

Values and Self-Perception of Older Workers who Work as Merchandise Packers in Supermarkets in Culiacán, México

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Abstract

According to Castillo (2013), in this year 32,340 people over 60 years old worked in México as merchandise packers in supermarkets without a salary.

The main purpose of this research was to identify the perceptions that packers of merchandise have about their work and about the state of health in which they are in the final stage of their life.

A questionnaire was designed and 125 merchandise packers were surveyed in supermarkets in Culiacán, Sinaloa, México. Using an analysis of means the results show that most of them are men (60%), with age ranging between 60 and 70 years, with very low school preparation and many of them do not enjoy an economic pension that serve as sustenance; almost the totality works by economic necessity; mainly of men are not satisfied with their work situation; 52.99% of women respondents said that they had a regular or bad state of health.

Keywords: Organizational values, older workers, self-perception against work, Mexican supermarkets.

1) Background

1.1 Older adults in numbers and challenges

Based on Maniar and Mehta (2017), according to the World Health Organization (WHO), an older person or adult is an individual 60 years of age or older; citing that these people around the world face problems specific to this stage of life ranging from poor health to the absence of a secure and sufficient income to support themselves and their economic dependents, lack of social security, loss role and social recognition and the absence of opportunities to creatively use their free time.

The same previous authors state that around the world many older adults feel energetic and want to continue contributing socially, so they do not want to retire. And they maintain that, although the main reason why older people work is to earn their economic livelihood, many of them also want to continue in their jobs for self-realization, to maintain friendly relationships with their colleagues or to continue having social participation.

In developed countries, such as Spain, according to the words of Héctor Maravall, director of the Institute for the Elderly and Social Services (IMSERSO, 1997), almost all older people are guaranteed a pension, they have achieved economic advantages in certain aspects of social life who do not have other layers of the population, participate more and more actively in social, cultural, leisure and sports life, live longer and with better health conditions in a good part of this stage of life. On the other hand, in the United States of America the situation for older adults does not seem so flattering. According to Sharit et al. (2009), many American workers can no longer count on traditional "defined benefit" pension plans and are not leaving enough funds in alternative or other retirement plans.

In the case of México, the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI, 2016), taking into account the figures from the 2015 Intercensal Survey, indicates that the amount of the population aged 60 and over in México was 12.4 million and represented 10.4% of the total population.

1.2 Quality of life in older people

For Azpiazu et al. (2002) quality of life is the global perception of satisfaction in a certain number of key dimensions, with special emphasis on the well-being of the individual. This term has different meanings for different people, since the pattern with which an individual values their own quality of life depends on their experience and the distance between their expectations and their achievements. Additionally, Azpiazu et al. (2002) state that quality of life is given by the degree of satisfaction achieved by the person with the opportunities offered by life and what has been achieved in those aspects that are important to them.

While for Rojo et al. (2002), quality of life is located as a global or dimensional concept related to life expectations and the satisfaction of needs, it is built from various components or areas and several domains have been recognized such as: health, work, leisure or free time, sources of income, socioeconomic level, physical and social environment, education and intellectual function, family, to name a few of the most common.

In relation to the quality of life of older people, for Martínez and Pérez (2006), an older person has quality of life as long as they show autonomy and can carry out basic and instrumental activities of daily life, enjoying a filial protection satisfactory (living with their relatives and receiving good treatment, affection and attention, or even living alone, that they receive this same positive influence from family, friends and relatives and feel satisfied), that even if they suffer from chronic non-communicable diseases that remain treated and properly controlled, and do not interfere with the normal performance of their daily activities, and that manifests a satisfactory state of mind.

1.3 Elderly people who pack merchandise in self-service stores

According to Ramírez (2005), expressed in his article in the newspaper La Jornada of the UNAM (National Autonomous University of México), the supermarket packers are known as *matchsticks*, they do not have a contract, base salary or any benefit, however, they are forced by the company to meet formal requirements as if they were employees, cover hours, fulfill responsibilities and are even punished if they break the rules. Also, Martínez (2009), says that the "elderly volunteer packers" plan began in 2003 with the noble objective of providing work for older people, however, it has been marred by cases of mistreatment and discrimination. Some are forced to carry out risky activities for their integrity, suffer discrimination from bosses and clients, in addition to being fired for "useless, slow and lazy." For his part, Castillo (2013) states that in México in that year 32 thousand 340 people over 60 years of age worked as baggers in department stores, all without a salary and, in many cases, with exploitation, harassment, discrimination and without rights labor.

The study of older adults who pack merchandise in self-service stores has been addressed by different researchers who have different concerns about this social segment. Gómez-Lomelí et al. (2010), carried out an investigation with old people who work as packers of merchandise in the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco, México, between May and July 2008, 416 people aged 60 and over, volunteer packers of Soriana stores located within the metropolitan area. The average age of the adults was 69.4 years, within the range studied between 60 and 87 years; Men between 66 and 71 stood out in proportion; men reported that they were retired or pensioned in 65.3%; of the women, only 27.7% had this status. In the group of married men or in a free union, that is, with a partner, there were 75.1%; women living outside of a union (single, widowed, divorced and separated) corresponded to 72.7%. This last data was associated with the results of who they lived with: men were accompanied by a spouse/children/sons-in-law-daughters-in-law/grandchildren in 72%; women preferred to live only with children/daughters-in-law-sons-in-law/grandchildren/other relatives and friends, in 43.4%. Most of both sexes expressed having primary level education: 59.5% of men and 57% of women.

Regarding the tasks and the type of work carried out by the old people who works as packers of merchandise in self-service stores, Castillo (2003) states that the functions of them are not limited only to keeping customer purchases in bags or boxes, their work also includes take shifts to do cleaning work, be a baggage handler or usher, losing tips during those hours. In addition, the possibility of breaking anything is high and it is "the end" of the total tips of a day's work of up to six hours standing.

This coincides with Argüelles (2014), who carried out a study on packers and car attendants in self-service stores in the city of Guadalupe, Nuevo León, where it became clear that older people who pack merchandise have to sign an attendance list, accommodate cars and "bag shopping" as mandatory activities to remain in his job typified as volunteer and for which the grocery store does not pay him any money.

Finally, regarding the self-perceived state of health of the older packers studied, Gómez-Lomelí et al. (2010) cite that 30.5% of men stated that they were not in good health, while 42.3% of women stated that their health was not exactly good.

2) Questions

Derived from the above problem, the following questions are raised, which are answered in this investigation:

Q₁: What is the socio-demographic profile of older people who work as merchandise packers in self-service companies in the city of Culiacán, Sinaloa, México?

Q₂: For what reasons are older people employed as packers of merchandise in self-service companies?

Q₃: What role does work as a merchandise packer play in the life project of older adults?

Q₄: How satisfied are the older packers with the work they do in self-service companies?

Q₅: What is the state of health of older people who are employed in self-service companies, according to their self-perception?

3) Methodology

This research was carried out in the city of Culiacán, capital of the state of Sinaloa, located in the Northwest of México. A survey with 29 items was designed on the sociodemographic profile of the respondent, as well as his health status and reasons why they work as a merchandise packer. Items related to 5 dimensions on job satisfaction and the importance of work for the individual were also placed. The sample studied was made up of 125 merchandise packers who work in 4 self-service companies. The results are presented through an analysis of means.

4) Results and discussion

The results of the research are presented below, grouping them into some sections for better understanding.

4.1 Sociodemographic profile of the respondents

A total of 75 men (60%) and 50 women (40%) who work as merchandise packers in the main self-service stores in the city of Culiacán, capital of the state of Sinaloa, México, were interviewed. The age of the participants of both sexes is located mainly in the age group of 60 to 70 years (men 66.8%, women 79.29%). The marital status of the men is mostly married (76%), while in the case of women the majority is without a partner (57.10%). Elementary school is the most voted by both sexes as the highest level of studies (men 42.67%, women 48.98%). Also noting that a considerable percentage of both groups of workers have not completed any school level (33.33% men and 34.69% women).

4.2 Self-perception at job

Men 97.7% and women 91.84% expressed that they work as packers for economic reasons. Additionally, it was observed that in the case of men, 96% consider work as a packer as an important thing in their lives, while women expressed the same in 95.90%. To test whether this work is really important in the lives of packers, the item "if I had better economic conditions, I would quit my job as a packer" was raised. To which 52% of the men answered that they would abandon this type of work and 44.90% of the packing women would make the same decision.

4.3 Job satisfaction

Relating to the evaluation of job satisfaction, the table 1. below shows that women are more satisfied with their work than men. In all the dimensions used to measure job satisfaction, female packers scored higher than male packers, except in the compensation system.

DIMENSION	SATISFACTION	
	% MEN	% WOMEN
Training	76 (1)	89.8 (1)
Leadership style	64 (2)	85.7 (2)
Relations with peers	61.3 (3)	75.5 (3)
Job conditions	54.7 (4)	61.3 (4)
Compensation system	22.6 (5)	14.3 (5)

Table 1. Job satisfaction for old people who work as merchandise packers.

To obtain the general job satisfaction index (JS) for both groups, the satisfaction means by dimension were added and the average was obtained by dividing it by the number of them. In the case of male packers, the JS index was 55.72% while in women it was 65.32%.

4.4 Health conditions according to self-perception of the respondents

Women reported having poorer health than men (52.99% of women and 41.4% of men said that their current health is between fair to poor).

5) Discussion of research questions

Question one says:

Q₁: What is the socio-demographic profile of older people who work as merchandise packers in self-service companies in the city of Culiacán, Sinaloa, México?

The older adults who work as packers of merchandise in self-service stores in Culiacán, Sinaloa are mostly men, most of them are between 60 and 70 years old, most of them have a low level of schooling, most of the men are married while the largest number of women do not have a partner, 46.7% of men do not have a pension while 63.30% of women do not receive any economic pension from Mexican government institutions. The above profile places the older packers in a low social, economic, and cultural state.

Question two says:

Q₂: For what reasons are older people employed as packers of merchandise in self-service companies?

With an overwhelming majority (97.7% men and 91.84% women), the older packers carry out this work in the self-service stores of Culiacán, Sinaloa for the economic income they receive as tips from customers.

Question three says:

Q₃: What role does work as a merchandise packer play in the life project of older adults?

Work plays a very important role for the vast majority of older packers (96% men and 95.90% women), although it is inferred that this importance is based on the economic need these workers have, since 52% of the men would leave this job if they had a life with better economic conditions and 44.90% of working women would stop going to pack merchandise if their economy was better.

Question four says:

Q₄: How satisfied are the older packers with the work they do in self-service companies?

In the case of male packers, the JS indicator was 55.72%, which semantically is interpreted as "very little satisfied" while in women it was 65.32%, whose semantic interpretation corresponds to "regularly satisfied". Appreciating in the results that the dimension with the least satisfaction is the compensation system, that is, the income they receive as tips from customers; This means that their income is insufficient to meet their economic needs at this stage of their lives.

Question five says:

Q₅: What is the state of health of older people who are employed in self-service companies, according to their self-perception?

The 41.4% of the packers expressed that their state of health is between fair and poor, while 52.99% of the female packers said that their state of health, likewise, was between fair and poor. Remaining as a fact that should concern government institutions.

6) Conclusions

According with the results of this research, the following conclusions are raised:

I) The older packers in the self-service stores of Culiacán, Sinaloa are people with a low social, economic and cultural profile who find themselves in the economic need to carry out this work in order to survive.

II) Women packers are more satisfied than men when performing this job.

III) Despite the fact that it was not observed that the elderly packers perform additional tasks to bag merchandise, the working conditions provided by the companies are not the best for this group of workers who have special needs due to the biological age in which they work find.

IV) The state of health of packers in general is not so good.

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