

# Canadians believe employers discriminate based on age: poll

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Nearly three-quarters of Canadians believe workplaces are shunning older job applicants based solely on their age, a worrisome finding given labour-force trends in Canada.

In a survey conducted by Ipsos Reid exclusively for Postmedia News, 74 per cent of those asked either "strongly" or "somewhat" agreed that employers discriminate against older people looking for jobs. The perception is higher among Canadians over the age of 35, but even a majority of those aged 18 to 34 think older workers are subject to ageist attitudes.

Fully one-third of poll respondents said they themselves have been a victim of age discrimination, either in the workplace or when being interviewed for a job. But here, the most aggrieved group was younger workers. Forty-one per cent of people between ages 18 and 34 said they had been victims of prejudice because of their tender years, while just 38 per cent of the over-55 group felt that way.



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**There are now more Canadians of the age one usually exits work than of the age one usually enters it.**

The apparent contradiction could have several explanations, said Sean Simpson, vice-president of Ipsos Reid.

For one thing, younger people participate in more interviews as they enter the workforce and therefore are more likely to have been turned down for a job, perhaps perceiving that their age played a role.

As well, Simpson suggested, older workers are more likely to be doing the hiring.

Generally, groups tend to favour hiring those in their

own age bracket.

Respondents to the poll also were asked, in a hypothetical scenario, who they would be most likely to hire: someone 18 to 24; 25 to 34; 35 to 44; 45 to 54; 55 to 64; or 65 and older. The question stated that the hypothetical applicants were without any specific experience in the job, but all had the same level of general qualifications.

Respondents were most likely to pick someone between the ages of 25 and 34 (37 per cent) and between

35 and 44 (25 per cent). People in their late-40s and early-50s were the next most preferred (19 per cent).

Only nine per cent said they would hire someone aged 18 to 24, or aged 55 to 64. And only three per cent said they would hire someone over the age of 65.

Even older Canadians favoured the young in this poll; the most popular age group that respondents over 55 said they would personally hire was those aged 25 to 34.

The overall trend favouring youth over age worries some experts, because the most recent population data suggest Canada faces a major labour force shortage in the years ahead. One solution to this is hiring, and retaining, older workers — but this means potential employers may have to shed their antipathy toward hiring seniors.

The online poll was conducted between July 10 and 13 and surveyed 1,005 people. The data was weighted against census information to ensure a balanced picture of demographics. An unweighted poll of this size has a margin of error of 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.