

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Analysis of Perceptions of Job Aptitudes of Elderly Workers Outplacement From Their Support Experts Based on Q Methodology: Case of Korea

Sung-Eun Cho¹ and Young-Min Lee^{2*}

¹Korea Employment Information Service, Seoul, South Korea

²Sookmyung Women's University, Seoul, South Korea

*ymlee@sookmyung.ac.kr

Abstract: The objective of this study was to categorize jobs that elderly workers preferred for reemployment. To that end, this study employed Q methodology to examine job preferences among elderly workers after their primary jobs. based on the subjective perceptions of experts specializing in elderly worker outplacement and career counseling. This study also proposed implications for establishing policies related to elderly worker outplacement and employment services. Based on this study's findings, the jobs preferred by elderly workers for reemployment were classified into the following four types: (a) the type preferring an experience-based job; (b) the type preferring a simple job appropriate for the elderly; (c) the type preferring a current job; and (d) the type preferring to remain in a leading job. Suggestions are presented regarding the direction of policies for elderly worker outplacement and employment services.

Keywords: Elderly Worker, Outplacement, Bridge Job, Q Methodology

A survey conducted among individuals aged 55 and older with employment experience in Korea indicated that, on the average age, they preferred to retire from a primary job at 49.1 years old (Statistics Korea, 2018). However, the actual retirement age in the labor market is 72. This indicates that people continue to do economic activities for substantially longer periods. There is a 62.1% employment rate among Koreans aged 50 to 74. This is considerably higher than the average among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (50.8%; OECD, 2018). At the individual level, elderly workers desire to remain in the labor market for the following reasons: unstable income, rigid financial

standing in which a person solely relies on real estate, a low expectation for pensions, increasing costs of living due to longer life expectancies, a desire to continue working, and physical ability (Ichino et al., 2017; Kobayashi et al., 2015; Schneider et al., 2013). There is no alternative to continuing one's employment until complete withdrawal from the labor market after cessation of a primary job due to weaknesses in the social safety net (OECD, 2018).

At the business level, elderly workers remaining in the labor market may lead to a decrease in labor productivity, a burden of labor fees connected with the annual income system, or the rigidity of human resource restructuring in the ever-changing

economy (Park et al., 2018). On the other hand, it may be advantageous for elderly workers to remain in the labor market to address manpower shortages among businesses at which youths are reluctant to take employment or increase business productivity by utilizing the know-how of experienced workers (Lee, 2015). Elderly workers also tend to have keen insight into determining whether a newly introduced technology will help a given production activity based on a wealth of experience (Drysdale, 2015). Although there may be a prejudice stating that elderly workers are less productive, they can actually be rather effective because they are capable of mastering new tasks based on past experiences with only basic training while maintaining serious attitudes and commitment toward the work (Shea & Haasen, 2006).

Furthermore, because the working-age population in Korea is decreasing, it is necessary to secure the largest possible labor force from the entire population. In this regard, elderly workers are the major target (Cho et al., 2016). Securing a labor force of elderly workers can help address problems such as manpower shortages, the aging of key human resources in the labor market, reduced productivity, and decreasing work proficiency and productivity after experienced laborers withdraw from the labor market (Lee & Lee, 2017; Hayashi & Prescott, 2002; Prskawetz, 2005). In summary, it can be beneficial to create an environment in which elderly workers can continue working at all individual business and government levels. It is thus necessary to secure proper employment for elderly workers because they can typically remain in the labor market for at least 15 years after retiring from primary jobs (i.e., until complete withdrawal from the labor market).

Some studies have already examined the characteristics of bridge jobs, which elderly workers may choose to remain in the labor market. Ruhm (1990) reported that only about one-third of elderly workers immediately stop working upon retirement from their primary jobs; other workers prepare for a gradual withdrawal from the labor market by choosing a bridge job (this state is defined as “partial retirement”). Ruhm (1990) also stated that, as elderly workers transfer to bridge jobs, their section of the workforce moves from one industry or occupational sector to another. Pengcharoen and Shultz (2010) supported this idea of “partial retirement” through a bridge job between one’s main employment and complete retirement, thus

viewing a flexible working schedule as a major factor in determining the possibility of accepting a bridge job. If one expects themselves to remain capable in the labor market and gain related social support, there is a high possibility of reemployment after retirement through a bridge job (Adams & Rau, 2004; Dingemans et al., 2015).

The abovementioned studies have examined the job characteristics among reemployed elderly workers in addition to the characteristics of elderly workers who continue working. These studies have also analyzed currently employed individuals. By contrast, there has been little research on relevant expert perspectives concerning continued job transfer among elderly workers. Relevant experts were selected as research subjects regarding jobs for elderly worker outplacement because they were expected to have well-established perspectives on the theme of this study (Watts & Stenner, 2014). This study also utilized the Q methodology because it plays an important role in measuring and comprehensively reasoning about the subjective perceptions of research subjects on certain topics (S. Kim, 2010; H. Kim, 2008).

This study’s objective was to explore the characteristics of appropriate jobs for the reemployment of elderly workers. Thus, the study was primarily conducted based on the subjective perceptions of experts specializing in elderly worker outplacement and career counseling in the field. This study also aimed to present practical suggestions for elderly worker outplacement and employment services. Based on this study’s findings, the types of jobs that experts viewed as desirable for the reemployment of elderly workers were derived. At the individual level, it was expected that these findings would help each worker to strategically prepare for reemployment based on their set priorities. These findings were also expected to be utilized for counseling and supporting services at organizations that support job transfer and outplacement, depending on individually preferred types of reemployment. Finally, it was expected that these findings could contribute to the government’s establishment of relevant policies through an improved understanding of policy beneficiaries. The specific research questions were as follows: First, what employments are preferred when elderly workers consider reemployment? Second, what employment types do elderly workers prefer for reemployment. Third, what implications do this study present for

elderly worker outplacement and employment service policies?

Theoretical Background

Elderly Worker Retirement and Reemployment

Hardy and Quadagno (1995) defined the middle-age stage as the “bridging” period leading to the old-age stage after the period of most active economic activity and retirement from employment activity. During this period, many choose to have a bridging job after retirement from their primary job. A bridging job enables older householders in Korea to make a family living and prepare for old age. Such employment is of great importance to elderly workers because extensive financial resources are required for child education and marriage (Lee, 2008; Son & Song, 2011).

Wang and Shultz (2010) suggested a conceptual framework with four approaches to retirement. First, retirement is regarded as the career development stage. In other words, retirement is viewed not as a withdrawal from the labor market but a stage of growth and change in one’s life. In this perspective, the following factors affect the retiree’s career development: the personal level (e.g., physical factors, cognitive aging experience, and expertise), vocational level (e.g., requirements for skill development, coping with job stress, and job characteristics), and organizational level (e.g., prejudice and discrimination against aging, perception of organizational cultures, and organizational downsizing) (Shultz & Wang, 2007). Accordingly, it is important to consider all personal, vocational, and organizational factors that affect career development for retirees who are in the reemployment process.

The second perspective of retirement is relevant to human resource management. This involves paying attention to the influences of organizational systems as well as monetary and non-monetary supports on individuals’ career plans and decision-making processes in order for the organization to secure effective retirement management (Kim & Feldman, 2000). In this perspective, the value of retirement management is emphasized by focusing on the retirement system in which the organization is directly involved.

The third perspective views retirement as a livelihood decision-making process. In this perspective, retirement is viewed as a leisure approach that is taken

when commitment to work is reduced while interests in other activities increase. The last perspective views retirement as an adjustment process (Wang et al., 2009). This approach focuses on the psychological development process of comprehensively reviewing one’s entire life after retirement. However, this last perspective is not applicable in Korea, where complete withdrawal from the labor market after retirement is practically difficult (Han, 2014).

These concepts of retirement are considered in the approach suggested by Wang and Shultz (2010), in which elderly workers tend to remain in the labor market after retirement from their primary jobs for general economic reasons. Accordingly, this study focused on post-retirement careers by viewing retirement from the career-development stage perspective. The career-development stage perspective is related to the Protean career perspective, in which an individual actively makes efforts to increase the possibility of employment before retirement from a leading job in preparation for a future career change (Hall, 1996). It is thus necessary to pay attention to individual efforts in preparing for the future.

Through comprehensive consideration of the bridge job perspective and the view of personal retirement as a career development stage, retirement from one’s primary job does not mean withdrawal from the labor market. Rather, elderly workers need to prepare to transfer to new employment, referred to as a bridge job or secondary employment. The most important aspect in this regard is to grasp what items should be prepared in transferring to secondary employment and what types of employment are appropriate.

Previous studies have presented various elements that cause elderly workers to remain in the labor market and continue working after retirement from their primary jobs. Here, the main elements are economic reasons and family support (Allen & Shockley, 2012; Dendinger et al., 2005; Humphrey et al., 2003). Other elements include the desire for social life and the social demand for occupation (Johnson et al., 2011; Kanfer et al., 2013; Quinn et al., 1998). Considering that people in Korea tend to remain in the labor market for at least 15 years after retirement from their primary jobs, elderly workers should consider how their employment conditions differ from those for youths and those in their prime ages. Nonetheless, little research has been conducted on the desired employment characteristics for elderly workers in their secondary employment.

Once the characteristics of desirable employment are clarified, elderly workers will be able to prepare to obtain the prerequisites for successfully gaining corresponding employment.

Job Characteristics for Elderly Workers and Preferred Employments

The job characteristics theory indicates that job characteristics may affect an individual's internal psychological state, productivity, and performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Among the job characteristics, certain factors such as skill variety, task identity, and task significance affect individual perceptions about job meaning. Autonomy affects one's job commitment, whereas feedback affects one's vocational knowledge. These job characteristics can enhance one's level of job satisfaction if adjusted properly.

A previous study suggested that to enhance job satisfaction, certain job characteristics (e.g., motivation, situation, and social aspects) should be considered in addition to those stated above (Humphrey et al., 2007). Regarding motivation, the following four aspects should be considered in addition to the five elements suggested in the job characteristics theory: information processing, job complexity, specialization, and problem-solving. For situational aspects, the biological approach suggested by Campion and McClelland (1991) should be adopted in consideration of the physical demands, work conditions, and ergonomics. Finally, the social considerations relevant to job characteristics include outside interactions, social support, interdependence, and feedback from agents.

It is vital to consider specific job characteristics to enhance an individual's satisfaction and work performance. When it comes to job characteristics, it is necessary to consider not only the characteristics of a certain job itself but also the personal situations required by the individual in carrying out that job. The considered job characteristics may be categorized into specific worker groups in that regard. Particularly in Korea, where elderly worker employment needs to be secured because the working-age population is decreasing, it is essential to consider the appropriate employment characteristics for elderly workers (Park et al., 2013).

To this end, several previous studies have been conducted among middle-aged or older workers in

consideration of the circumstances in Korea. Some have been conducted among elderly workers looking for jobs in Seoul. For instance, Jeong (2013) classified the occupations for which elderly reemployment is currently active, those with policy support for stable job creation, and those with great potential in consideration of expected social changes. Jeong also pointed out that it was necessary to specify standards objectifying the physical abilities required for each occupation and that market demands were essential even if elderly workers were suitable for those occupations. Elderly workers also tend to prefer auxiliary or care-related employments.

A study by Choi et al. (2015) indicated what was expected for occupations focusing on existing markets and low prime cost strategies. Here, demands for production line managers were relatively high. Thus, many technical job opportunities will be available in occupations focusing on emerging markets and product differentiation strategies. For job specifications, this study expected higher demands for elderly workers as technicians and production line managers than as workers in financial accounting, strategic planning, personnel management, and marketing. Elderly workers are advantageous in terms of professionalism in technical and marketing areas and for organizational stability in production line management. However, there are disadvantages associated with elderly workers, including the failure to adapt to a changed hierarchical position and different duties. There are also challenges in outplacement, including the difficulty associated with finding personnel with a level of professionalism expected by the company and in arranging a compromise regarding wage conditions. After all, elderly workers tend to be demanded in occupations that younger workers avoid or that require a high level of proficiency or skills. Depending on the business situation, elderly workers mainly tend to be employed in two different conditions. As a business experiences rapid growth, elderly workers may be employed to secure professionalism based on experience. If the market is declining or a business is in poor financial condition, existing human resources may transfer and thus be replaced with elderly workers with career experience in that area (appropriate measures depend on different employment demands).

Park (2017) pointed out a weakness in economic activities between retirement and actual withdrawal;

service-related jobs requiring long-term experience or stable employment offering relatively low incomes (e.g., compliance with the labor contract and social insurance) are appropriate for elderly workers. Park et al. (2013) emphasized that elderly workers should develop skills to utilize digital devices as they transfer to occupations to take advantage of the expertise and capabilities developed in their previous careers.

In addition to relevant studies in Korea, Johnson et al. (2011) pointed out that elderly workers tend to choose part-time rather than full-time jobs and prefer more flexible work schedules than in their previous jobs when seeking employment after retirement. In many cases, elderly workers choose self-employment as a bridge job after retirement from a primary job (Johnson et al., 2011; Kerr & Armstrong-Stassen, 2011). In addition to the characteristics of employment types, a previous study also emphasized the need to find jobs in which elderly workers can use their experience without physical challenges (Kawakami et al., 2000). Similar studies have commonly pointed out that elderly workers should utilize their skills, abilities, and know-how when taking new employment and that limited physical ability and market demands should also be considered.

Methods

Research Subject (P-Sampling)

This study was conducted among 18 experts who were currently or had been handling tasks involving outplacement and vocational counseling for elderly workers. Here, “P-sample” indicates that the study subjects were examined using the Q methodology. Rather than choosing individuals at random, P-sampling focuses on finding individuals with specific views related to the research questions as a reflection of the characteristics of exploratory research (Kim & Won, 2000). P-sample does not have an absolute standard for the number. Researchers can construct an appropriate number of P-samples that can present their opinions on the topic, and a small number of studies are possible (Brown, 1993). Generally, the number of P-samples is less than the number of Q-samples (Brouwer, 1999). When P-sampling, Thompson (1966) suggested that subjects could be classified as follows: those

with a keen interest in a certain topic, those who can present unbiased opinions, experts or masters of a certain topic, interested individuals, and those with little interest in or knowledge about a certain topic. As this was an exploratory study on elderly worker reemployment, experts in outplacement and vocational counseling and those familiar with the research topic were selected rather than seeking individuals with little interest or knowledge in the topic.

Research Tool (Q-Sampling)

This study utilized the Q methodology, which requires study subjects to read sentences and express their extent of agreement. The sentences used in this study were selected through Q-sampling, which was performed based on a literature review. According to the study purpose, Q-samples were classified into structured and unstructured Q-samples. With no assumption or theoretical idea, this study utilized unstructured samples to find and explain certain types of individuals (Kim, 2008). Unstructured samples were extracted for certain types through a literature review and interviews. In this study, papers and reports from domestic settings and abroad were collected by searching for relevant keywords, including “elderly workers,” “future career,” “future employment,” “reemployment,” and “outplacement.” Among the collected materials, sentences that were suitable for the secondary employment of elderly workers and that could be judged subjectively were selected as Q-sample candidates. A total of 100 sentences were collected during the initial step. The Q statements did not concern simple facts; rather, they were related to individual subjective judgments, perceptions, and values (Webler et al., 2009). Some were appropriately complemented as Q statements during the review and sentence selection processes. The Q statements can clearly indicate the research theme, is selected by the researcher, and the number is also according to the researcher’s decision. In this study, the number of Q statements was reduced three times by deleting similar sentences and select clear statements (Watts & Stenner, 2005). A total of 25 sentences were selected as the final Q Statements for use in this study after reviews were conducted by one professor specializing in human resource development and one outplacement practitioner.

Table 1*Q Statements*

No.	Q-Statement
1	The employment needs to be appropriate for the person's aptitude.
2	The employment needs to correspond to the position of the previous workplace.
3	It needs to be possible to utilize the know-how that the person has accumulated.
4	The person needs to be able to start working shortly in the utilization of skills that she or he already has.
5	The employment needs to be a permanent position.
6	For employment type, part-time work is more appropriate than full-time work.
7	The position should be for a manager or middle manager.
8	It is better to attend and leave the office on a regular basis at the designated times.
9	The focus should be on social contribution rather than making a living.
10	Work in public service that gives the person feelings of self-contentment and achievement is appropriate.
11	It is appropriate to change the employment type, working hours, and duties within the same workplace rather than in another workplace.
12	It should be a business with great potential for future growth.
13	Demands for that employment should be constant in society.
14	Competition with youths for that employment should not be heavy.
15	Employment in the public sector is more appropriate than in the private sector.
16	The income condition needs to be different from that in previous employment.
17	The working schedule needs to be flexible.
18	Various tasks need to be given.
19	Physical labor should not be intense.
20	Tasks should be simple.
21	It should be possible to secure a competitive edge by completing a training course for a certain period or acquiring a certificate.
22	It should be possible to obtain that job only if available with no need for certain expertise or skills.
23	Lifelong learning opportunities should be provided.
24	There should be encouragement, acknowledgment, and support from coworkers.
25	The commuting distance should be short.

Research Procedures

This study's procedures were as follows: (a) Q-samples (Statements) were selected; (b) the population of P samples (subjects) who would respond to Q-samples and P subjects for participation in this research were selected; (c) P samples were asked to arrange Q-samples in order of priority; (d) the Q-samples arranged by P samples were analyzed; and (e) results were interpreted.

The selection of Q-samples was followed by Q-sorting, where subjects classified the statements. Subjects (P samples) were asked to classify 25 statements (Q-Samples) in the columns of standard distribution between -4 and 4, depending on their extent of agreement (Figure 1). Subjects were asked to read the Q-samples and classify them into categories of "not agree," "normal," and "agree," depending on their extent of agreement. They were then asked to put the sentences of complete agreement or disagreement first, while the remaining statements were placed thereafter.

Analysis

This study aimed to classify jobs for elderly worker outplacement. To that end, a statistical method referred to as the Q methodology was utilized to measure individual views on certain issues. The Q methodology provides a way to identify a group of people reflecting similar subjective factors (e.g., attitude, preference, thinking, and behavior) by collecting their responses to a series of questions (Kim & Won, 2000).

A total of 18 sets of materials were used during this study's analysis process. This involved use of the Ken-Q analysis (Version 1.0.4, March 13, 2019) method. During the analysis process, factors were derived through a principal component analysis; the number of factors was then determined with the

Eigenvalue set to 1.0 (Watts & Stenner, 2005). The explained variance was maximized using the Varimax rotation method, which is designed to secure factors with high factor loading (Watts & Stenner, 2005).

Results

Categorization

The four factors with Eigenvalues as high as 1.0 were finally selected among the eight total. The accumulative explained variance of the derived factors was 66%. The characteristic value of each type was 5.9252, 2.5753, 2.0439, and 1.3910, whereas the explained variance was 33%, 14%, 11%, and 8%, respectively. Type 1 best represented the characteristics of the perceptions of elderly workers regarding secondary employment. A total of 18 P samples were classified into groups of elderly workers, depending on their views about secondary occupations (Table 2). Each group included 7, 4, 5, and 2 individuals in order.

Characteristics of Each Type

Type 1 was titled "the type preferring an experience-based job." These individuals commonly viewed employments utilizing existing skills as appropriate jobs for elderly worker outplacement. They particularly preferred employments taking full advantage of individuals' aptitudes, experiences (No. 1, $z=1.853$), know-how (No. 3, $z=1.291$), and those involving no intense physical labor (No. 19, $z=1.303$). On the other hand, they did not greatly care about comparatively stable conditions, such as manager or middle manager positions (No. 7, $z=-1.448$), permanent positions (No. 5, $z=-1.684$), or positions corresponding to those at their previous workplaces (No. 2, $z=-1.601$). In summary, Type 1 subjects thought that employments

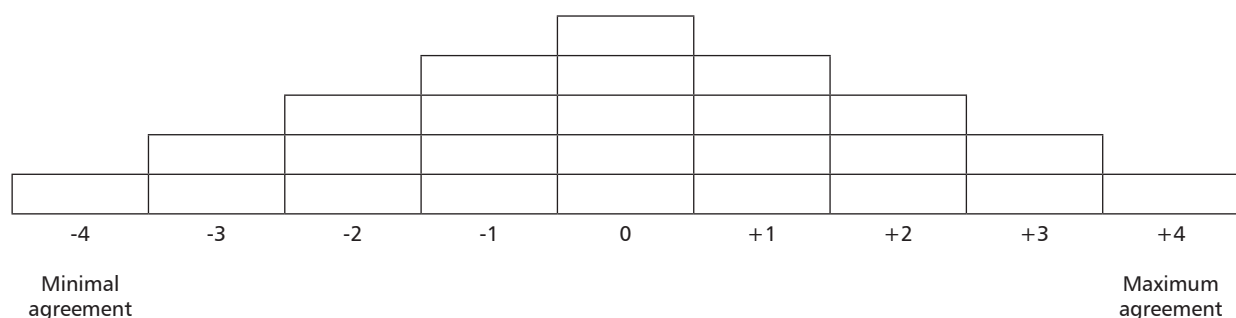


Figure 1. Q Distribution

Table 2*Factor Matrix with Defining Sorts*

P Samples	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4
P1	0.6823	0.2824	0.2172	0.1560
P4	0.5818	0.1575	0.1589	0.3003
P5	0.6185	0.2993	-0.1008	0.0112
P7	0.7749	-0.1252	0.3258	-0.0466
P8	0.5524	-0.2869	0.5303	0.3180
P16	0.6920	-0.1671	0.0633	0.4365
P18	0.5209	0.5104	-0.0209	0.0779
P3	0.4635	0.6094	0.3862	0.1227
P6	0.1896	0.7933	0.0370	0.0297
P9	0.2950	-0.7857	0.0975	0.3272
P15	0.1374	0.5889	0.508	0.2228
P10	0.4011	0.1650	0.6848	0.2088
P11	-0.1347	0.0807	0.6817	0.2661
P12	-0.0119	0.1219	0.8733	-0.2229
P13	0.3609	-0.0279	0.7059	-0.1515
P17	0.2243	-0.1004	0.5481	0.4100
P2	0.0380	0.0643	0.0755	0.8600
P14	0.2575	-0.0269	0.0137	0.7898
Variance (%)	20	14	19	13

utilizing existing experience would be appropriate jobs for elderly worker reemployment, even if the levels of stability and positions were not the same as before.

Type 2 was titled “the type preferring a simple job appropriate for the elderly.” For Type 2, the most important aspects related to jobs for elderly worker outplacement were as follows: employments with no intense physical labor (No. 19, $z = 1.726$), those with short commuting distances (No. 25, $z = 1.458$), those with simple tasks (No. 20, $z = 1.195$), those that require no certain knowledge or skills but are highly available and can be obtained within a short period of time (No. 22, $z = 1.078$), and employments with no fierce competition with youths (No. 14, $z = 1.257$). On the other hand, Type 2 subjects cared less about the following factors: variety of tasks (No. 18, $z = -1.783$), employments corresponding to one’s

aptitude and experience (No. 1, $z = -1.129$), and permanent positions (No. 5, $z = -1.511$). Additionally, Type 2 subjects placed relatively low importance on business potential for future growth (No. 12, $z = -1.684$). In summary, Type 2 subjects thought that simple jobs involving low difficulty were appropriate for elderly workers. They also thought that appropriate commuting distance, physical labor intensity, and the complexity of tasks should be considered for elderly workers. These subjects thought the possibility of immediately obtaining a job was more important than business and employment stability.

Type 3 was titled “the type preferring current employment.” One outstanding characteristic of Type 3 subjects was that they preferred to find changes within the same workplace rather than a new workplace (No. 11, $z = 1.464$). They also viewed permanent

position employments (No. 5, $z = 1.270$) or those for which commuting times were designated (No. 8, $z = 1.074$) as appropriate as jobs for elderly worker outplacement. On the other hand, they disagreed with the idea that employment should pursue social contributions rather than making a living (No. 9, $z = -2.241$) or work involving public service (No. 10, $z = -1.031$). Thus, they emphasized that jobs for elderly worker outplacement should be taken for the purpose of making a living rather than contributing to society. They also disagreed with the idea that a variety of tasks should be given (No. 18, $z = -1.170$). They instead preferred simple tasks. In summary, Type 3 subjects thought that jobs for elderly worker outplacement should prepare workers for a gradual withdrawal from the labor market. The job transfer impact is reduced by selecting job types similar to the leading jobs these workers held at previous workplaces rather than inducing many changes.

Type 4 was titled “the type preferring a leading job.” Subjects of this type placed importance on the utilization of one’s know-how (No. 3, $z = 1.872$), employments corresponding to one’s aptitude and experience (No. 1, $z = 1.781$), and positions corresponding to those at the previous workplace (No. 2, $z = 1.228$). They generally viewed jobs of these types as similar to one’s primary job. They also viewed encouragement and acknowledgment from coworkers (No. 24, $z = 1.105$) as important, thereby emphasizing that support from surrounding people was important for elderly workers. Type 4 subjects did not place importance on factors such as control over the intensity of physical labor (No. 19, $z = -1.320$), simplicity of tasks (No. 20, $z = -1.320$), and flexibility of the working schedule (No. 17, $z = -1.443$). They generally agreed that these jobs should be similar to primary jobs. This was consistent with their positive views about the other statements. In summary, Type 4 subjects thought that

Table 3
Characteristics and Factor Weight for Each Type of P-Sample

Type	ID	Organizational characteristics	Career	Factor Weight
Type 1 The type preferring an experience-based job	P1	Private	5 years	1.2766
	P4	Private	10 years	0.8795
	P5	Private	4 years	1.0017
	P7	Public	8 years	1.9395
	P8	Public	9 years	0.7950
	P16	Public	4 years	1.3279
	P18	Public	17 years	0.7149
Type 2 The type preferring a simple job appropriate for the elderly	P3	Private	5 years	0.9694
	P6	Private	6 years	2.1401
	P9	Public	3 years	2.0532
	P15	Private	15 years	0.9016
Type 3 The type preferring current employment	P10	Public	2 years	1.2895
	P11	Public	3 years	1.2735
	P12	Public	3 years	3.6794
	P13	Public	5 years	1.4070
	P17	Private	14 years	0.7835
Type 4 The type preferring a leading job	P2	Private	5 years	3.3026
	P14	Public	6 years	2.0993

elderly worker outplacement jobs should not greatly differ from current employment.

The perceptions about jobs for elderly worker outplacement and related factors were analyzed according to career and organizational characteristics. The results are presented in Table 3. Factor weight indicates how close the P-sample is to this type of characteristic. For example, high factor weight values represent the attributes of each corresponding type more properly (Brown, 1993). First, each group included 7, 4, 5, and 2 individuals in order, thus indicating that a high number of individuals belonged to “the type preferring an experience-based job.” Second, certain types of P-samples were classified according to the characteristics of their affiliated organizations. Most P-samples of the type preferring a simple job appropriate for the elderly belonged to private organizations. By contrast, most P-samples of the type preferring current employment belonged to public organizations; their work careers tended to be shorter than those of other types. It was expected that such differences depended on organizational characteristics, service contents, service targets, and individual careers.

Consistency and Inconsistency Among Types

The five highest and five lowest z-score items were selected to examine consistency and inconsistency among the opinions for each factor. Table 4 shows statements indicating opinions that are relatively consistent among factors. Regarding the desirable job characteristics for elderly worker outplacement, the statements that part-time work was more appropriate than full-time work (No. 6) and that the person needs to be able to start working shortly in the utilization of skills that she or he already has (No. 4) were agreed upon to a moderate extent for every factor. The statement that there should be encouragement, acknowledgment, and support from coworkers (No. 24) was generally agreed upon for every factor. By contrast, the statement that various tasks need to be given in jobs for elderly worker outplacement (No. 18) was disagreed upon for every factor.

Table 4 also shows five items of inconsistency among factors in reference to z-scores. The item that showed the most significant difference among factors in terms of agreement extent was the statement that employment should be a permanent position (No. 5). However, there was a high level of disagreement

Table 4
Consistency Among Types

	No.	Q-Statement	Factor				Z-Score variance
			1	2	3	4	
Consistency Among Types	6	For employment type, part-time work is more appropriate than full-time work.	0	0	0	0	0.022
	21	It should be possible to secure a competitive edge by completing a training course for a certain period or acquiring a certificate.	0	-1	-1	0	0.037
	4	The person needs to be able to start working shortly in the utilization of skills that she or he already has.	0	1	0	0	0.094
	24	There should be encouragement, acknowledgment, and support from coworkers.	2	1	1	2	0.099
	18	Various tasks need to be given.	-1	-4	-3	-2	0.118
Inconsistency Among types	5	The employment needs to be a permanent position.	-4	-3	3	-3	1.495
	1	The employment needs to be appropriate for the person's aptitude and experience.	4	-2	2	3	1.453
	19	Physical labor should not be intense.	3	4	1	-2	1.361
	20	Tasks should be simple.	-2	2	1	-3	1.147
	2	The employment needs to correspond to the position of the previous workplace.	-3	0	-2	3	1.121

among the remaining factors, thus showing a distinctive contrast. For statement No. 1 (i.e., “The employment needs to be appropriate for the person’s aptitude and experience”), there was only a disagreement for Factor 2 (i.e., “the type preferring a simple job appropriate for the elderly”). This is the type for obtaining employment as long as it is available, even if it does not match the elderly worker’s level of aptitude and experience. The opinions for this statement generally differed from those for other factors, for which worker aptitude and experience were deemed important. For Factor 4 (i.e., “the type preferring a leading job”), the statement that the position should correspond to that of the previous workplace (No. 2) was more strongly agreed upon than for other factors.

Discussion

This study used the Q methodology to explore the preferred job for an elderly worker by outplacement experts. Study subjects were selected among experts who provided vocational counseling for elderly workers. The subjective perceptions of 18 total experts regarding elderly worker employment were thus investigated. As a result, experts providing vocational counseling services for elderly workers were classified into four types depending on their perceptions about jobs for elderly worker outplacement. Subjects were specifically classified according to whether they viewed certain jobs as appropriate or inappropriate for elderly worker outplacement. Their judgments were thought to be affected by the types of organizations they belonged to, their careers, clients they had met, and the business characteristics of their organizations. This study’s findings about the types and characteristics of jobs for elderly worker outplacement by experts are summarized below.

First type preferred experience-based employment as jobs for elderly worker outplacement. They preferred employments in which elderly workers could utilize the experience they had accumulated while performing leading jobs. However, in this case, employments involving no intense physical labor were viewed as appropriate for elderly workers in consideration of their physical characteristics (Zhan et al., 2009). Second type preferred simple employments as jobs for elderly workers outplacement. This type viewed factors such as short commuting distance, low intensity of physical labor, simple tasks, and immediate employment as

important (Topa et al., 2009). Third, there was a type preferring changes within current employment rather than transferring to another workplace. This type preferred similar conditions to those at the current workplace and viewed the following factors as appropriate for jobs for elderly worker outplacement: possibility of continued employment at the current workplace, permanent position employment, utilization of individuals’ experience and know-how, and designated times of commuting to and from the office. Fourth, there was a type preferring to remain in the current primary job. Although this type did not contain many individuals, they demanded certain task characteristics, positions, and support from coworkers for jobs for elderly worker outplacement. Support from coworkers was not stated in other types. Self-determination theory indicates that extrinsic elements motivate elderly workers to commit themselves to their given work (Deci & Ryan, 2010).

This study explored jobs for elderly worker reemployment that reflects domestic situations in which there is a 10-year gap between primary job retirement and withdrawal from the labor market. It particularly examined what jobs elderly workers would prefer for reemployment based on the perceptions of experts who personally met with elderly workers in their outplacement and vocational counseling services. This study’s findings can be applied in the field of vocational counseling and outplacement, elderly worker outplacement divisions of businesses, elderly worker employment service policies, and directions for such services. The following suggestions are presented based on this study’s findings.

First, outplacement services should consider the types of employments individuals preferred. However, it is necessary to conduct further research on both criteria and demand types because elderly worker employments can be classified, as in the present study. In particular, the aptitude of elderly people will differ, depending on social background. Further researches must be conducted on a method that enables specialists to correctly understand the characteristics of elderly people and to provide appropriate vocational placement or outplacement according to the individual background. Second, it is necessary to consider an intra-company transition system. Third, it is necessary to establish a system to share information on elderly worker employment. This study was conducted among experts specializing in elderly worker outplacement

and vocational counseling. Future studies should examine the employment perceptions of elderly workers who have transferred or will transfer to a job for reemployment after retirement from a primary job. Future research should also secure more specific statements and a wider range of Q-samples.

Declaration of ownership:

This report is our original work.

Conflict of interest:

None.

Ethical clearance:

This study was approved by our institution.

References

- Adams, G., & Rau, B. (2004). Job seeking among retirees seeking bridge employment. *Personnel Psychology*, 57(3), 719–744.
- Allen, T., & Shockley, K. (2012). Old Workers and Work-Family Issues. In Borman, W. & Hedge, J. (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of work and aging*. (pp. 520-537). Oxford University Press.
- Brouwer, M. (1999). Q is accounting for tastes. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 39(2), 35–39.
- Brown, S. (1993). A primer on Q methodology. *Operant subjectivity*, 16(3), 97–138.
- Campion, M., & McClelland, C. (1991). Interdisciplinary examination of the costs and benefits of enlarged jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 186–198.
- Cho, D., Yoo, H., Kim, J., & Doo, M. (2016). Roles and responsibilities of HRD in low fertility and population aging society. *The Korean Journal of Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 18(2), 37–64.
- Choi, Y., Jeong, J., & Na, D. (2015). *A study on the actual conditions of the employment and employment in Korea and the improvement of the employment support system for the elderly in order to solve the mismatch between the elderly and the employment agencies*. Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training.
- Deci, E., & Ryan, R. (2010). Intrinsic motivation. In I. Weiner & E. Craighead (Eds.), *The Corsini encyclopedia of psychology* (pp. 1–2). Wiley.
- Dendinger, V., Adams, G., & Jacobson, J. (2005). Reasons for working and their relationship to retirement attitudes, job satisfaction and occupational self-efficacy of bridge employees. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 61(1), 21–35.
- Dingemans, E., Henkens, K., & Solinge, H. (2015). Access to bridge employment: Who finds and who does not find work after retirement? *The Gerontologist*, 56(4), 630–640.
- Hackman, J., & Oldham, G. (1976). Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 16, 250–279.
- Hall, D. (1996). Protean careers of the 21st century. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 10(4), 8–16.
- Han, T. (2014). Bridge job transition and its success factors of middle-aged workers: Two exploratory qualitative studies. *Journal of Organization and Management*, 38(2), 223–265.
- Hardy, M., & Quadagno, J. (1995). Satisfaction with early retirement: Making choices in the auto industry. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 50(4), S217–S228.
- Hayashi, F., & Prescott, E. (2002). The 1990s in Japan: A lost decade. *Review of Economic Dynamics*, 5(1), 206–235.
- Humphrey, A., Costigan, P., Pickering, K., Stratford, N., & Barnes, M. (2003). *Factors affecting the labour market participation of older workers*. Department for Work and Pensions.
- Humphrey, S., Nahrgang, J., & Morgeson, F. (2007). Integrating motivational, social, and contextual work design features: A meta-analytic summary and theoretical extension of the work design literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1332–1356.
- Ichino, A., Schwerdt, G., Winter-Ebmer, R., & Zweimüller, J. (2017). Too old to work, too young to retire? *The Journal of the Economics of Ageing*, 9, 14–29.
- Drysdale, C. (2015). *What age means for the labour force*. International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/audio/WCMS_358943/lang--en/index.htm
- Jeong, E. (2013). *A study on the senior vocationality of Seoul City for the spread of employment among the elderly*. Seoul Welfare Foundation.
- Johnson, R. W., Mermin, G., & Resseger, M. (2011). Job demands and work ability at older ages. *Journal of Aging & Social Policy*, 23(2), 101–118.
- Kanfer, R., Beier, M., & Ackerman, P. (2013). Goals and motivation related to work in later adulthood: An organizing framework. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 22(3), 253–264.
- Kawakami, M., Inoue, F., Ohkubo, T., & Ueno, T. (2000). Evaluating elements of the work area in terms of job redesign for older workers. *International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics*, 25(5), 525–533.
- Kerr, G., & Armstrong-Stassen, M. (2011). The bridge to retirement: Older workers' engagement in post-career

- entrepreneurship and wage-and-salary employment. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 20(1), 55–76.
- Kim, H., & Won, Y. (2000). *Q methodology*. Education and Science Press.
- Kim, H. (2008). *Q methodology: Scientific philosophy, theory, analysis and application*. Communication Books.
- Kim, S., & Feldman, D. (2000). Working in retirement: The antecedents of bridge employment and its consequences for quality of life in retirement. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(6), 1195–1210.
- Kim, S. (2010). Theory and philosophy of Q methodology. *Korean Society and Public Administration*, 20(4), 1–25.
- Kobayashi, J., Kagawa, M., & Sato, Y. (2015). How to get a longer job? Roles of human and social capital in the Japanese labor market. *International Journal of Japanese Sociology*, 24(1), 20–29.
- Lee, G., & Lee, J. (2017). *Economic growth and labor market in an age of decreasing productive population*. Korea: LG Economic Research Institute.
- Lee, S. (2008). Employment and decent jobs for the Korean mid-old age. *Korea Social Review*, 15(2), 181–216.
- Lee, Y. (2015). A study on the policy implications for using aging workforces of research and development field in the era of working age population decline. *Journal of Engineering Education Research*, 18(1), 3–10.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2018). *Working better with age: Korea*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Park, C., Lee, S., & Lee, Y. (2018). *A study on the model and mandatory legalization of enterprise's support services*. Ministry of Employment and Labor.
- Park, J. (2017). *Youth's job vs. senior's job*. Samsung Life Insurance.
- Park, K., Kim, K., & Seo, Y. (2013). *Research of future jobs*. Korea Employment Information Service.
- Pengcharoen, C., & Shultz, K. (2010). The influences on bridge employment decisions. *International Journal of Manpower*, 31(3), 322–336.
- Prskawetz, A. (2005). Will population ageing decrease productivity? *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*, 3, 1–3.
- Ruhm, C. (1990). Bridge jobs and partial retirement. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 8(4), 482–501.
- Quinn, J. B., Anderson, P., & Finkelstein, S. (1998). Managing professional intellect: Making the most of the best. In D. Klein (Ed.), *The strategic management of intellectual capital* (pp. 87–100). Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Schneider, U., Trukeschitz, B., Mühlmann, R., & Ponocny, I. (2013). “Do I stay or do I go?”—Job change and labor market exit intentions of employees providing informal care to older adults. *Health Economics*, 22(10), 1230–1249.
- Shea, G., & Haasen, A. (2006). *The older worker advantage: Making the most of our aging workforce*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Shultz, K. S., & Wang, M. (2007). The influence of specific physical health conditions on retirement decisions. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 65(2), 149–161.
- Son, Y., & Song, C. (2011). *Characteristics and implications of the elderly labor market*. Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education & Training.
- Statistics Korea. (2018, May). *Economic activity population survey additional survey results for the elderly*. Statistics Korea.
- Thompson, G. C. (1966). The evaluation of public opinion. In Berelson, B. and Janowitz, M. (Eds.), *Reader in Public Opinion and Communication (2nd edition)* (pp. 7–12). New York: Free Press.
- Topa, G., Moriano, J., Depolo, M., Alcover, C., & Morales, J. (2009). Antecedents and consequences of retirement planning and decision-making: A meta-analysis and model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75, 38–55.
- Wang, M., & Shultz, K. (2010). Employee retirement: A review and recommendations for future investigation. *Journal of Management*, 36(1), 172–206.
- Wang, M., Adams, G., Beehr, T., & Shultz, K. (2009). Bridge employment and retirement: Issues and Opportunities During the Latter Part of One's Career. In Baugh, G. & Sullivan, S. (Eds.), *Maintaining focus, energy, and options over the career* (pp. 135–162). Information Age Publishing.
- Watts, S., & Stenner, P. (2005). Doing Q methodology: Theory, method and interpretation. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2(1), 67–91.
- Watts, S., & Stenner, P. (2014). *Implementation, theory, method and analysis of Q methodology Research* (P. Baek, Trans.). Communication Books.
- Webler, T., Danielson, S., & Tuler, S. (2009). *Using Q method to reveal social perspectives in environmental research*. Social and Environmental Research Institute.
- Zhan, Y., Wang, M., Liu, S., & Shultz, K. (2009). Bridge employment and retirees' health: A longitudinal investigation. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 14(4), 374–389.