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## Diverse Human Resources – Motivation and State of Knowledge about Demographic Trends in Organizations of the Visegrad Group V4 Countries

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** The aim of this article is to determine the state of knowledge about the future of the labor market and demographic changes that are taking place in the countries of the Visegrad Group V4 in the perspective of the next 5 years – among the organizations of this group and level of motivation of diverse human resources.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** In order to verify the thesis and answer the research questions, the method of literature analysis and criticism, the method of diagnostic survey and statistical methods were used. The study was based on a survey questionnaire, based on the opinions of 401 representatives of organizations of the Visegrad Group V4 countries.

**Findings:** It turned out that the state of knowledge about the future of the labor market and demographic changes that are taking place in the Visegrad Group V4 countries in the next 5 years is at a low level. Research has revealed that employee motivation levels vary by gender, age and health, and that diverse resources can help improve business outcomes.

**Practical Implications:** The practical business implications are primarily concerned with the use of research findings in the selection process for Generation Z organizations.

**Originality/value:** It turned out that education and place of residence significantly differentiate the changes that are taking place in the countries of the Visegrad Group V4 and motivation different group.

**Keywords:** Demographic changes, Visegrad Group, motivation, diverse group.

**JEL classification:** M11, J41, J24.

**Paper Type:** Research study.

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## **1. Introduction**

Changes taking place on the labor market, globalization and increased competitiveness are the challenges faced by modern organizations today. Society is changing rapidly, and demographic changes taking place in the world and in Poland can potentially affect many aspects of organizational management. For this reason, organizations are increasingly diverse in relation to both their external and internal environment. Maximizing and drawing on diversity in the workplace is an important issue for today's quality of management and not only human resource management (Gross-Gołacka, 2016).

As for the whole world, one of the biggest challenges for Europe is demographic change, in this part of the world the population will be getting older. Today's median age of 30 will rise to 36 in 2050 and 42 in 2100, where today a quarter of people in Europe are aged 60+ (Global..., p. 8). These changes are being noticed in all European countries, and the ageing of the population is currently one of Europe's most important socio-economic problems. Demographic changes will have a significant impact on the labour market over the next two decades and beyond, both in the Visegrad Group V4 countries and in other parts of Europe (Jiřincová, 2013, p. 37-40). Progressive socio-economic changes mean that (Urbaniak, 2014, p. 63-79):

1. The labour market is changing, including working conditions, lifestyles, employment profiles;
2. Traditional patterns of hiring, consumption, and mindset are losing their relevance. They have an impact on who we employ, to whom goods and services are provided, and who provides them;
3. The importance of groups that have been marginalized so far, e.g. people 50+, women, on the labour market and the market of goods and services is increasing. Managers more and more often manage people from different parts of the world who speak different languages, have a different value system or have a different idea of what good cooperation in a team, organization of work or how to solve problems is.

In view of such assumptions in the conditions of volatility in the modern world, there is an urgent need for a new look at the most important resource of the organization, which are people and human capital, which are characterized by competence, subjectivity and responsibility. It is worth looking at this issue from the perspective of demographic features such as: age, gender, origin, or full fitness / disability.

Of course, these are not one-off changes because demography is constantly changing, and in different parts of the world there are different changes and at different rates, which creates greater challenges for human resource management (HRM) specialists, because they employ, train, manage and maintain specific groups of employees in the organization.

According to the author, it seems that these changes have a big impact on harms around the world, as the workforce becomes more and more diverse, which forces organizations to make significant changes in the way they approach human resource management. In fact, there will soon be no "average worker" today, and jobs may be diverse in terms of gender, age and culture. And today's strategies used by organizational units for HR may become unnecessary and outdated. It seems, therefore, that the success and competitiveness of an organization depends on its ability to embrace and accept diversity and realize the benefits.

As a consequence of these considerations, the main goal of the study was outlined, consisting in determining the state of knowledge about the future of the labor market and demographic changes that are taking place in the countries of the Visegrad Group V4 in the next 5 years – among the organizations. An additional goal of the article is to get to know the opinion on the level of motivation of diverse human resources in the organization. Gender, age and health status were taken into account for the analysis. When conducting the research, the method of literature study and diagnostic survey, using the survey technique, was used. This allowed for the formulation of conclusions, including postulative ones, and recommendations for the necessary changes in management, aimed at diversified human resources.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Diverse Human Resources**

The literature on the subject devotes attention to defining the concept of diversity from the perspective of its management in an organization. In one of the first articles on diversity, diversity was described as "people from different ethnic backgrounds, different nationalities, ages, religions, and social classes" (Carter, Kepner, Shaw, and Woodson, 1982; Drucker, 2007; Keil, Amershi, Holmes, Jablonski, Luthi, Matoba, Plett, and Unruch, 2007). Over the years, diversity has applied to virtually all characteristics and newly added such as gender, economy class, marital status, sexual orientation, education, disability, etc.

According to Drucker (2007), diversity encompasses many demographic and socio-economic aspects of society, including an ageing population, an increase in the competences and knowledge of workers, an increase in immigration, the changing role of women in the labour market, and growing cultural and gender differences in the organisation. For example, British researchers Kirton and Greene (2005) point out that gender and race can be treated as the main characteristics shaping the situation on the labour market, together with disability, age and sexual orientation, as other characteristics of diverse human resources (Kirton and Greene, 2005; Sonenshein, 2007).

But many interpretations of diversity are broader than those that take into account demographic variables. For example, Heery and Noon in the Oxford Dictionary of

Human Resources Management describe diversity as "a concept that recognizes the diversity of traits possessed by people in an organization" (Noon, 2007, pp. 784). The concepts emphasize the individuality of each person and the importance of each person's values with their personal combination of e.g., skills, competences, characteristics, knowledge and personality in the organization/team. It seems, therefore, that the success and competitiveness of an organization depends on its ability to embrace and accept diversity and become aware of its benefits (Kanwal, 2019, p. 77-90).

## **2.2 Motivation of Diverse Human Resources in the Organization**

In the current dynamic environment – for organizations to function effectively – flexibility is required of them. With the differentiation of hrm tools in relation to individual groups of employees can also take place in the case of motivation. Motivation is a very complex phenomenon, dependent on many conditions (areas of life, socio-economic living conditions, individual and temperamental differences, etc.). Motivation in psychology is a concept that defines the process of regulating behavior. It has the task of controlling the taking, maintenance and completion of undertaken activities (Reykowski, 1992). In general, motivation takes into account any factors that influence people to behave in a certain way. Three components are listed direction (what a person is trying to do), effort (that is, how hard he tries), perseverance (how long he tries).

Currently, in organizations, we can come into contact with various groups of employees who are characterized by a specific approach to employment, workplace or work-life balance issues (Mahmoud, Ali, Fuxman, Mohr, Reisel, and Grigoriou, 2020, p. 194-195). For example, for the age criterion, specific age groups of employees are distinguished by assigning them a specific system of values or needs (Luthra, 2021). We distinguish the following groups (Bear, 2011; Zagórowska 2012, p. 15-16; Tulgan, 2009; European Commission 2015), traditionalists (born before 1945), baby boomers (born in 1946-1964), generation X (born in 1965-1980), generation Y, so-called millennials (born in 1981-2000) and generation C or Z (born after 2000).

Knowledge of the needs and motivations of even these groups of employees can significantly affect the effectiveness of the implemented methods of human resources management (Gerhold and Whiting, 2020, p. 11-14). Polish researcher Jamka (2011) presents the basic problems of specific groups of employees and the challenges associated with them in an organization where there is a diverse human capital (Table 1).

In light of the above, organizations face a whole set of challenges related to the employment and work of diverse employees. It is crucial that managers and owners treat this diversity not as a threat, but as a market advantage. Without this diversity, companies and institutions in a few years will simply not be able to function

efficiently, and employers will be forced to use their knowledge, experience and skills to operate in the social structure of the company.

**Table 1.** *The main challenges in managing people towards diverse groups of employees*

<b>Employee groups</b>	<b>Basic management problems</b> <b>Objective: complementary use of the potential of work</b>
<i>Multigenerational workers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- diversification of approaches to individual age groups modified labor standards supported by adapted organization of working conditions and time</li> <li>- developing acceptance and understanding of the need for such an approach debunking myths</li> <li>- emphasis on intergenerational - cooperation joint tasks/projects/teams</li> </ul>
<i>Multicultural workers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge and acceptance of different systems of values, attitudes and needs resulting from national culture and national management styles/models</li> <li>- creating an organizational culture integrating multiculturalism</li> <li>- coordination of learning processes for the effective functioning of a multicultural internal and external environment at the individual, group, organizational and international level</li> </ul>
<i>"Dispersed" employees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- dematerialization of work increase in the importance of trust in interpersonal and interorganizational relations</li> <li>- business partnership the need to understand the entire company's network of connections between all stakeholders</li> <li>- focus on supply chain/value cooperation based on activating opportunities as a basis for competition</li> </ul>
<i>"Virtual" employees - teleworkers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- physical remoteness from the direct and indirect management entity reduced possibility of control and organizational development of the employee</li> <li>- decreasing impact of organizational culture decrease in employee loyalty and their sense of organizational identity</li> <li>- global recruitment of employees</li> <li>- emphasis on coordination of activities and communication</li> </ul>
<i>Knowledge workers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the need for autonomy in the design and execution of activities increase the importance of work coordination and task motivation</li> <li>- high independence of the evaluation of activities from feedback, decreasing importance of targeting</li> </ul>
<i>Disadvantaged workers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- meeting the requirements of legal regulations (mainly of the European Union)</li> <li>- modification of work standards and organization of working conditions and time</li> </ul>

**Source:** B. Jamka, *The human factor in the contemporary enterprise resource or capital? Oficyna Wolters Kluwer business, Warsaw 2011, p. 262.*

On the other hand, there are a number of "hindering" factors - not only on the part of employers, but also on the side of older employees themselves - e.g., employees "mentally" begin to part with employment much earlier than the retirement age. And lingering stereotypes, habits and the times of the year still make it difficult for companies to effectively employ various groups of employees, e.g., people 50+ (Williams, 2020, p. 59-77).

### 3. Materials and Methods

In order to verify the thesis and answer the research questions, the method of literature analysis and criticism, the method of diagnostic survey and statistical methods were used. A quantitative-qualitative study was conducted in V4 Visegrad Group countries, based on a questionnaire survey, among 4001 organizations. The research sample consisted of 51,20% of women and 49,80% men. In terms of age, the largest group of respondents were people of 40-49 years of age (28,90%), followed by the 30-39 age group (26,60%) and below 39 years of age (21%). Essentially, people over 40 years of age constituted almost 53% of all respondents.

The majority of respondents were owners/co-owners of enterprises (27,9%) and representatives of the group “other positions” (31%). 17% of the respondents represented the positions of HR specialists and 11% were personnel directors. People representing the position of president/vice-president were in the minority at 3,3%, whereas 11% were PR directors.

#### 3.1 Results of Empirical Research

It turned out that 50% of respondents predict that there will be more foreigners on the labor market and in the environment of the organization. A minority of respondents (30%) indicate that there will be an increase in the number of people under the age of 30 (33%) and aged 30-39. Also, only 1/4 of the respondents assume that in the next 5 years there will be more elderly people (those 50+), people aged 40-49, women and people with disabilities.

It also turns out that half of the respondents predict that the number of men (53%) and women (46%) will not change. Also, a minority of respondents (30%) estimate that the number of people aged 30-39 and people with disabilities will not change on the labour market and in the organisation in the next 5 years. The share of people aged 50+ in the labour market will also not change according to 25% of respondents, as will the number of people aged 40-49 (38%).

**Table 2. Demographic changes in opinion organization V4 (%)**

	C Z	H U	P L	S K	V 4	C Z	H U	P L	S K	V 4	C Z	H U	P L	S K	V 4
<i>Group</i>	Increases					Remain at the same level					Decrease				
Woman	30	20	23	32	<b>26</b>	50	14	66	54	<b>46</b>	12	0	4	10	<b>6</b>
Men	22	4	16	9	<b>13</b>	63	8	68	72	<b>53</b>	6	6	7	16	<b>9</b>
People below 30 years	38	20	20	56	<b>33</b>	30	6	23	22	<b>20</b>	21	8	46	15	<b>2</b>
People ages 31-39 years	45	9	46	28	<b>32</b>	35	18	32	28	<b>28</b>	9	2	9	39	<b>1</b>
People ages	51	9	25	19	<b>26</b>	28	18	50	57	<b>38</b>	7	8	9	17	<b>1</b>

40-49 years															<b>0</b>
People 50+	48	2	16	33	<b>25</b>	19	1	43	35	<b>24</b>	18	6	26	25	<b>19</b>
Disabled people	32	20	19	32	<b>26</b>	38	9	30	40	<b>29</b>	10	6	13	16	<b>11</b>
Foreigners	66	20	34	74	<b>49</b>	10	3	16	9	<b>9</b>	3	2	12	10	<b>7</b>

*Source: Own research.*

A significant minority of respondents (19%) indicate that there will be a reduction in the number of people over 50 years of age. But also only 22% of respondents indicate that there will be a reduction in the number of people under 30 in the labor market and in the environment of the organization. What can be agreed with the first conclusion is difficult to agree with the second.

Analysis of the results for individual countries allows us to see that the Czech Republic and Poland were the closest in their forecasts to the official forecasts regarding the demographic situation of the surveyed countries. Overall, the results in this area cannot be considered satisfactory as they do not coincide with country-specific projections, which should be assumed to be stable and not subject to change.

According to the authors, it seems that the lack of knowledge about how the demographic structure of societies will be shaped, on the one hand, may have a significant impact on the acquisition and retention of employees, on the other hand, the perspective may limit the building of a competitive advantage by not adapting goods and services to the needs of specific social groups.

Respondents were asked whether diverse teams could lead to improved business outcomes in an organization. The results showed that the majority of respondents agree with the above thesis, including "strongly agree" (14%) and "agree" (62%) that diverse teams contribute to improving business performance. Only the remaining 1/4 of respondents "rather disagree" with this view, and the strong opponents belong to individual individuals (2.5%). The biggest supporters of diverse teams are respondents from Polish, followed by Hungary and Slovakia.

The results of the research lead to the conclusion that there is a great openness to diversity on the part of the surveyed organizations, but there is still a lack of sufficient knowledge about the diversity of human resources, which was included in the previous answers.

The respondents were also asked whether the age and gender of the employee is related to his level of motivation. The respondents indicated that in relation to both of these characteristics, they notice differences in the level of motivation, indicating the feature - age (77%) and gender (65%), respectively. In Hungary and Poland, the vast majority of respondents confirmed this dependence, which cannot be said about the representatives of the Czech Republic.

**Table 3.** Motivation of diverse human resources in opinion organizations V4 (%)

	C Z	H U	P L	S K	V 4	C Z	H U	P L	S K	V 4	C Z	H U	P L	S K	V 4
<i>Group</i>	Poorly motivated					Average motivated					Very motivated				
Employees below 30 years	22	30	8	46	<b>26</b>	54	22	21	36	<b>33</b>	11	42	34	18	<b>26</b>
Employees ages 31-39 years	5	10	5	9	<b>7</b>	43	73	30	68	<b>54</b>	44	11	27	23	<b>26</b>
Employees ages 40-49 years	9	7	11	23	<b>13</b>	19	36	38	32	<b>31</b>	66	52	13	46	<b>44</b>
Employees 50+	8	15	24	23	<b>17</b>	30	38	25	46	<b>35</b>	55	41	13	32	<b>35</b>
Woman	7	11	4	32	<b>13</b>	45	37	31	64	<b>44</b>	33	46	26	5	<b>27</b>
Men	2	6	6	23	<b>9</b>	35	61	42	64	<b>50</b>	50	25	13	14	<b>25</b>
Disabled employees	11	26	4	14	<b>14</b>	31	47	24	23	<b>31</b>	25	21	32	41	<b>30</b>

*Source:* Own research.

The results revealed that groups of employees aged 40-49 (44% of indications) and people aged 50+ (35% of indications) compared to other groups of employees received the highest number of indications that they are highly motivated to work. However, these results cannot be considered satisfactory. 30% of respondents also indicated that people with disabilities are highly motivated. About 25% of respondents confirmed that groups such as: employees under 30 years of age, employees aged 30-39, women, men are highly motivated in the workplace.

On the other hand, in the opinion of 26% of representatives of the organization, the group of employees with low motivation to work are employees under 30 years of age. Employees 50+ also according to 17% of respondents and people with disabilities, women, people aged 40-49 according to 13% of respondents are groups with low motivation to work.

About half of the respondents note that people aged 30-39 (53%), men (50%) and women (44%) have an average level of motivation to work. Also, 1/3 of respondents note that people under 30 years of age, people aged 40-49, people 50+ and people with disabilities present an average level of motivation at work. Respondents were also asked which groups of employees – in their opinion (maximum 3 answers) – competences, opinions and ideas are very valuable for the organization. The results shown in the below table.

**Table 4.** Most valuable employees for an employer – opinion organization V4 (%)

<i>Group</i>	CZ	HU	PL	SK	V4
Employees below 30 years	16	61	35	22	<b>33</b>
Employees ages 31-39 years	44	74	53	48	<b>55</b>
Employees ages 40-49 years	60	72	19	36	<b>47</b>
Employees 50+	19	7	11	28	<b>16</b>
Woman	22	5	26	9	<b>15</b>
Men	31	54	21	22	<b>32</b>

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Disabled employees	4	0	3	0	<b>2</b>
No such group	15	20	22	22	<b>20</b>

*Source: Own research.*

The results show that the most valuable employees for an employer are employees aged 30-49. In the case of respondents from Polish, Slovakia and Hungary, the group of employees aged 30-39 received more indications, and respondents from the Czech Republic and Hungary value workers aged 40-49 more. Next, in the studied context, there is a group of employees under 30 years of age and men.

Unfortunately, a small number of respondents indicated the high value of ideas, ideas or competences of people aged 50+ and women. The discussed case and the earlier one can be interpreted in such a way that in the studied organizations significant differences in the level of motivation of specific groups of employees are noticed. In favor of those aged 30-49 years and men. And to the disadvantage of such groups as, people under 30 years of age, people 50+, women and people with disabilities. Such an approach may limit the equal opportunities of these groups of employees, their sense of value, commitment and negatively affect the use of their potential. In addition, these results confirm strongly rooted stereotypes in relation to the indicated groups of employees, i.e., people 50+ or women.

The study also found which social characteristics (age, gender, full fitness/disability, ethnicity, religion, education) they believe may most often promote unequal treatment and discrimination in the workplace. It turned out that in the opinion of respondents, the age of the employee is the most common cause of these negative phenomena. 40% of respondents thought so. In this infamous ranking, education (35%) was followed by gender (30%) and ethnicity (29%).

This distribution of responses varies from country to country. The most frequently indicated feature (3 features could be indicated) that could contribute to unequal treatment and discrimination in the workplace in the Czech Republic (61%) and Poland (29%) was age, and in Hungary (56%) and Slovakia (46%) - education. The second most common indication for Hungary (37%), Polish (21%) and Slovakia (42%) was ethnicity, and for the Czech Republic - gender (44 %).

#### **4. Discussion**

The research has shown that the level of knowledge about the future of the labor market and demographic changes taking place in the countries of the V4 Visegrad Group over the next 5 years - among the organizations of the V4 Visegrad Group countries - is at a low level. Unfortunately, the surveyed organizations do not show knowledge of what supply on the labor market should be expected, which is certainly not beneficial for acquiring and retaining employees and building a competitive advantage.

The surveyed representatives of organizations are optimistic that diverse teams can contribute to the improvement of the organization's business results, which allows them to believe in creating and using such teams - consisting of various employees.

It turned out that, in the opinion of the respondents, differences resulting from sex, age and health condition affect the level of employee motivation. According to the respondents, the most motivated group are employees aged 40-49, and people aged 30-39 as well as men and women are moderately motivated. On the other hand, the low level of motivation also applies to employees under 30, employees over 50, women and people with disabilities.

When asked which group of employees has competences and opinions and are the most valuable for the organization, they indicated people aged 30-49, followed by people under 30, and men. The competences, opinions and ideas of people over 50, women and people with disabilities turned out to be of little value for the surveyed companies. This negative trend is also confirmed by the fact that the respondents indicate that it is precisely from the perspective of age and level of education that the greatest exposure to unequal treatment and discrimination in the labor market (and in the workplace) is most at risk.

## **5. Conclusion**

The conducted research also suggests several postulatory conclusions. First, you should promote the building of diverse teams and the resulting benefits for the organization. Both for the employer and employees. The concept of diversity management at various levels of operation should be included in the company's strategy, from the strategy and mission of the organization, to the implementation of solutions in the field of human resource management, including the acquisition and retention of employees or the process of motivating.

It is therefore necessary to further promote the diversity of human resources and the trends that will take place in this area. However, this requires multifaceted activities in the studied area. This situation requires extensive training and educational activities for all employees of the organization (including management) aimed at eliminating stereotypes and prejudices as well as all manifestations of discrimination and unequal treatment in the workplace and promoting the idea of diversity management.

Secondly, getting to know the needs of specific groups of employees and adjusting motivational tools, because, as research has shown, motivation to work varies depending on age or gender, it is related to demographic characteristics. In the light of the above, it is worth recommending organizations to research the needs and expect from their employees or simply motivators important for specific social groups in the organization, e.g., young people, the elderly, women, people of a different nationality or religion.

Just as organizations research new products or services, they should research the demographics of the current workforce and the projected demographics of the future workforce to determine what the expectations are for their workplace.

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