the response rate was increased from 37% in that report, to 38% in my study.

[3] A total of 504 organizations were eliminated from the original sample of 1,980 organizations, due to an out-of-date list provided by Dun & Bradstreet Canada.

[4] For a more precise description of the weighting procedure used in the Employer Survey please see Underhill, Marshall, & Deliencourt (1997). Also, consult Kervin (1992) for further discussion on weighting.

C. Measurement

Employers' attitudes were measured using response items from the *Options 45+* Employer Survey (See Appendix A). Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with 16 attitudinal statements using a 4 point Likert response scale (Dane, 1990). Participants circled one of the following four responses: 'Strongly Agree' (1); 'Moderately Agree' (2); 'Moderately Disagree' (3); or 'Strongly Disagree' (4). These statements were adapted from a scale used by Taylor and Walker (1994), and are based on stereotypes of older workers that have been documented in the literature pertaining to studies of attitudes toward older workers. The procedure used to construct the dimensions of the dependent variable is described in the section "Data Analysis" presented later in this chapter.

In order to measure the first two independent variables in this study, the industrial sector and company size designated in the sampling methodology were used. Thus, five industrial categories (Sales and Service, Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation/ Communication/ Public Utilities, and Agriculture and Resources) and two company sizes were analyzed. In order to be consistent with other research on company size reported in Chapter II, organizations with less than 20 employees will be referred to as 'small', and those with 20 or more employees will be referred to as 'larger' in this study (Brown, Hamilton, & Medoff, 1990; Doeringer & Terkla, 1988). The industrial sectors and company sizes used for classification in the distribution of the Employer Survey are utilized to define this variable.

Specific questions from the Employer Survey were utilized to measure the

remaining four independent variables in this study: proportion of older workers in the organization (Question 2), employers' age (Question 37), employers' sex (Question 36), and employers' education (Question 38) (See Appendix A). It should be noted that the variable representing employers' age was re-coded so that employers who were less than 45 years of age were grouped into one category (younger), and those who were 45 years of age or older were grouped into a second category (older). In this way, comparisons could be made between older and younger employers. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter II of this thesis, the variable "sex" represents a biological distinction, due to the one question available for analysis on this dimension in the Employer Survey.

Three variables (industrial sector, company size, and proportion of older workers in the organization) relate to organizational characteristics and will allow comparisons to be made across industries and between larger and small companies. Furthermore, comparisons will be made among organizations with varying proportions of older workers (less than 10%; between 10 and 25%; between 26 and 50%; and above 50%).

A profile of the employers was constructed using the following three variables: age, sex, and education. These variables were included in order to determine whether the results varied, depending on the specific individual requested to complete the Employer Survey.

D. Data Analysis

The information from the Employer Survey was previously entered into SPSS, a statistical data analysis package (Norusis, 1990). Three phases of analyses were

developed to meet the research objectives of this study. In the first phase of analysis, descriptive statistics were generated to determine the attitudes of employers (testing the first research objective) and determine the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents. The second phase of data analysis involved an analytical objective of this research, which was designed to determine the dimensions of employers' attitudes, in order to test the significance of these dimensions on potential indicators of attitudes. Therefore, the last phase in analysis was designed to test the second research objective of this study, and thus determine which factors influence employers' attitudes toward older workers.

In the first phase of analysis, descriptive statistics were generated. Frequency distributions were calculated for each of the items used to construct the dependent variable (16 attitudinal statements) in order to address the first research objective of describing Canadian employers' current attitudes toward older workers. Frequency distributions were also generated on additional variables in order to describe the sociodemographic profile of the organizations and employers surveyed.

"An attempt to understand a phenomenon...typically involves an investigation of a series of causally-related variables" (Goddard & Kirby, 1976, 3). Therefore, to better understand employers' attitudes toward older workers, I wanted to discover which of the 16 attitudinal statements clustered together around distinct conceptual constructs. Factor analyses were produced in order to address an analytical objective of this study (Kim & Mueller, 1978): to reduce the number of variables that indicate employers' attitudes toward older workers, to a smaller number of factors that can be used to address the

second research objective of this study.

To meet my analytical objective, the second phase of inquiry concerning data reduction involved a total of five factor analyses. With respect to sample size, the literature indicates that to conduct factor analysis, a sample size of 50 is very poor, 100 is poor, 200 is fair, 300 is good, 500 is very good, and 1000 is excellent (Comrey & Lee, 1992 cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Therefore, I determined that the current sample of 559 organizations was sufficient to conduct reliable factor analyses. Factor analyses were generated as follows: (1) all responses, unweighted; (2) all responses, weighted by all 3 classifications (industrial sector, company size, and geographical region); (3) all responses, weighted only by industrial sector; (4) all responses, weighted only by company size; and (5) all responses, weighted only by geographical region. Principal component factor analyses and varimax orthogonal rotations of the factors were performed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). This method of rotating the variables magnifies certain factor loadings (the correlation between the variable and the factor) and diminishes others to allow for easier comprehensibility of the new constructs (Reyment & Joreskog, 1993).

Variables were grouped into constructs based on factor loadings of .60 or greater (Ashbury, Cameron, Mercer, Fitch, & Nielson, 1998). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was done to compare the dimensions of the observed correlation coefficients to the partial correlation coefficients (Norusis, 1990). "Kaiser (1974) characterizes measures in the 0.90's as marvellous, in the 0.80's as meritorious, in the 0.70's as middling, in the 0.60's as mediocre, in the 0.50's as miserable, and below 0.50

as unacceptable" (Norusis, 1990, 317). This index was used to determine the measure of sampling adequacy in this study. Cronbach's alpha was used as the reliability coefficient to determine the internal consistency of the factors created (Norusis, 1990). This value ranges from 0 to 1, where the reliability of the factor increases as the value approaches 1 (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987). The variables were re-coded to achieve a consistent direction of responses in order to compute Cronbach's alpha. Variables that did not load on to specific factors, loaded highly on more than one factor, or were believed to be theoretically unrelated to the factors, were eliminated from the third phase of analysis. Indices were produced for each respective construct by summing the scores and dividing by the number of items, in order for employers to be allocated a score on each dimension of attitudes (Kim & Mueller, 1978).

The final phase in the data analysis was designed to test the second research objective of this study. Therefore, in this third phase of inquiry, bivariate analyses were generated to explore whether industrial sector, company size, proportion of older workers in the organization, and employers' age, sex, and education influence attitudes toward older employees. In order to meet this second research objective, the factors created in the second phase of analysis were used to test these six potential indicators. Bivariate analyses were generated using either one-way ANOVAs or t-tests (depending on the nature of the variable) in order to determine each of the indicators' significance to the dependent variable. T-tests were used in variables with two groups (i. e. company size, employers' age, and employers' sex) to test for differences (Jaeger, 1990). When comparisons were made using variables with more than two groups, one-way ANOVAs

were used to test their significance (i. e. industrial sector, proportion of older workers in the organization, and employers' education). As a result of a strong relationship between employers' sex and the three attitudinal dimensions created, a crosstabulation was generated on this variable to compare males and females on the 16 attitudinal statements.

It should be noted that some of the respondents had missing data on specific items (which were not currently accessible) thereby reducing the number of respondents in some of the response categories. Furthermore, the data from the Employer Survey were examined to determine the percent of respondents who did not answer all 16 of the attitudinal items in Question 31. Only 4% of employers (n = 22) did not provide answers to all of these responses. These data were examined in relation to the independent variables in this study, and it was resolved that the missing items did not contain a pattern of non-response. Therefore, it was determined that the missing responses did not undermine the validity of the data. Also, the statistical procedures that were used in this study excluded the missing data from the analyses. The results from this study will now be presented.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In Section A of this chapter, the results of the descriptive analyses are presented. These results include a summary of the sociodemographic characteristics of the organizations and employers surveyed. In Section B, the results of the first research objective (to ascertain Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers) are presented.

The first part of Section C utilizes factor analyses to meet an analytical objective of this study (to reduce the number of variables that indicate employers' attitudes toward older workers, to a smaller number of factors that can be used to address the second research objective of this study). An unweighted factor analysis is presented first, followed by four factor analyses using weighted data. A summary of the five factor analyses that were performed is then presented, which includes a discussion on the limitations of the factor analyses that involved weighted data. The final part of Section C presents the results of the one-way ANOVAs and t-tests that were generated using the factor structure created with the unweighted data in the earlier part of Section C. Results are presented for each of the six independent variables, which test the six hypotheses pertaining to the second research objective, proposed in Chapter II. Data are presented on the following six items: industrial sector, company size, proportion of older workers in the organization, age of employer, sex of employer, and education of employer. Results from a crosstabulation of employers' sex using the 16 attitudinal statements is then presented, due to a strong relationship between this variable and the factor structure created.

A. Descriptive Results: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Organizations and Employers Surveyed

Frequency distributions were generated on the organizational attributes (industrial sector, company size, proportion of older workers in the organization, and region) and the personal attributes (age, sex, and education) of the employers who responded to the survey on behalf of these organizations, using unweighted data (See Table 4).

The sampling procedure in the Employer Survey was deliberately designed to obtain equal samples from five industrial sectors, four geographical regions, and two company sizes. The organizations included in this study are representative of five industrial sectors (See Table 4). Twenty-one percent of organizations are from the Sales and Service sectors, 18% are from the Construction sector, 23% are from the Manufacturing sector, 21% are from the Transportation, Communication, and Public Utilities sectors, and 17% are from the Agriculture and Resource sectors. The companies surveyed were also representative of the four regions sampled across Canada. Twenty-seven percent of organizations were from the Western Provinces, 25% were from Ontario, 25% were from Quebec, and 24% were from the Atlantic Provinces. With respect to company size, larger organizations were over-represented in the achieved sample. Thirty-five percent of organizations were small (fewer than 20 employees) and 65% were larger (20 or more employees). The proportion of older workers in the company surveyed was also considered. Thirty-one percent of organizations had less than 10% older workers; 30% had between 10% and 25% older workers; 32% had

between 26% and 50% older workers; and 8% had above 50% older workers in their respective organizations.

Table 4 Sociodemographic Characteristics of Study Sample (Unweighted)

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (n)
Industrial Sector		Total n = 559 **
Sales & Service	21	116
Construction	18	103
Manufacturing	23	130
Transp./ Comm./ PU	21	115
Agriculture/ Resources	17	95
Region		Total n = 559
Western Provinces	27	148
Ontario	25	138
Quebec	25	139
Atlantic Provinces	24	134
Company Size		Total n = 559
Small (< 20 employees)	35	194
Larger (≥ 20 employees)	65	365
Proportion of Older Workers		Total n = 553
Less than 10%	31	169
Between 10% & 25%	30	164
Between 26% & 50%	32	175
Above 50%	8	45
Age of Employer		Total n = 540
Younger (< 45 yrs.)	47	255
Older (≥ 45 yrs.)	53	285
Sex of Employer		Total n = 546
Male	69	376
Female	31	170
Education of Employer		Total n = 543
Completed elementary or public school	6	32
Completed high school	20	108
Completed vocational/ technical college or special diploma	32	171
Completed undergraduate university degree	29	156
Completed post-graduate university degree(s)	14	76

* Proportions may not total 100% due to rounding.
** Total n varies due to missing cases.

According to Dun & Bradstreet's list of organizations, some of the organizational characteristics in the current study sample are not reflective of Canadian companies (See Table 5). For example, while my research had relatively equal proportions of companies from the five industrial classifications used, the majority of Canadian companies are located in the Sales and Service sector (68%) (Underhill, Marshall, & Deliencourt, 1997). With respect to geographical region, while the first three regions do not appear to differ significantly between the sample and the population of companies, the Atlantic Provinces are over-represented in this study (24% as compared to 7.8%). Furthermore, while 35% of the companies in this research study are small, according to Canadian data, the population of small Canadian companies is 89%. In addition, older workers (aged 45-64) account for 30% of the labour force (Statistics Canada, 1998).

Frequency distributions on the personal characteristics of the employers were also generated (See Table 4). Forty-seven percent of the respondents were younger than 45 years of age, while 53% were 45 years of age or older. Thus, relatively equal proportions of both older and younger employers' attitudes were captured in this survey. These proportions are not entirely reflective of Canadian organizations (Statistics Canada, 1998).

In relation to employers' sex, 69% of the employers were male, and only 31% of them were female (See Table 4). It may be assumed that these proportions are representative of the current proportions of males and females in 'employer' roles (owners or vice-presidents of organizations). As implied in Chapter II of this thesis, "managers' sex was strongly related to their level in the managerial hierarchy: The odds

Table 5 Distribution of Organizational Characteristics, According to Dun & Bradstreet Canada

ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTIC	PERCENT
Industrial Sector	
Sales and Service	Total Sales and Service = 68
Retail	30
Services	20
Wholesale	10
Finance / Real Estate	8
Construction	Total Construction = 13
Manufacturing	Total Manufacturing = 10
Transportation / Communication / Public Utilities	Total Transp./ Comm. / P.U. = 5
Agriculture and Resources	Total Agriculture and Resources = 3.5
Agriculture	2.5
Mining	1
Government Agencies (not included in this study)	0.5
Province / Region	
Ontario	Total Ontario = 32.7
Quebec	Total Quebec = 26.7
Western Provinces	Total Western = 32.8
British Columbia	14.2
Alberta	11.1
Manitoba	3.6
Saskatchewan	3.6
Northwest Territories	0.2
Yukon Territories	0.1
Atlantic Provinces	Total Atlantic = 7.8
Nova Scotia	3.3
New Brunswick	2.4
Newfoundland	1.6
Prince Edward Island	0.5
Company Size	
Small Companies	Total Small = 89
0-4 employees	61
5-9 employees	18
10-19 employees	10
Larger Companies	Total Larger = 11
20-49 employees	7
50-99 employees	2
100+ employees	2
Proportion of Older Workers in Labour Force	Total older workers in labour force = 30
aged 45-54	22
aged 55-64	8

of reaching top or upper management were more than half as great for men as women (56.1% vs. 35.8%)" (Reskin & Ross, 1992, 350).

With respect to respondents' level of educational attainment, only 6% had discontinued school at the elementary or public school level, 20% completed high school, 32% completed vocational / technical college or a special diploma, 29% completed an undergraduate university degree, and 14% had completed a post-graduate university degree (See Table 4). In 1997, individuals with less than a high school education comprised 20% of the entire Canadian work force (Statistics Canada, 1998). Also, employers tend to be more highly educated in general, as compared to other employees. It has also been recognized in the literature that "persons who respond to mail surveys typically are better educated and have higher reported income levels than persons who complete surveys person-to-person" (Ashbury, Cameron, Mercer, Fitch, & Nielsen, 1998, 99). Therefore, this finding, coupled with the fact that respondents were in high positions within the workplace hierarchy, could account for the relatively educated sample of employers achieved.

B. Employers' Attitudes Toward Older Workers: Results of Attitudinal Statements

In addressing the first research objective of this study (to ascertain Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers), the first hypothesis (Canadian employers in positions of responsibility to recruit and supervise others have positive attitudes toward older employees in the workplace) was addressed. In order to test this hypothesis, frequency distributions were calculated on the 16 attitudinal statements included in the Employer

Survey. The employers' responses to these statements are presented in Table 6. The statements were presented to the respondents in an order that interspersed the positive and negative statements. However, for easier comprehensibility, the positively worded statements are first discussed, followed by the negatively worded statements.

The responses on all eight of the positively worded statements indicate that employers hold favourable views toward older workers (See Table 6). Being good mentors or teachers for younger employees (94% strongly or moderately agreed), being reliable (98% strongly or moderately agreed), and being productive (93% strongly or moderately agreed) were the domains where employers felt the strongest about older workers. Employers strongly or moderately agreed that older workers could adapt to organizational change (79%), are highly respected (91%), have strong communication skills (63%), and have few accidents (79%). Interestingly, employers also strongly or moderately agreed that older workers are interested in technological change (55%).

On the negatively worded statements, employers strongly endorsed only two statements that suggested negative attitudes toward older workers (See Table 6). The statement "older workers dislike taking orders from younger employees" had the highest proportion of negative views (56% strongly or moderately agreed). Employers' views on older workers' ability to do heavy physical work were also negative (52% strongly or moderately agreed). On all other items, so few employers endorsed the negative statements that it can be concluded that employers' attitudes are positive on the whole.

Table 6 Frequency Distributions on Positive and Negative Attitudinal Statements (Unweighted)

OLDER WORKERS...	STRONGLY AGREE %	MODERATELY AGREE %	[illegible]	[illegible]
Positively Worded Items				
can adapt to organizational change (n=524).**	23 *	56	19	2
are good mentors/ teachers for younger workers (n=528).	48	46	5	1
are highly respected (n=523).	31	60	8	1
are reliable (535).	55	43	1	1
are productive employees (n=520).	38	55	6	1
have strong communication skills (n=509).	11	52	33	4
are interested in technological change (n=518).	7	48	38	7
have few accidents (n=513).	18	61	19	2
Negatively Worded Items				
are too cautious (n=517).	5	40	47	8
have trouble with shift work (n=474).	8	34	43	15
are marking time until retirement (n=509).	4	24	43	29
are hard to train (n=521).	6	35	45	14
have difficulty working overtime (n=511).	5	27	47	21
dislike taking orders from younger employees (n=515).	11	45	32	12
cannot do heavy physical work (n=521).	11	41	40	8
have more absences (n=518).	3	14	54	29

*Proportions may not total 100% due to rounding.

** Total n varies due to missing cases.

C. Determining Dimensions and Indicators of Employers' Attitudes Toward Older Workers

i. Results on Factor Analyses: Dimensions of Employers' Attitudes

An analytical objective of this research study was: to reduce the number of variables that indicate employers' attitudes toward older workers, to a smaller number of factors that can be used to address the second research objective of this study. This section presents the results of the factor analyses in two parts. The first part presents the results of the unweighted and weighted data. The second part addresses how the factor analyses were applied to test the second research objective of this study. This section includes a summary and discussion of the limitations of the weighted factor analyses.

a. Factor Analysis on Unweighted Data

The first factor analysis, using unweighted data, extracted four factors with eigenvalues equal to or greater than 1.00 and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .83, suggesting common underlying concepts (Kim & Mueller, 1978). Using varimax rotations, the factor structure in Table 7, Column 1 was established. The factor loadings that were calculated for all 16 of the items entered into the five factor analyses are depicted in Table 7.

The first factor originally included five variables: "older workers have difficulty working overtime" (.73); "older workers are hard to train" (.68); "older workers cannot do heavy physical work" (.64); "older workers dislike taking orders from younger employees" (.62); and "older workers have trouble with shift work" (.62). It is not clear why the item "older workers dislike taking orders from younger employees" loaded

highly with the other items. This item does not appear to be associated either theoretically or conceptually with the other items. As such, this factor was created, excluding the item "older workers dislike taking orders from younger employees". The Cronbach's reliability alpha score, not including the fourth item was 0.70, suggesting the remaining items are reliable as a construct. Therefore, including four of the five variables, the first factor "age-related decline" was constructed. This factor depicts the stereotypes surrounding the health of older workers, specifically processes associated with physical and cognitive decline. It is interesting to note that all four of these variables are negatively worded statements. An index was created for this factor which resulted in a mean of 2.65 (SD = .59). The items that loaded highly on this first factor were negatively worded, and thus a higher mean would indicate a more positive attitude. Thus, a relatively high mean score on this construct suggests that employers hold positive attitudes toward older workers on this first dimension involving "age-related decline".

The second factor in this analysis included four variables: "older workers are good mentors/ teachers for younger workers" (.73); "older workers have strong communication skills" (.69); "older workers can adapt to organizational change" (.65); and "older workers are highly respected" (.62). This factor depicts "experiential attributes" of older workers, as the items represent characteristics of an employee that are often developed through prolonged experience in the work force. The Cronbach's reliability alpha for this construct is 0.72, suggesting a reliable factor. These items all describe positive attitudinal statements. The mean score for this factor was 1.91 (SD = .49) suggesting that attitudes are also relatively positive for the dimension of

"experiential attributes". A lower mean score on this factor indicates positive attitudes, as the statements were positively worded.

The third factor includes two variables: "older workers are reliable employees" (.80) and "older workers are productive employees" (.66). This factor indicates that older workers are "reliable and productive". The Cronbach's reliability alpha for this construct is 0.67, suggesting a reliable factor. On the dimension "reliable and productive", an index was created which produced a mean score on this construct of 1.59 (SD = .52). For this factor, a lower mean score indicates positive attitudes, as the statements included in this factor were also positively worded. Therefore, this mean suggests employers hold positive views toward older workers' reliability and productivity.

The last factor representing "attention to safety standards" also includes two factors: "older workers have few accidents" (.70) and "older workers are too cautious" (.63). This factor proved to be quite problematic. First, the Cronbach's reliability alpha for this construct was only 0.08, suggesting an unreliable factor. Also, the wording of the second statement was problematic, as it appeared that the concept "too cautious" was regarded as a negative attribute. It could be reasoned that if the word "too" were removed from this statement, the attribute "cautious" would be viewed in a positive light. Therefore, based on the reliability score, the interaction between these two variables, and the problematic wording of the second statement, this factor was eliminated from further analysis. The first factor explained 26% of the variance, the second factor 14%, the third factor 8%, and the last factor explained only 6% of the variance (Walsh, 1990). The

Table 7 Results on Unweighted and Weighted Factor Analyses

VARIABLES	UNWEIGHTED DATA (n=436) *				WEIGHTED BY ALL 3 VARIABLES (n=458)					WEIGHTED BY SECTOR (n=439)				WEIGHTED BY REGION (n=442)				WEIGHTED BY COMPANY SIZE (n=422)			
	Factors				Factors					Factors				Factors				Factors			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Positively Worded Items																					
organizational change	-.32	**.65**	.06	-.07	.56	-.39	.05	-.22	-.10	.43	-.35	.01	.45	-.35	**.65**	.08	-.05	.59	-.37	-.08	-.06
good mentor/ teacher	.07	**.73**	.28	-.06	**.83**	-.12	-.11	.06	.08	**.69**	-.10	.03	.20	.04	**.72**	.31	-.04	**.81**	.01	-.09	.01
highly respected	.07	**.62**	.43	-.07	**.82**	.07	-.15	.03	.14	**.77**	.02	.02	.13	.05	**.61**	.44	-.03	**.75**	-.01	-.21	-.03
reliable employees	.07	.17	**.80**	.09	**.63**	.26	-.10	-.52	.10	**.74**	-.18	-.08	-.33	.10	.16	**.79**	.11	.49	.23	-.57	.12
productive employees	-.26	.28	**.66**	.00	.11	-.21	-.05	**-.85**	.09	.51	-.50	-.14	-.03	-.24	.25	**.67**	.01	.44	-.15	-.56	.12
strong communication skills	-.07	**.69**	.10	.21	**.69**	-.37	.33	-.19	-.05	.58	-.20	.28	.42	-.04	**.73**	.07	.17	**.72**	-.25	.05	.17
interested in technological change	-.40	.57	-.12	.19	-.01	**-.76**	-.05	-.05	.12	.13	-.11	-.20	**.77**	-.39	.54	-.07	.17	.33	**-.61**	.04	.13
few accidents	-.07	.21	.29	**.70**	.30	-.22	-.08	-.04	**.73**	.57	.19	-.38	.16	-.05	.20	.26	**.74**	.23	-.08	-.15	**.72**
Negatively Worded Items																					
too cautious	.30	-.08	-.14	**.63**	-.03	.29	.26	.04	**.65**	.10	**.67**	.04	-.15	.33	-.02	.20	.56	-.11	.18	.16	**.68**
trouble with shift work	**.62**	.11	-.19	.25	-.19	-.03	**.72**	.14	.16	-.04	.41	**.61**	.08	**.61**	.14	-.21	.17	.06	.30	.54	.35
marking time until retirement	.51	-.15	-.39	.16	-.01	.27	.25	**.69**	.20	-.19	**.73**	.17	.05	.53	-.14	-.40	10	-.14	.23	**.65**	.09
hard to train	**.68**	-.29	-.05	.10	-.13	**.72**	.18	.24	.28	-.09	**.64**	.17	-.41	**.70**	-.31	-.02	08	-.14	**.75**	.18	.11
difficulty working o/t	**.73**	-.09	-.14	.07	-.18	.36	**.70**	-.01	.16	-.15	.49	.49	-.18	**.74**	-.11	-.15	05	-.10	**.67**	.29	.19
dislike taking orders	**.62**	-.23	.02	.03	-.18	.56	.27	.34	-.12	-.07	.46	.33	-.36	**.62**	-.26	.06	.01	-.14	**.63**	.18	.14
cannot do heavy physical work	**.64**	-.00	.22	-.06	.32	.23	**.62**	-.03	-.44	.17	-.00	**.77**	-.26	**.63**	-.02	.21	- 02	.29	**.62**	.22	-.12
have more absences	.53	.11	-.41	-.18	.13	.04	**.64**	.40	-.05	-.15	.39	.56	.02	.54	.14	-.33	-35	.03	.26	**.65**	-.05

*Total n varies due to missing data.

results from this unweighted factor analysis will be used in the third phase of investigation involving bivariate analyses.

b. Factor Analysis on Data Weighted by Industrial Sector, Company Size, and Geographical Region

Generally, inaccurate proportions may be altered using various weighting techniques. However, as described in a later section of this chapter, the weightings were not used in all stages of the analyses due to unforeseen challenges. When factor analyses of the same items were generated applying different weightings, similar items did not consistently cluster together on the same factor in all analyses. In fact, the same number of factors was not continuously identified in each analysis. Therefore, in the following four factor analyses, labels are not assigned to the factors due to the inconsistency among the five factor analyses generated. It may be pointed out here that the final four factor analyses will not be used in any further analyses, thus it was not deemed necessary to create labels. This decision is further justified in the final section of this chapter.

The second factor analysis used data weighted by industrial sector, company size, and geographical region. This factor analysis (summarized in Table 7, Column 2) yielded five factors. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .75. The first factor included four variables: "older workers are good mentors/ teachers for younger workers" (.83); "older workers are highly respected" (.82); "older workers have strong communication skills" (.69); and "older workers are reliable employees" (.63). The Cronbach's alpha for this factor was 0.77 indicating the construct is reliable. The second factor created included two variables: "older workers are interested in

technological change" (-.76); and "older workers are hard to train" (.72). The Cronbach's alpha for this factor was 0.55. The third factor constructed included four items: "older workers have trouble with shift work" (.72); "older workers have difficulty working overtime" (.70); "older workers have more absences" (.64); and "older workers cannot do heavy physical work" (.62). The Cronbach's alpha for the third factor was 0.66. The fourth factor created included two items: "older workers are productive employees" (-.85); and "older workers are marking time until retirement" (.69). The alpha for this factor was 0.66. The final factor created in this analysis also included two items: "older workers have few accidents" (.73); and "older workers are too cautious" (.65). The Cronbach's reliability alpha for this factor was only 0.26, suggesting an unreliable factor. The first factor accounted for 26% of the variance, the second factor 16%, the third factor 9%, the fourth factor 8%, and the last factor accounted for 7% of the variance.

c. Factor Analysis on Data Weighted by Industrial Sector

The third factor analysis conducted in this study used data weighted only by industrial sector (See Table 7, Column 3). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .81. The first factor contained three variables: "older workers are highly respected" (.77); "older workers are reliable employees" (.74); and "older workers are good mentors/ teachers for younger workers" (.69). The Cronbach's reliability alpha for this factor is 0.70. The second factor also included three variables: "older workers are marking time until retirement" (.73); "older workers are too cautious" (.67); and "older workers are hard to train" (.64). The alpha for this factor was 0.64. The third factor

contained the following two items: "older workers cannot do heavy physical work" (.77); and "older workers have trouble with shift work" (.61). The alpha for this factor was 0.58. The last factor contained only one item with one factor loading greater than .60: "older workers are interested in technological change" (.77). Cronbach's alpha is not applicable for this factor as it contained only one variable. The first factor accounted for 29% of the variance, the second factor 14%, and the third and fourth factors each accounted for 7% of the variance.

d. Factor Analysis on Data Weighted by Geographical Region

The next factor analysis used data weighted by geographical region (See Table 7, Column 4). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .82. Four factors were created in this analysis. The first factor included the following five items: "older workers have difficulty working overtime" (.74); "older workers are hard to train" (.70); "older workers cannot do heavy physical work" (.63); "older workers dislike taking orders" (.62); and "older workers have trouble with shift work" (.61). The Cronbach's reliability alpha for this construct was .75. The second factor also contained four variables: "older workers have strong communication skills" (.73); "older workers are good mentors/ teachers for younger workers" (.72); "older workers can adapt to organizational change" (.65); and "older workers are highly respected" (.61). The alpha for this factor was .72. The third factor created had the following two items: "older workers are reliable employees" (.79); and "older workers are productive employees" (.67). The alpha for this factor was .65. Finally, the last factor created only contained one item: "older

workers have few accidents" (.74). A reliability score is not applicable for this factor. The first factor accounted for 27% of the variance, the second factor accounted for 14%, the third factor accounted for 8%, and the last factor accounted for 7%.

e. Factor Analysis on Data Weighted by Company Size

The last factor analysis utilized data weighted by company size (See Table 7, Column 5). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy for this factor analysis was .83. Four constructs were created in this analysis. The first factor contained the following three items: "older workers are good mentors/ teachers for younger workers" (.81); "older workers are highly respected" (.75); and "older workers have strong communication skills" (.72). The Cronbach's reliability alpha for this factor was .75. The next construct contained five variables: "older workers are hard to train" (.75); "older workers have difficulty working overtime" (.67); "older workers dislike taking orders" (.63); "older workers cannot do heavy physical work" (.62); and "older workers are interested in technological change" (-.61). The Cronbach's reliability alpha for this factor was .47, suggesting an unreliable construct. The third construct contained two items: "older workers have more absences" (.65); and "older workers are marking time until retirement" (.65). The alpha for this construct was comparatively low at .45. The last factor created contained the following two items: "older workers have few accidents" (.72); and "older workers are too cautious" (.68). This factor was quite unreliable, as the alpha score was only .18. The first factor accounted for 27% of the variance, the second accounted for 14%, the third accounted for 8%, and the fourth factor accounted for 7%.

f. Summary and Limitations of Factor Analyses

A total of five factor analyses were generated in this inquiry. However, upon examination of the factor analyses involving weighted data, some problematic findings were noted. First, the analyses containing weighted data did not have face validity (Dane, 1990). It became quite apparent during several comparisons of the five factor analyses that variables did not cluster together similarly. This was particularly true for the factor analyses involving data weighted by industrial sector. Merging two of the industrial sectors into a single category (so that only four sectors were used for comparison) was tested to see if this would alter the results. However, problems still were prevalent in the weighted data. It was then decided to re-check the calculations of the weightings that were originally computed. These weightings were correct.

Finally, an investigation into the original procedure of collapsing the industrial sectors into categories was conducted. This inquiry revealed a methodological weakness, diminishing the quality of the data from the Employer Survey. Although organizations were sampled proportionately according to the industries classified in this study, the sectors no longer accurately depicted the population of Canadian organizations, as described in Section A of this chapter. An interaction effect was occurring between industrial sector and region, which distorted the weighted data. For example, if 70% of the mining organizations are located in Alberta, but the surveys are mailed out representatively across all regions (25% in the Western Provinces) and all sectors (20% in the Agriculture and Resource sectors) then an over-representation of mining

companies from the Western Provinces will be achieved. Therefore, in the current study when it was assumed that the data were being weighted back to the original population of Canadian organizations, an error was being made. In effect, the data were only being weighted back to the new classifications of industrial sectors created for this study. This methodological flaw would need to be ameliorated in future research in order for conclusions to be drawn concerning the entire population of Canadian organizations. Therefore, when reading the results of this study, it is important to interpret the findings only in relation to the sample of 559 Canadian employers that responded to this survey. As a result of the problems described, it was decided to exclude the weighted factor analyses from the third phase of inquiry. Therefore, the following section of this paper uses the three constructs created in the unweighted factor analysis: 'age-related decline'; 'experiential attributes'; and 'reliable and productive'. These constructs are used to test the significance of industrial sector, company size, proportion of older workers in the organization, and employers' age, sex, and education on attitudes toward older workers.

ii. Results on ANOVAs and T-Tests: Indicators of Employers' Attitudes

A series of one-way ANOVAs and t-tests were calculated using the three constructs created in the unweighted factor analysis in order to compare the means on each of the independent variables. Bivariate analyses were generated to meet the second research objective of this study, thus determining how organizational characteristics (industrial sector, company size, and proportion of older workers in the organization) and employers' personal characteristics (age, sex, and education) influence employers'

attitudes toward older workers. In the ensuing discussion, recall that the items that loaded highly on the first factor ("age-related decline") were negatively worded, and thus a higher mean score indicates a more positive attitude. However, on the second and third factors ("experiential attributes" and "reliable and productive") lower mean scores indicate more positive attitudes. Results concerning the six independent variables will now be presented.

a. Industrial Sector

Hypothesis 2a: Employers from less technological and physically demanding industrial sectors will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than those in technologically advanced and physically demanding companies.

The results from the one-way ANOVA using the three dimensions of attitudes created in the previous section of this paper were not statistically significant (See Table 8). Therefore, using only these constructs, Hypothesis 2a was not supported. Though not significant, the Transportation/ Communication/ Public Utilities sector had the most positive attitudes toward older workers (2.70) on "age-related decline". With respect to "experiential attributes", the Sales and Service sector had the most positive views toward older workers (1.82). On the last factor, "reliable and productive", employers from the Agriculture and Resource sector had the most positive views toward older employees (1.54). Thus, no particular industrial sector can be highlighted on the factors used to examine differences in employers' attitudes.

Table 8 Means [Standard Deviations] from the ANOVA on Industrial Sector (Unweighted)

	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]
FACTOR 1 AGE-RELATED DECLINE	2.64 [.57]	2.64 [.66]	2.59 [.57]	2.70 [.53]	2.66 [.66]	530
FACTOR 2 EXPERIENTIAL ATTRIBUTES	1.82 [.48]	1.95 [.50]	1.90 [.49]	1.97 [.51]	1.90 [.49]	535
FACTOR 3 RELIABLE AND PRODUCTIVE	1.59 [.54]	1.63 [.49]	1.58 [.55]	1.59 [.53]	1.54 [.48]	535

FACTOR 1 $p>.05$, Critical F = .45
FACTOR 2 $p>.05$, Critical F = 1.35
FACTOR 3 $p>.05$, Critical F = .36
* Total n varies due to missing cases.

(1.54). Thus, no particular industrial sector can be highlighted on the factors used to examine differences in employers' attitudes.

b. Company Size

Hypothesis 2b: Employers in small companies will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than will employers in larger companies.

The results from the t-test, illustrated in Table 9 reveal that while attitudes did not significantly differ by company size on "age-related decline" and "reliable and productive", a significant difference in the means of small and larger companies was recognized when looking at attitudes concerning "experiential attributes". The mean score for small companies (1.81) is significantly lower than that of larger companies (1.96). Therefore, it can be interpreted that employers from small companies are more positive in their attitudes toward experiential attributes than are those from larger companies. Though not statistically significant, employers from small companies were also slightly more positive on the other two factors.

Table 9 Means [Standard Deviations] from T-Test on Company Size (Unweighted)

	SMALL COMPANIES	[illegible]	[illegible]
FACTOR 1 AGE-RELATED DECLINE	2.68 [.60]	2.63 [.59]	530
FACTOR 2 ** EXPERIENTIAL ATTRIBUTES	1.81 [.51]	1.96 [.48]	535
FACTOR 3 RELIABLE AND PRODUCTIVE	1.53 [.50]	1.62 [.53]	535

FACTOR 1 t = .93, df = 528, two-tailed p > .05
FACTOR 2 t = -3.28, df = 533, two-tailed p < .01
FACTOR 3 t = -1.72 df = 533, two-tailed p > .05
* Total n varies due to missing cases.
** Statistically Significant.

c. Proportion of Older Workers in Organization

Hypothesis 2c: Employers in organizations with a larger proportion of older workers will have more positive attitudes than will those with smaller proportions of older workers.

There were no statistically significant differences on all three dimensions of attitudes when comparing organizations with varying proportions of older workers, using a one-way ANOVA (See Table 10). While not significant, those organizations with the largest

proportion of older workers did have more positive attitudes on the "age-related decline" and "reliable and productive" dimensions.

Table 10 Means [Standard Deviations] from ANOVA on Proportion of Older Workers in Organization (Unweighted)

	LESS THAN 10%	BETWEEN 10 AND 25%	[illegible]	[illegible]	TOTAL n *
FACTOR 1 AGE-RELATED DECLINE	2.62 [.61]	2.61 [.60]	2.66 [.55]	2.76 [.67]	526
FACTOR 2 EXPERIENTIAL ATTRIBUTES	1.85 [.52]	1.90 [.47]	1.96 [.48]	1.89 [.55]	531
FACTOR 3 RELIABLE AND PRODUCTIVE	1.61 [.49]	1.60 [.58]	1.57 [.49]	1.51 [.48]	531

FACTOR 1 $p>.05$, Critical F = .79
FACTOR 2 $p>.05$, Critical F = 1.48
FACTOR 3 $p>.05$, Critical F = .59
* Total n varies due to missing cases.

d. Age of Employer

Hypothesis 2d: Older employers will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than will younger employers.

Using a t-test, no significant differences were found on the first two dimensions of employers' attitudes when comparing older (≥ 45 years) and younger (< 45 years) employers. However, it was interesting to discover that significant differences between these age groups were found on the dimension "reliable and productive". When examining this third dimension of employers' attitudes, it was discovered that older employers do have more positive attitudes toward older workers than their younger counterparts (See Table 11). The mean score for younger employers on this dimension was 1.64, whereas older employers had a mean score of 1.53.

Table 11 Means [Standard Deviations] from T-Test on Age of Employer (Unweighted)

	YOUNGER EMPLOYERS (<45 YEARS)	[illegible]	TOTAL n *
FACTOR 1 AGE-RELATED DECLINE	2.69 [.55]	2.60 [.63]	521
FACTOR 2 EXPERIENTIAL ATTRIBUTES	1.94 [.50]	1.87 [.48]	526
FACTOR 3 ** RELIABLE AND PRODUCTIVE	1.64 [.47]	1.53 [.52]	526

FACTOR 1 t = 1.89, df = 519, two-tailed p > .05
FACTOR 2 t = 1.63, df = 524, two-tailed p > .05
FACTOR 3 t = 2.40, df = 524, two-tailed p < .05
* Total n varies due to missing cases.
** Statistically Significant.

e. Sex of Employer

Hypothesis 2e: Female employers will have more positive attitudes toward older workers than will male employers.

Using a t-test, female employers (F) had significantly more positive views toward older workers on all three dimensions of attitudes than did male employers (M) (See Table 12). Attitudes were more positive concerning "age-related decline" (F = 2.78; M = 2.58), "experiential attributes" (F = 1.79; M = 1.96), and "reliable and productive" (F = 1.51; M = 1.62).

Table 12 Means [Standard Deviations] from T-Test on Sex of Employer (Unweighted)

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL *
FACTOR 1 ** AGE-RELATED DECLINE	2.58 [.60]	2.78 [.56]	525
FACTOR 2 ** EXPERIENTIAL ATTRIBUTES	1.96 [.48]	1.79 [.51]	530
FACTOR 3 ** RELIABLE AND PRODUCTIVE	1.62 [.52]	1.51 [.51]	530

FACTOR 1 t = -3.56, df = 523, two-tailed p < .001
FACTOR 2 t = 3.59, df = 528, two-tailed p < .001
FACTOR 3 t = 2.29, df = 528, two-tailed p < .05
* Total n varies due to missing cases.
** Statistically Significant.

After realizing the strength of sex as an indicator on all three attitudinal dimensions of employers' attitudes toward older workers, I re-examined the effect of sex on all 16 attitudinal statements. Results from the crosstabulation of sex by attitudinal characteristic indicate that significant differences were found between males (M) and females (F) on seven of the attitudinal statements: "older workers can adapt to organizational change" (M=76%, F=87% in agreement); "older workers are highly respected" (M=91%, F=93% in agreement); "older workers have strong communication skills" (M=61%, F=93% in agreement); "older workers are too cautious" (M=54%, F=59% in *dis*agreement); "older workers have difficulty working overtime" (M=65%, F=75% in *dis*agreement); "older workers dislike taking orders from younger employees" (M=47%, F=39% in *dis*agreement); and "older workers cannot do heavy physical work" (M=47%, F=50% in *dis*agreement) (See Table 13). From this analysis, it can be interpreted that women had more positive attitudes toward older workers than did men on six of these statements. Male employers had more positive views toward older workers on the statement "older workers dislike taking orders from younger employees", as compared to female employers.[5]

[5] It is important to recognize that the decision to re-visit the responses to all 16 items, differentiated according to sex, may be misleading. First, it is not possible to state a definitive relationship based on bivariate analyses. Second, it is important to reiterate that the sex differences that were identified previously in the factor analysis represent an analytical collapsing of several items into one.

Table 13 Frequency Distributions on Positive and Negative Attitudinal Statements by Sex of Employer – Male (M) and Female (F) (Unweighted)

OLDER WORKERS ...	[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]		[illegible]	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Positively Worded Items								
can adapt to organizational change (n=524).** x^2=14.82. df=3. p<.01. Cramer's V=.17	20*	32	56	55	22	13	3	1
are good mentors/ teachers for younger workers (n=528). x^2=6.51. df=3. p>.05. Cramer's V=.11	45	56	49	38	6	4	1	1
are highly respected (n=523). x^2=8.84. df=3. p<.05. Cramer's V=.13	28	40	63	53	8	7	1	0
are reliable (535). x^2=6.50. df=3. p>.05. Cramer's V=.11	52	61	45	38	2	0	1	1
are productive employees (n=520). x^2=3.64. df=3. p>.05. Cramer's V=.08	35	44	57	50	6	6	1	1
have strong communication skills (n=509). x^2=16.36. df=3. p=.001. Cramer's V=.18	8	19	53	48	36	27	3	6
are interested in technological change (n=518). x^2=2.93. df=3. p>.05. Cramer's V=.08	6	10	50	46	38	38	7	7
have few accidents (n=513). x^2=3.04. df=3. p>.05. Cramer's V=.08	17	21	62	56	19	20	2	3
Negatively Worded Items								
are too cautious (n=517). x^2=25.15. df=3. p<.001. Cramer's V=.22	5	7	42	34	49	42	5	17
have trouble with shift work (n=474). x^2=4.51. df=3. p>.05. Cramer's V=.10	9	6	36	29	42	46	14	19
are marking time until retirement (n=509). x^2=2.91. df=3. p>.05. Cramer's V=.08	4	3	23	27	45	39	28	31
are hard to train (n=521). x^2=7.78. df=3. p=.05. Cramer's V=.12	7	3	38	30	44	48	12	19
have difficulty working overtime (n=511). x^2=12.16. df=3. p<.01. Cramer's V=.16	6	3	29	21	48	46	17	29
dislike taking orders from younger employees (n=515). x^2=12.44. df=3. p<.01. Cramer's V=.16	12	8	41	54	36	23	11	16
cannot do heavy physical work (n=521). x^2=7.93. df=3. p<.05. Cramer's V=.12	14	6	40	45	40	40	7	10
have more absences (n=518). x^2=7.10. df=3. p>.05. Cramer's V=.12	3	1	14	14	56	49	26	36

*Proportions may not total 100% due to rounding.

** Total n varies due to missing cases.

f. Education of Employer

Hypothesis 2f: Employers with higher educational attainment will have more positive attitudes than will those with lower educational attainment.

Using a one-way ANOVA, the hypothesis on this variable initially appeared to be supported by the first dimension of attitudes "age-related decline" (See Table 14). However, upon closer examination of this variable, it was discovered that while the means appear to become increasingly positive for all five of the educational groups, the second group (those with a high school education) are more positive than the two groups which follow. A Tukey's test was conducted in order to identify which group means significantly differed from one another (Walsh, 1990). The Tukey's test indicated that group five (the most highly educated group) differed significantly from groups one, three, and four, while group one also differed significantly from group two at the .05 level. Therefore, this closer examination of educational status revealed that attitudes did not continuously increase the more educated one became. Thus, because these findings are problematic, in addition to this pattern not repeating itself on the second and third dimensions of attitudes, this finding must be interpreted with caution. Further investigation into this variable would be required to support the hypothesis concerning employers' education.

Table 14 Means [Standard Deviations] from T-Test on *Highest Level* of Education Completed by Employer (Unweighted)

	Elementary or Public School	High School	Vocational/ Technical College or a Special Diploma	Undergraduate University Degree	Post-Graduate University Degree	Total n *
FACTOR 1 ** AGE-RELATED DECLINE	2.36 [.65]	2.74 [.56]	2.59 [.58]	2.61 [.59]	2.87 [.56]	523
FACTOR 2 EXPERIENTIAL ATTRIBUTES	1.82 [.46]	1.87 [.51]	1.89 [.48]	1.97 [.50]	1.87 [.48]	528
FACTOR 3 RELIABLE AND PRODUCTIVE	1.55 [.45]	1.47 [.54]	1.61 [.50]	1.64 [.53]	1.58 [.48]	527

FACTOR 1 $p<.01$, Critical F = 5.89
FACTOR 2 $p>.05$, Critical F = 1.09
FACTOR 3 $p>.05$, Critical F = 2.04
* Total n varies due to missing cases.
** Statistically Significant.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved secondary data analysis of the Employer Survey and was designed to address the following two objectives: to ascertain Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers; and to determine which factors influence Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers. Conclusions emanating from this study are presented in four sections. In the first section, the results from the descriptive statistics describing Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers are summarized and discussed. In the second section, I discuss factors identified and used in this analysis, which may also be used in subsequent research to help predict employers' attitudes toward older workers. This section includes a discussion of the analyses generated with the employer data. The third section provides a discussion of the limitations of the current study, which is followed by a section that specifies ways to address these limitations to assist in future research. The final section of this chapter suggests ways in which the results of this study could be incorporated into employers' and governments' policies, programs, and practices to improve the working environment for older employees.

A. Summary and Discussion of Employers' Attitudes Toward Older Workers

The descriptive statistics on employers' attitudes revealed that the employers who participated in this study have positive views toward older workers. Employers' responses to the survey demonstrated negative views toward older workers on only two

items ("older workers dislike taking orders from younger employees" and "older workers cannot do heavy physical work"). Therefore, the first hypothesis (Canadian employers in positions of responsibility to recruit and supervise others have positive attitudes toward older employees in the workplace) was supported. Employers expressed the most positive views on the following three items: "older workers are reliable employees", "older workers are good mentors or teachers for younger employees"; and "older workers are productive employees". These findings largely support the literature reviewed in Chapter II of this thesis (See for example, the work of Guillemard & Walker, 1994, Taylor & Walker, and AARP, 1989). It is interesting to note that the two items where employers articulated negative views, were also the items that were negatively worded. It is possible that the wording of the questions could have played a significant role in the responses to the attitudinal statements (Fink, 1995). Further discussion on the wording of the survey instrument will be presented in Section C of this chapter.

While the result concerning employers' views on older workers' ability to do heavy physical work was negative (52% strongly or moderately agreed), the proportion of employers who have negative attitudes on this dimension was not as large as other research reviewed in Chapter II suggested. Perhaps in the current work environment, where technology is increasingly replacing human physical labour, the physical abilities of older workers are becoming a decreasing concern. This suggests a positive future for older employees. Specifically, employers' attitudes in industries where physical labour was once a criterion for older workers to remain active in the workforce may become more positive in the future.

Fifty-five percent of employers agreed (moderately and strongly) that "older workers are interested in technological change". This positive finding contradicts the majority of literature reviewed in Chapter II. However, many of the studies reviewed, concerned older workers' ability to engage in new technology. It is plausible that while employers believe that older workers are *interested* in technological change, they do not believe older workers are *capable* to adapt to new technological advances in the work environment. This perception of employers could be a reason for the proportionately fewer training opportunities offered to older workers (AARP, 1994). Perhaps a change in the wording of this attitudinal statement, or the inclusion of an additional statement concerning older workers' technological capability would clarify this issue.

B. Dimensions and Indicators of Employers' Attitudes Toward Older Workers

i. Dimensions of Employers' Attitudes: Results from Factor Analysis

Limitations of the weighted factor analyses were described in the previous chapter of this thesis. As a result of these limitations, the weighted analyses were not included in the third phase of investigation, leaving the factors generated by the unweighted factor analysis. The following constructs were identified and utilized to test the indicators of employers' attitudes: 'age-related decline'; 'experiential attributes'; and 'reliable and productive'. These factors were created to assess the significance of industrial sector, company size, proportion of older workers in the organization, and employers' age, sex, and education on attitudes toward older workers.

ii. Indicators of Employers' Attitudes: Results from ANOVAs and T-Tests

Upon examination of employers' attitudes toward older workers across industrial sectors, no significant differences were noted. After reviewing the literature in this area, it was hypothesized that employers in industries involving a high degree of technology and physical labour would have the most negative views toward older workers. This hypothesis was not supported in this study, which I believe is largely the result of methodological issues and the influence of technological innovations in the workplace.

It has already been recognized in Chapter IV of this thesis that the industrial groupings created in the sampling strategy of the Employer Survey did not accurately portray the industrial categories specified by Dun & Bradstreet Canada. There was a great degree of variation within each sector that may have confounded the results. For example, the Sales and Service sector included a wide range of occupations (e.g. real estate agents, wholesalers). Therefore, this variation within each sector may account for the lack of differences found among industrial sectors when testing the hypothesis. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter II, the ability to engage in physical labour is no longer as industry-specific as it once was. Technology is increasingly replacing the need for physical labour in all industries (albeit at perhaps different paces), which in turn may diminish the gap between industrial sectors on this domain.

When investigating the variable company size, it was discovered that employers from small companies value "experiential attributes" (good mentors, communication skills, adapt to organizational change, and highly respected) more so than do those in larger companies. It is probable that disparate organizational cultures emerge in

companies of different size (Brown, Hamilton, & Medoff, 1990). These disparate cultures may stem largely from the degree of interpersonal interaction and relationships that may develop between employers and employees. For example, employers in small organizations may have responded to the attitudinal statements based on first-hand knowledge of older workers' capabilities, whereas those in larger organizations may have responded to a more abstract notion of an older worker – more likely based on unfounded stereotypes or misconceptions. Thus, questioning respondents on issues specifically involving older workers in their respective organizations (such was the case in the Employer Survey), and not asking them about younger workers as well, may have influenced the findings. A further discussion on measurement effects is presented in a following section of this chapter.

In addition, significant differences may only have appeared on one factor, as there was considerable variation within the larger group of companies. It is anticipated that organizations with 50 employees would respond differently to certain items, as compared to those with 2,000 employees. While these classifications were based on the sampling strategy used in the Employer Survey, they could be re-grouped in future research.

There were no statistically significant differences for all three factors involving the proportion of older workers in an organization. The literature has suggested that organizations with larger proportions of older workers will have more positive attitudes toward older employees than will those with smaller proportions. This finding was not supported in this study. It was also anticipated that the findings on this variable would infer that as the workforce itself ages, employers' attitudes will become increasingly

positive. This assumption was not yet validated in the current study. Further investigation into the impact of this variable on employers' attitudes is required.

The next variable investigated was employers' age. On this item, it was revealed that in relation to the dimension "reliable and productive", older employers do in fact have more positive attitudes than their younger counterparts. The result on this dimension supports the notion of an "ingroup" bias, suggested in Chapter II (Gibson, Zerbe, & Franken, 1993; Tajfel, 1982), where older employers will favour older workers. In addition, it is plausible that older employers believe more strongly in the importance of these qualities, and thus more strongly assert that their own age cohort also possess these attributes.

Concerning the variable employers' sex, females had significantly more positive views toward older workers on all three factors than did males. As a result of this being the strongest relationship found, additional analyses were generated which revealed significant differences between males and females on seven of the 16 attitudinal dimensions. Although there was a lack of literature pertaining specifically to sex as an indicator of employers' attitudes toward older workers, male and female styles of leadership were reviewed, and it was inferred from this review that females would be more positive in their views. This inference was supported in the present study. This finding justifies a claim made in Chapter II (Larwood & Lockheed, 1979; Reskin & Ross, 1992). It was reasoned that because women (more so in the past than in the present) were faced with a greater number of challenges in their working careers than males, they have become more empathetic to the needs of other disadvantaged groups, such as older

workers. In addition, it was also identified in Chapter II that female leaders respond to workers based on both the norm of equality and the norm of equity (males only used the norm of equity) (Dobbins, 1986). Therefore, this would indicate that there would be a larger number of female employers with positive attitudes toward older workers, as compared to male employers.

Attitudes toward older workers have not been adequately assessed in previous Canadian literature with respect to employers' level of education. However, education has been assessed in the literature as a predictor of racist or sexist attitudes and behaviour. It was anticipated that data concerning ageist behaviour or attitudes would perform similarly. Therefore, I hypothesized from this literature that as a person's level of educational attainment increases, his or her attitudes toward older workers will become more positive. The one-way analysis of variance generated on the educational status of employers showed that this relationship was not this straightforward. Attitudes did not consistently improve as employers' level of education increased. Employers with high school education showed more positive views toward older workers than the two groups with higher levels of education that followed. Thus, as this finding was problematic, no specific conclusions can be asserted concerning this variable. Further investigation into this variable is warranted.

In summary, the results from this study indicate that while employers' attitudes are positive on the whole, older workers will likely encounter the most positive work environment with older, female employers from smaller companies. The preliminary findings also suggest that older workers should not experience differences in employers'

attitudes in varying industrial sectors, in companies with differing proportions of older workers or from employers with varying levels of educational attainment. The results for all seven hypotheses (supported and not supported) are summarized in Table 15.

Table 15 Summary of Results on Supported and Not Supported Hypotheses

HYPOTHESES		SUPPORTED / NOT SUPPORTED
Research Objective 1 To ascertain Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers.		
Hypothesis 1a. (Employers' Attitudes)		**Supported**
Research Objective 2 To determine which factors influence Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers.		
Hypothesis 2a. (Industrial Sector)	i. Age-Related Decline ii. Experiential Attributes iii. Reliable and Productive	Not Supported Not Supported Not Supported
Hypothesis 2b. (Company Size)	i. Age-Related Decline ii. Experiential Attributes iii. Reliable and Productive	Not Supported **Supported** Not Supported
Hypothesis 2c. (Prop. of older workers)	i. Age-Related Decline ii. Experiential Attributes iii. Reliable and Productive	Not Supported Not Supported Not Supported
Hypothesis 2d. (Age of Employer)	i. Age-Related Decline ii. Experiential Attributes iii. Reliable and Productive	Not Supported Not Supported **Supported**
Hypothesis 2e. (Sex of Employer)	i. Age-Related Decline ii. Experiential Attributes iii. Reliable and Productive	**Supported** **Supported** **Supported**
Hypothesis 2f. (Education of Employer)	i. Age-Related Decline ii. Experiential Attributes iii. Reliable and Productive	Not Supported Not Supported Not Supported

C. Limitations of Current Study and Suggestions for Improvements

Unfortunately, the majority of studies contain limitations that need to be articulated. This section will outline the limitations of the current study and will suggest improvements that can be made in order to engage in further research. The limitations that will be discussed in this study include the following: the weighting of the data, the response rate, employing sex and not gender as an independent variable, and measurement effects.

i. Weighting of the Data

It has become apparent after examining the limitations of the weighted factor analyses that several changes need to be made when weighting future surveys. The classifications that were used in grouping the industrial sectors and geographical regions need to be re-examined. In addition, because of the problems discovered using the weighted data and the necessity to use only the unweighted data in examining the indicators of attitudes, the results from this study could not be generalized to the entire population of Canadian organizations. As a result, the findings can only be used to describe the study sample. However, it is important to note here that the findings in this study do represent data from 559 Canadian companies, a sizeable number of organizations. Furthermore, the findings do support the majority of studies that have been examined in the literature.

ii. Response Rate

A related weakness in this study involves the relatively low response rate from Canadian organizations. Despite a somewhat intensive follow-up procedure (described in Chapter

III), the achieved response rate was only 38%. While this response rate would normally indicate that a level of caution be used when interpreting these results, the response rate is considerably higher than other comparable surveys aimed at organizations, particularly private sector firms (Undersell, Marshall, & Deliencourt, 1997; Greer & Ireland, 1992; Jackson, Schuler, & Rivero, 1989). In addition, when examining the response rate in terms of the number of organizations included in the current study, a sizeable sample of Canadian companies was still obtained. A more detailed investigation into the characteristics of the organizations that did not respond to the survey would be helpful in increasing the response rate for future studies. This would be implemented in order to determine whether these companies systematically differed from those that did respond to the Employer Survey. Access to the information on these companies was not available for my research.

iii. "Sex" or "Gender"?

It has been indicated in this thesis that the concept "sex" refers to a biological characteristic, whereas "gender" is a socially-constructed category. Due to the data set available, this thesis was only able to focus on "sex" of the employer surveyed. While it would be interesting and informative to understand the role of "gender" in determining employers' attitudes toward older workers, this issue goes beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, future research could include a more detailed discussion of how socialization can influence one's managerial style and consequently influence one's attitudes toward older workers. Further investigation of the literature pertaining to organizational culture would

allow for additional questions to be included in future survey instruments concerning employers' attitudes toward older workers.

iv. Measurement Effects

Several limitations also appeared when examining the survey instrument. First, the wording of some of the attitudinal items in the Employer Survey may have caused problems for their interpretation by the respondents. Statements such as "older workers are too cautious" and "older workers have few accidents" should be re-worded in order to convey their intended meanings. Perhaps some respondents viewed the phrase "too cautious" as a negative attribute, while other respondents viewed it as a positive attribute. In addition, the factor analyses also suggested that the wording of some of the questions used in this survey was problematic. Also, a more detailed investigation into the inclusion of certain items in factors where they did not appear to fit theoretically (e.g. "older workers dislike taking orders") should be performed. In order to conduct future analyses using this data set, some of these questions would need to be altered.

In addition, the direction of the attitudinal statements may have altered the results. For example, it may be easier (and less embarrassing) to agree with the statement "older workers dislike taking orders from younger employees", than it would be to disagree with a similar statement "older workers do not mind taking orders from younger employees". The literature supports this assertion (Fink, 1995). It has also been recognized that negatively worded questions require more logical thinking, as compared to positively worded items. For example, in the statement "older workers can not do heavy physical

work", respondents could fail to read the word "not" and interpret this statement as a positive one. This could be improved by emphasizing the word **NOT** in future response items (Fink, 1995).

As this study was cross-sectional in nature, it is difficult to assess whether employers' attitudes have improved over time, or whether a cohort effect is present. This issue could be addressed by asking the respondents to complete another survey at a later date. In addition, no comparable data sets involving attitudes toward older workers were accessible in order to assess the content and construct validity of the Employer Survey. In future research, the original scale used by Taylor and Walker (1994) could be requested, in order to test the validity of the survey instrument.

It was indicated in the literature that employers frequently rate their own older employees positively on surveys, yet when asked about older workers in general, negative attitudes emerge (NACA, 1991). It is plausible that because employers in this study were only questioned about the abilities of the older employees in their respective organizations, they demonstrated positive attitudes. However, if a future survey would focus on perceptions of older workers in general, negative views may surface. Therefore, if employers display positive attitudes toward older workers in their own organizations, the retention of older workers will not be an issue. However if negative attitudes exist concerning older workers in general, the recruitment of older workers will be a potential challenge in these organizations.

Another consideration in preparing a future survey instrument to assess employers' attitudes toward older workers would be to include specific questions that

would compare younger workers to their older counterparts. This amendment would allow for differences in attitudes to be compared between these two groups in order to determine whether employers were responding to the survey based on general feelings of all workers in their respective organizations. For example, employers could have felt that all workers are "too cautious", not just older workers.

Another area that would be interesting to explore in future research would be whether the findings on the attitudinal statements actually reflect some level of age discrimination held by employers, or instead reflect older workers true capabilities. It has been recognized in this thesis that in certain respects, misconceptions definitely exist regarding older workers (e.g. ability to learn new technology, absences from work). However, in relation to other characteristics of older workers, such as their physical strength, a more detailed investigation is warranted.

Another limitation of this study is reflected in the reliance on self-reported questionnaires. Due to the sensitive issue of age discrimination being examined, the accuracy of responses could be questionable. It is possible that employers may have responded to the survey anticipating the investigators' expectations. Inaccurate responses may have also occurred as a result of certain employers being more informed than others on legislation or policies surrounding age discrimination in employment. Thus, more informed employers may actually feel more positively toward older workers, or may feel they must *appear* more positive in their views toward older employees. Future questionnaires could include items involving older worker policies, programs, and practices, in order to determine which employers were informed in these areas.

Qualitative follow-up (i.e. interviews) with some of the employers surveyed would allow for greater insight into the meanings that employers give to various questions and concepts used. In general, personal interviews with both employers and older workers may help clarify some of the misconceptions presented in this analysis. More appropriate and additional questions could then be designed for future survey research.

D. Additional Considerations for Future Research

In this section, I recommend other variables that might be examined in future research concerning employers' attitudes toward older workers. These variables include the following: employment status, compensation/ employee benefits, and study's originating country.

i. Employment Status

It would be interesting to explore whether differences exist in attitudes toward older workers when status of employment is considered. For example, are attitudes toward older part-time workers different than those toward older full-time workers? It is plausible that more positive attitudes are expressed for older part-time workers, as employers are not required to provide the same level of monetary compensation or benefit packages. In addition, employers may perceive that older part-time workers are

more flexible than younger workers who may have more role commitments, as compared to their younger counterparts (e.g. child-rearing obligations). The issue of part-time employment of older workers is becoming increasingly significant: "In 1976, 7% of older men [aged 55+] worked part-time. By 1997, the rate had doubled to 15%. Over the same period, the part-time rate of older women [aged 55+] grew from 27% to 36%" (Statistics Canada, 1998, 12).

ii. Compensation/ Employee Benefits

As mentioned in Chapter II, many employers perceive that older workers will need to be compensated more highly (e.g. higher wages, more comprehensive employee benefits packages), as a result of more experience. However, as mentioned in Chapter II, concerns about costs for older workers were not crucial in several of the organizations that participated in the IAW project (Marshall, 1996). In addition, "In 1995, male and female older workers [aged 55+] were somewhat less likely to receive all types of benefits than those aged 35 to 54" (Statistics Canada, 1998, 16). Therefore, increased compensation costs may be an unjustified concern to employers considering the recruitment or retention of older workers. It is suspected that costs may increase for employers who develop and implement training programs specifically for older workers. However, an assessment of these costs, as compared to the benefits that these programs would provide for older workers (e.g. increased productivity and contentment) could be investigated in future research. Thus, the issue of cost could be considered an additional indicator of employers' attitudes toward older workers in future research.

iii. Study's Originating Country

In my current study, it was not possible to compare Canadian employers' attitudes with those of other countries. It would be interesting to examine if there are attitudinal differences in Canada, as compared to the United States. In the United States attitudes may be concealed in response to the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), or employers in fact may be better informed and thus more positive toward older workers than in other countries. However, it should be noted that 24,000 age discrimination cases have been filed each year, for the last 10 years, under the ADEA (AARP, 1996). It would also be interesting to examine research conducted in England, where the program *Getting On* has recently been established to encourage more positive attitudes toward older workers. However, it is also known that, despite this program initiated by the government, age bars to recruitment are still quite prevalent in British job advertisements (Taylor & Walker, 1994).

Thus, the effectiveness of these anti-age discrimination programs also needs to be examined more comprehensively in the future. Are programs more effective in Canada than the United States, or is the highest success rate for older employees fighting against age discrimination in England? These issues are connected to the accountability of employers, which will be discussed in a following section of this chapter.

While my current study has illustrated that company size, employers' age, and employers' sex are indicators of attitudes toward older workers, further investigation, using the conceptual model that I created (See Figure 1), will be helpful to comprehend the reality that older employees will encounter in the workforce. The additional variables

that have been suggested in the previous sections of this chapter may also be included in this model in the future. However, a more detailed review of the literature pertaining to these three variables would first need to be done to determine the appropriate placement of the new concepts. Regression analysis can be done in future research in order to identify the predictors of employers' attitudes toward older workers and to identify opportunities for programs, practices, and policies to facilitate the needs of older workers. This analysis can only be accomplished after many of the limitations described in this study have been overcome.

E. Implications for Policies and Programs

Policy implications and program opportunities are suggested for employers and governments. Interestingly, more than half of the employers in this study (55%) felt that the aging of the Canadian population would have little or no effect on their specific organization's human resource policies. However, this study has demonstrated that the aging of the workforce is an area that warrants consideration by employers. Concerns that were of relevance to a small proportion of employers in this study surrounded issues related to the health or physical abilities of older workers (7%) and the increased costs that were associated with higher benefit packages of older workers (9%). These issues will become increasingly important to consider as the workforce ages to avoid disrupting the balance of the work environment.

However, both of these concerns should not be threatening to employers. First, reports emanating from data analyzed by Statistics Canada (1998), suggests that the

future generation of older workers (comprised of baby boomers) will be very different than today's generation. Baby boomers are more highly educated and have better technological skills than the current group of older workers. These skill changes, combined with changes in the workplace that have moved away from skills requiring physical labour, will increase the working life-span of the next generation of older workers, and make them more valuable to employers. Information manipulation is becoming the superlative requirement in the changing work environment (Statistics Canada, 1998). Issues surrounding the increased costs of older workers have been discussed in a previous section of this chapter.

It is anticipated that employers can use the results of this study to prepare for the certain changes that will occur as a result of the aging of the Canadian workforce. In this way, human resource policies, programs, and practices can be designed that will better accommodate the needs and strengths of older workers. The majority of current policies, programs, and practices that pertain specifically to older workers involve issues concerning retirement and early retirement, consequently pertaining to older workers exiting the labour force (Marshall, 1996). Programs that encourage older workers to remain in the organization for a longer period of time, such as those involving technological training, are generally not designed to meet the diverse learning needs of older workers (Marshall, 1996).

Additional research, including my own (Berger, 1996), has demonstrated that many policies exist that are not defined as age-specific by employers, yet do have a greater impact on older workers. For example, Employee Assistance Programs, eldercare

programs, flexible work arrangements, and environmental adaptations (ergonomics) may impact older workers to a larger degree than their younger counterparts. Furthermore, many policies that are intended to be age-neutral may still discriminate in company practices or programs. Using the example of technology again, while an organization's policy may be to train all workers, in practice managers are often selecting only younger workers to engage in their technological training programs (Marshall, 1996). Employers will need to re-evaluate their training programs to assess the proportions of older and younger workers that are actually being trained. Proportions should also be evaluated in terms of opportunities for advancement that are offered to workers.

Employers will also need to assess their recruitment practices. More positive employer attitudes can heighten the recruitment of older workers, which in turn can shorten the long periods of unemployment they often encounter. A preliminary investigation into employers' attitudes toward recruitment using the Employer Survey indicated that older workers do face real barriers during recruitment (Underhill & Marshall, 1998). Another recent study reported in the Toronto Star of 400 executives supported that an individual's age represented a barrier when seeking employment ("Age an obstacle", 1998). It was recognized that employees aged 46 to 50 and 51 to 55 take longer to find employment, as compared to workers aged 35 to 40 (24% longer and 66% longer, respectively). Therefore, it is plausible that older workers are being discriminated against in hiring practices. Furthermore, while employers may not have discriminatory policies regarding the hiring of older workers, the practices of employers may need to be questioned. For example, organizations could examine the proportion of workers above

the age of 45 they have hired in the last five years. Is this proportion considered acceptable to employers who have positive attitudes toward older workers? It is anticipated that the positive attitudes of employers discovered in this study can guide the practices, programs, and policies designed and implemented for older workers in the future. Whether these policies influence employers' attitudes or are a direct reflection of their attitudes is another interesting area to be investigated in the future.

Various policy implications and program opportunities also need to be considered by governments. This research suggests that existing policies should be re-examined, and new policies developed to prevent age discrimination in employment. In Canada, protection for older workers is currently posited to exist in the Canadian Charter of Human Rights, yet many claims against organizations for age discrimination have been unsuccessful. For example, in 1997, the Canadian Human Rights Commission received 424 complaints of age discrimination (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1997).[6] However, only six of these cases were resolved or settled, thirteen were directed to alternative redress mechanisms (grievance procedure or an employer's internal complaints procedure), and three cases were sent to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal for a hearing. Thus, a gap in the accountability of Canadian employers may exist. Would employers be less likely to engage in discriminatory practices (e.g. not hiring workers over age 45) if they would be held accountable for their actions? This issue could be considered in future research.

The findings from this study of employers' attitudes toward older workers can assist

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[6] Employers' prejudice was reflected in the lack of recruitment of older workers, mandatory retirement policies, and job loss in times of organizational downsizing or restructuring.

governments improve the current legislation, and develop new legislation and educational programs for employers to eliminate age discrimination in the workplace. It is recommended that while the development of legislation and educational programs should be designed for all employers, programs should first focus on improving the attitudes of employers' where significant differences were found in this study. For example, younger, male employers, in larger organizations, could be the initial focus for programs aimed at the elimination of age discrimination in the workplace. Community-based training organizations and older worker employment bureaus can also use these findings to suggest optimal work environments to older employees.

F. Concluding Remarks

The reality is that there will be an increasing proportion of older workers in the labour force in the near future. Employers and governments will increasingly face significant challenges as the workforce continues to age; challenges to which innovative and effective policies and programs will need to be designed and implemented to meet the needs of an aging workforce. The actions of employers (e.g. early retirement incentive programs) directly affect the needs of government policies (e.g. public pensions) (Marshall, 1996). Therefore, there is an urgent need for researchers, business, and governments to work in unison to improve the current work environment for older employees.

Results from this study indicated that Canadian employers' attitudes toward older workers are generally quite positive. Therefore, the lack of discriminatory attitudes found in this study, makes it plausible that older employees will decreasingly face overt discrimination in the workplace. However, despite the existence of positive attitudes found in this study, it is possible that age stereotypes are being reflected in employment policies, programs, and practices of employers (e.g. recruitment, training opportunities). This study has established the groundwork for the elimination of misconceptions or inaccurate stereotypes that employers have concerning older workers. Once negative stereotypes are eliminated, the well-being of older workers (or other currently disadvantaged groups) will be improved, and consequently, more positive working environments will be created for all members of the labour force in the future. Retaining and hiring experienced, knowledgeable, loyal, and trustworthy older employees, should be the preference for all employers. In order for employers to achieve this goal, the following three areas need to be considered: (1) employers must have access to information and knowledge that will allow them to act accordingly; (2) employers must be enabled by legislation; and (3) mechanisms must be in place to monitor and report on the effectiveness of employers' responses to the needs of older workers. These strategic approaches will not only empower informed employers to become leaders in their industries, but will also provide an environment in which governments, employers, and workers can work harmoniously and productively.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN *OPTIONS 45+* EMPLOYER SURVEY

Institute for Human Development,
Life Course and Aging
University of Toronto
Institut du développement humain
parcours des âges et du vieillissement
Université de Toronto

One Voice
The Canadian Seniors Network

La Voix
Le Réseau canadien des aîné(e)s

EMPLOYER QUESTIONNAIRE

December, 1996

Funded by Human Resources Development Canada, *Options 45+* Project

Aussi disponible en français

OPTIONS 45+ Project*

Employers' Questionnaire

As you answer the following questions, please keep in mind that all of the information you give us will be held in strict confidence, and be used only by a small research staff at the University of Toronto. The study results will be released only in the form of percentages or grouped data. If there are questions you would rather not answer do not feel obligated to do so. In completing this questionnaire you give consent to the use of the information you have provided for the purpose of the study.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. For each question please circle the NUMBER that most accurately represents your response.

   For example: (0) No 1 Yes 8 Don't know

2. An "OLDER WORKER" in this study is defined as anyone aged 45 or older and a "YOUNGER WORKER" is defined as anyone younger than 45. This definition is consistent with Human Resources Development Canada's (HRDC) definition and other research on aging.

3. Once you have completed the questionnaire, please return it directly to the Institute for Human Development, Life Course and Aging at the University of Toronto (a stamped, self-addressed envelope has been provided).

4. If you have any questions concerning this questionnaire please feel free to contact Susan Underhill at the Institute for Human Development, Life Course and Aging. For inquiries in French or questions concerning the *OPTIONS 45+* project please contact Sylvie Deliencourt at One Voice, the Canadian Seniors Network.

   Contacts:

Susan Underhill
Institute for Human Development,
Life Course and Aging
University of Toronto
222 College Street, Suite 106
Toronto, Ontario M5T 3J1
Phone: (416) 978-5968
Fax: (416) 978-4771
E-mail: susan.underhill@utoronto.ca

Sylvie Deliencourt
OPTIONS 45+ Project Co-ordinator
One Voice
1005-350 Sparks St.
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7S8
Phone: (613) 238-7624
Fax: (613) 235-4497
E-mail: onevoice@magi.com

*The *OPTIONS 45+* project was initiated by Human Resources Development Canada with One Voice, the Canadian Seniors Network. The purpose of this project is to assess the needs of workers 45 years and over through a collaboration with Human Resources Development Canada, Canadian businesses, older workers employment bureaux, and other agencies.

Q1. Please estimate the proportion of employees at your company who work ...

a. seasonally _____%
b. in a union _____%
c. shiftwork _____%
d. contract* _____%
e. an hourly position _____%
f. permanent part-time** _____%

* employed by your company for 3 months or more
** working less than 30 hours per week

Q2. In your own view, what is the proportion of employees in your company aged 45 years and older?

1	2	3	4
Less than 10%	Between 10 and 25%	Between 26 and 50%	Above 50%

Q3. In the last five years has this proportion....

1	2	3	4
increased?	decreased?	remained the same?	don't know

Q4. Do you think that in the coming five years this proportion will....

1	2	3	4
increase?	decrease?	remain the same?	don't know

Q5. In your opinion, how will the aging of Canada's population affect the Human Resource Policies of your company?

1	2	3	4	5
No effect	Little effect	Some effect	Great effect	Don't know

Q5a. If you feel this change will have an effect, please explain

_____
_____
_____

Q6. As the Baby Boom generation moves closer to retirement, do you foresee a shortage of younger workers to replace them?

0 No 1 Yes

Q7. Would you describe your company as presently... *(circle only one response)*

1	growing?	5	declining?
2	growing but cyclical?	6	declining but cyclical?
3	stable?	7	other *(please describe)* _____
4	stable but cyclical?		_____

Q8. Would you describe the industry your company is involved in as presently ... *(circle only one response)*

1	growing?	5	declining?
2	growing but cyclical?	6	declining but cyclical?
3	stable?	7	other *(please describe)* _____
4	stable but cyclical?		_____

Q9. At what age do the staff in your company usually retire?

		Enter age of men	*Enter age of women*	Don't know	N/A
a.	Employees in general	___	___	8	9
b.	Managers	___	___	8	9
c.	Supervisors	___	___	8	9
d.	Professionals (Engineers, Analyst, Information Systems etc.)	___	___	8	9
e.	Administrative staff (Secretary, Clerk, etc.)	___	___	8	9
f.	Technical staff (Lab technician, etc.)	___	___	8	9
g.	Maintenance	___	___	8	9
h.	Production	___	___	8	9
i.	Other *(please describe)* _____	___	___	8	9

Q10. **Overall and in the past five years,** has your company's workforce ...

1	2	3
increased?	decreased?	remained the same?

Q11. **In the past five years,** has your company used any of the following strategies to reduce its personnel costs? *(circle only one response)*

		No	Yes
a.	Wage freezes	0	1
b.	Wage roll-backs	0	1
c.	Reduction in benefits	0	1
d.	Reduced hours	0	1
e.	Job sharing	0	1
f.	Other *(please specify)* _____	0	1

Q12. **Has your company increased the size of its workforce at any time in the past five years?**

0 No

1 Yes

Q12a. **If yes, how much emphasis has your recruitment strategy placed on ...**

		No emphasis	Some emphasis	Much emphasis
a.	work experience?	1	2	3
b.	life experience?	1	2	3
c.	educational qualifications?	1	2	3
d.	technical skills?	1	2	3
e.	employment equity?	1	2	3
f.	willingness to relocate?	1	2	3
g.	salary?	1	2	3
h.	youth?	1	2	3

Q12b. Does your recruitment strategy differ by type of work?

0 No

1 Yes

If yes, please explain: _____

_____

_____

Q12c. How has this increase affected the average employee's workload at your company?

0	1	2	3
No effect	Too early to tell	Decreased slightly	Decreased a great deal

Q12d. In your own view, to what extent has this increase been advantageous or disadvantageous to older workers? *(circle only one response)*

1 it has had no advantage or disadvantage for older workers

2 it has been advantageous to older workers

3 it has been disadvantageous to older workers

Why? _____

_____

_____

Q13. **Has your company decreased the size of its workforce at any time in the past five years?**

0 No

1 Yes

Q13a. **If yes, how much emphasis has your company's reduction strategy placed on ...**

		No emphasis	Some emphasis	Much emphasis
a.	attrition with reduced or no hiring?	1	2	3
b.	early retirement with incentive programs?	1	2	3
c.	early retirement without incentives?	1	2	3
d.	other incentive programs?	1	2	3
e.	reduced hours?	1	2	3
f.	lay-offs?	1	2	3
g.	job sharing?	1	2	3

Q13b. Does your reduction strategy differ by type of work?

0 No

1 Yes

If yes, please explain: _____

_____

_____

Q13c. How has this decrease affected the average employee's workload at your company?

0	1	2	3
No effect	Too early to tell	Increased slightly	Increased a great deal

Q13d. **In your own view, to what extent has this reduction been advantageous or disadvantageous to older workers?** ***(circle only one response)***

1 it has had no advantage or disadvantage for older workers

2 it has been advantageous to older workers

3 it has been disadvantageous to older workers

Why? _____

_____

_____

Q14. **In the past five years, has your company provided incentives for early retirement?** *(circle only one response)*

0 No

1 Considering providing

2 Yes, currently providing

3 Yes, have provided in the last five years

8 Don't know

Q14a. **If yes, roughly what proportion of eligible staff have taken the early retirement in the last 5 years?**

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 10%	Between 10 and 25%	Between 26 and 50%	Above 50%	Don't know

Q15. **In the past five years, has your company provided incentives for postponed retirement (i.e. retirement after age 65) in order to retain workers?** *(circle only one response)*

0 No

1 Considering providing

2 Yes, currently providing

3 Yes, have provided in the last five years

8 Don't know

Q15a. **If yes, roughly what proportion of eligible staff have taken postponed retirement in the last 5 years?**

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 10%	Between 10 and 25%	Between 26 and 50%	Above 50%	Don't know

Q16. **In the past five years, has your company offered a formal gradual retirement option (i.e., reduction of hours but maintaining full pension eligibility)?** *(circle only one response)*

0 No

1 Considering providing

2 Yes, currently providing

3 Yes, have provided in the last 5 years

8 Don't know

Q16a. **If yes, roughly what proportion of eligible staff have taken gradual retirement in the last 5 years?**

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 10%	Between 10 and 25%	Between 26 and 50%	Above 50%	Don't know

Q17. **In the past five years,** has your company been involved in or considered being involved in any of the following practices? *(circle only one response in the Status column and if program is in place, also circle only one response in the Effectiveness column.)*

		Status			Effectiveness		
		In place	Considering	No Program	Effective	Not effective	Too early to tell
a.	Outsource work to other companies	1	2	3	1	2	3
b.	Substitute technology for labour	1	2	3	1	2	3
c.	Transfer work overseas	1	2	3	1	2	3
d.	Use of salary/pension combinations to provide termination incentives	1	2	3	1	2	3
e.	Use of pension accrual after age 65	1	2	3	1	2	3
f.	Combined use of reduced hours/employment insurance benefits to decrease workforce	1	2	3	1	2	3
g.	Increased retraining	1	2	3	1	2	3
h.	Flextime options	1	2	3	1	2	3
i.	Eldercare/childcare services	1	2	3	1	2	3
j.	Gradual retirement	1	2	3	1	2	3
k.	Retiree or displaced worker job bank	1	2	3	1	2	3
l.	Rehire retirees or displaced workers as consultants	1	2	3	1	2	3
m.	Rehire retirees or displaced workers on a part-time basis	1	2	3	1	2	3
n.	Use of retirees or displaced workers on special projects	1	2	3	1	2	3
o.	Use of flexible work options	1	2	3	1	2	3
p.	Strategic repositioning*	1	2	3	1	2	3
q.	Time off for family responsibility	1	2	3	1	2	3

*Positioning workers in jobs according to their changing needs and abilities

Q18. **In the past five years,** were there any substantial technological changes in the machinery or equipment used in your industry?

0 No 1 Yes

Q19. Does your company have a mandatory retirement policy?

0 No 8 Don't know

1 Yes

Q19a. **If yes,** at what age is mandatory retirement? ____ *(enter age)*

Q20. Do you personally believe in mandatory retirement?

0 No

1 Yes

Q20a. If yes, at what age? ___ ___ *(enter age)*

Q21. Does your company offer training through ... *(you may circle more than one response)*

1	2	3	4
On the job training?	In house courses?	External courses?	Does not provide training

Q22. Does your company feel an obligation to provide job security to its employees until normal retirement age?

0 No 1 Yes

Q23. At what age, generally, would you consider people as being too old to hire into your company?

1 No age is too old

2 Generally, someone would be too old at age ___ ___ *Enter age*

3 Don't know

Q24. In general, are there jobs at your company to which employees over 45 would have difficulty in adapting?

0 No 8 Don't know

1 Yes

a. What percentage of overall jobs at your company would pose problems of adaptability for older employees? _____%

b. Please give one or two examples of these jobs:_____

_____

_____

c. Please specify the main difficulties they would have: _____

_____

_____

Q25. Does your company have programs to assist displaced workers in finding new jobs?

0 No 8 Don't know

1 Yes

a. If yes, is special attention given to older workers?

0 No 8 Don't know

1 Yes

Q26. Does your company co-operate with government or community agencies to assist displaced workers in finding new jobs?

0 No 8 Don't know

1 Yes

a. If yes, what agencies? *(please list, attach additional sheet if necessary)*

_____

_____

_____

Q27. Have the recent changes to Canada's Employment Insurance policy (including change of name from "Unemployment Insurance") affected your company's policies?

0 No 8 Too early to tell 9 Not aware of changes

1 Yes

a. If yes, how? _____

_____

_____

Q28. Are you aware of proposed changes in Canada's Pension policy (CPP)?

1	2	3	4
Very aware	Somewhat aware	Not very aware	Not at all aware

Q29. If the government decides to raise the age of eligibility for CPP to 67, will this affect your company's retirement policies?

0 Unlikely 8 Don't know

1 Likely

a. If likely, how? _____

_____

Q30. In your opinion, what are the challenges that your company is likely to encounter in the next 5 years? *(circle only one response)*

		Yes, definitely	Yes, quite likely	No, not very likely	No, definitely not	N/A
a.	Marketing to an older demographic	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Re-organizing the workflow	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Keeping up with technological change	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Controlling salary costs	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Controlling benefits costs	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Increased globalization	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Other *(Please specify)*	1	2	3	4	5

_____

Q31. **In your personal opinion, and thinking of the older workers at your company, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.** ***(circle only one response)***

Older workers ...		Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	can adapt to organizational change.	1	2	3	4
b.	are good mentors/teachers for younger workers.	1	2	3	4
c.	are highly respected.	1	2	3	4
d.	are too cautious.	1	2	3	4
e.	are reliable employees.	1	2	3	4
f.	have trouble with shift work.	1	2	3	4
g.	are marking time until retirement.	1	2	3	4
h.	are productive employees.	1	2	3	4
i.	are hard to train.	1	2	3	4
j.	have difficulty working overtime.	1	2	3	4
k.	dislike taking orders from younger employees.	1	2	3	4
l.	have strong communication skills.	1	2	3	4
m.	cannot do heavy physical work.	1	2	3	4
n.	are interested in technological change.	1	2	3	4
o.	have few accidents.	1	2	3	4
p.	have more absences.	1	2	3	4

FOR THE NEXT SET OF QUESTIONS WE ASK YOU TO THINK OF YOUR INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE.

Q32. In your opinion, do some age groups have more difficulty than others in finding jobs in your industry?

0 No

1 Yes

Q32a. If yes, please rank from 1 to 4 the following groups in order of difficulty. ***(1 = most difficult and 4 = least difficult)***

60 years or older _____

45-59 years _____

30-44 years _____

less than 30 years _____

Q33. Thinking now about possible *barriers* to employment in your industry, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that each of the following characteristics poses a barrier. *(crcle only one response)*

		Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	Being older (45 years or older)	1	2	3	4
b.	Being a woman	1	2	3	4
c.	Being a visible minority	1	2	3	4
d.	Being disabled	1	2	3	4
e.	Being aboriginal	1	2	3	4
f.	Being a man	1	2	3	4

Q34. In your view, do employers in your industry discriminate more against **older** workers who have **more than one** of the above characteristics?

0 No

1 Yes

If yes, what combination of characteristics do you feel poses the greatest barrier to employment. _____

_____

_____

WE WOULD LIKE TO CONCLUDE BY ASKING SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU.

Q35. What is your current job title?

_____

Q36. Are you ... 1 Male *OR* 2 Female?

Q37. In what year were you born? *Enter year* 19___

Q38. Please indicate the *highest level* of education that you have completed. *(circle only one response)*

1 Completed elementary or public school

2 Completed high school

3 Completed vocational/technical college or a special diploma program

4 Completed undergraduate university degree

5 Completed post-graduate university degree(s)

Q39. How long have you been in the paid labour force?

Enter number of years ___ *OR* *months* ___

Q40. How long have you been employed by your current employer?

Enter number of years ___ ___ *OR* *months* ___ ___

Q41. Do you have retirement plans?

0 No

1 Yes

Q41a. If yes, what are your plans (including your anticipated age at retirement).

_____

_____

_____

Q42. Throughout this questionnaire we have defined an older worker as anyone aged 45 or over. Do you agree with this definition?

1 Yes

0 No

a. If no, at what age do you consider someone to be an older worker?

___ ___ *enter age*