



The age of librarians as a driver of change in social attitudes

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Received: 27 May 2021; revised: 14 September 2021; accepted: 05 October 2021

Human capital is one of the most valuable resources of libraries. The age of librarians is a variable that may affect their attitudes and behaviours. The purpose of the paper is to pinpoint such correlations. The paper presents the results of research conducted among librarians in 20 countries of the world analysing the impact of age on individual social capital, social activity, social attitudes, civic engagement, level of trust, attitude to patrons and professional preferences. The research was conducted based on the Questionnaire for the Measurement of Individual Social Capital (KPIKS) developed by the Polish psychologist Rafał Styła. The study confirms that there is a correlation between age and attitude and behavioural changes. The age of librarians statistically and significantly differentiates their behaviour and social attitudes. The results may be used in library management processes, e.g. in the area of task and role allocation.

Keywords: Age; Library Personnel; Social Attitudes; Human Capital

Introduction

Every library uses its tangible and intangible resources to offer services¹. This enables effective communication with the community, establishing relations with patrons and offering a wide range of services. The capital resources determine its strategy of action, being assets (e.g. real capital like equipment and financial capital) or values the library may use to achieve its goals (Fig. 1). One of the key intangible resources is human capital, which, in the context of libraries, is defined as a set of individual potentials of librarians, such as their physical, psychological, intellectual and moral attributes, formed by their capacities, talents, knowledge, skills, motivation, competencies and experience². It is one of the most thoroughly examined and discussed library resources³. Other usages of human capital in literature includes social potential, human relation potential (that is, the study of human problems arising from organisational and interpersonal relations - HR) or work potential. However, regardless of the terminology used, it is worth focusing on the factors that drive change in the human potential of libraries.

Among the many possible reasons behind social capital transformations (such as training, experience and management tools), age is a possible determinant of librarians' attitudes. This paper attempts to evaluate the impact of the age of librarians on their social attitudes and behaviours.

Review of literature

Origin of the concept of social capital

The concept of social capital was originally used in economics; however, it has since become so popular that it is now used in the context of many different sciences, including library science. The first economists who proposed to treat an individual and the individual's skills as a form of capital were Adam Smith and Heinrich von Thünen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The latter claimed that treating people as a form of capital is not disparaging; to the contrary, it proves their value, while Smith believed that the skills an individual acquires through learning or apprenticeship constitute the individual's asset and the asset of the entire society⁴.

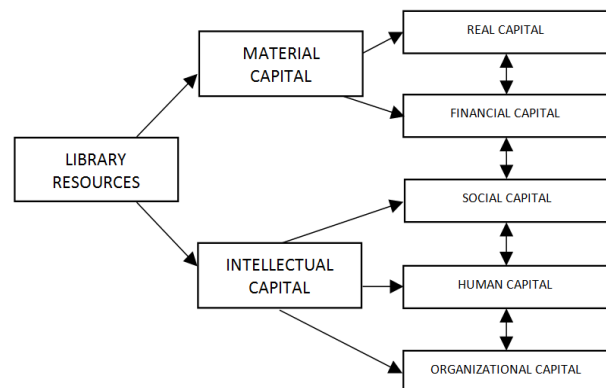


Fig. 1 — Library resources

Joseph Nicholson, the English economist, wrote in the late 19th century about the “living capital” instead of material capital (i.e., machines, buildings, land). In the early 20th century, Alfred Marshall and Irving Fisher claimed that, despite its undeniable value, human capital could not be thoroughly examined. It is not possible to analyse the actual economic value of this resource. Moreover, Fisher distinguished tangible capital, which may be individually traded on the market, and human capital, embodied in an individual and, as such, attached to the individual as their integral value. He wrote in 1906 in his book, *The nature of capital and income* that: “Based on certain genetic potential of the society we can multiply through investment human knowledge, health, strength and energy”⁵.

It is believed that the concept of human capital was popularised by Jacob Mincer, the “father” of contemporary labour economics, born in Poland. In 1958, Mincer described the process of investing in human capital, which he understood as learning and gaining professional experience – first at school, then at work⁶. He created a model in which human capital was the sum of knowledge gained at school and at work, measured by the length of formal education and age, which was supposed to reflect employee experience. According to Mincer’s model, professions (e.g., medical doctors) requiring longer learning (longer training) are associated with higher wages. Later, another variable was added to the model: wage differences within the same professions, conditioned by professional experience understood as job seniority. To this day, the length of education and professional experience are the basic variables used to evaluate human capital resources.

Meanwhile, Theodore Schultz claimed that human capital was the reason behind rapid economic growth, disproportionate to physical capital, land, and labour growth. He believed that investing in human capital translated into higher wages⁷. He defined human capital as the attributes of acquired population quality that were valuable and could be enriched by adequate investments⁸. Gary Becker, too, noted the importance of investing in human capital to improve future earnings, apart from education and professional experience. The author also recognised medical care as a form of investment⁹.

Burton Weisbrod analysed human capital in the context of technological progress and social development. He believed that by investing in people,

it was possible to make the best use of the abovementioned technological progress and, consequently, continue development. He highlighted the importance of medicine, which enabled education and professional activity by prolonging average life expectancy, thus contributing to scientific progress, including medical progress, in a chain of dependencies¹⁰.

In *Human Capital*¹¹ Gary S. Becker – representative of the Chicago School of Economics, recapitulated the findings on human capital and introduced the concept of investment in human beings and proved that it was profitable for the State to invest in the education of the unemployed. Becker believed that every income should stem from an asset. Every individual's asset was knowledge and competencies, which the individuals could use to their own (financial, social, etc.) benefit. The book claimed that the volume of social capital increased through investments, mainly through expenditure on education, which he understood as tuition and the cost of the time allocated to learning instead of working and the earnings an individual could gain if they went to work instead of continuing education. He stated that such investments could yield higher earnings, social prestige and social status in the future. Currently, it is believed that failure to invest in human capital is the source of underdevelopment and poverty. Becker’s theories triggered a wave of interest in the links between education and the level of earnings. He also introduced the term of human capital in economic literature.

More models and theories were published in the second half of the twentieth century by Richard Nelson and Edmund Phelps¹², Yoram Ben-Porath¹³, Robert Lucas¹⁴, Costas Azariadis and Allan Drazen¹⁵, Robert G. King and Sergio Rebelo¹⁶, N. Gregory Mankiw, David Romer and David Weil¹⁷. They discussed new factors affecting human capital and aspects of its functioning, such as institutional possibilities and limitations shaping human capital, costs of generating human capital, dynamics of return on investment in education that changed throughout an individual’s life, the relationship between the rate of natural increase and human capital level, and human capital related to immigrants. After the year 2000, multiple publications have been devoted to human capital in the European Union and human capital waste caused, among other things, by unemployment among highly skilled professionals.

The last decade saw a huge increase in publications dedicated to human capital. This shows that human capital is now recognised as an important concept, for example, in contemporary economics, where it is mathematically modelled and other areas, such as education, theory of organisation, and library science. In the latter case, publications on human resources in libraries are increasingly common.

Relevance of the concept of social capital in libraries

Human capital consists of intangible assets embodied in an individual, such as knowledge, skills, experience, competencies, personality traits, talents, motivations, as well as physical (material) assets, such as health, physical strength, life energy, etc., which are conditioned by several factors. For example, an employee's health may be affected by genetic factors, lifestyle, medical conditions (including access to medical services) and hygiene. All the above elements of human capital affect the working capacity of the personnel and the efficiency of the library. The impact of knowledge and competencies is direct, whereas poor health indirectly affects the librarian's job by causing reduced focus and engagement or more frequent absence from work. Interestingly, some human capital studies use the level of readership as one of human capital indicators. Readership, as a variable linked to the level of knowledge, replaces the indicator of formal education¹⁸.

Publications devoted to the operation of libraries often include definitions of human capital, and it is worth mentioning some of those definitions here. According to Sabina Adamiec, human capital means the attributes and properties accumulated in employees, which determine their ability to perform certain tasks associated with their jobs and constitute an intangible form of library capital. Human capital is the most important element of the intellectual capital of every library¹⁹. Joanna Kamińska writes that human capital is the library's collective ability to extract the best solutions from the knowledge of its workers. The quality and value of human capital are determined by competencies, motivation and mental dexterity²⁰. According to the third definition, human capital consists of knowledge, skills, competencies, personality traits, health, energy and vitality, and internal motivation embodied in an individual (person). The respective components of human capital are genetically determined, or they can result from the

activity of an individual, which means that they change over time. Human capital has two aspects: qualitative (the number of library personnel, the number of hours that the personnel can work, etc.) and quantitative (the level of competencies, knowledge, experience and other quantitative factors that affect one's ability to work and the quality of one's work)²¹.

Human capital, unlike social capital, belongs to individuals. Thus, the loss of an employee also means the loss of their experience, knowledge, relations, contacts with the local community or library patron groups, suppliers, sponsors, and other library partners. Human capital differs from the tangible capital of a library in several ways.

Human capital is much diversified as it stems from people with different upbringings, educational backgrounds, personality traits, life experiences and even genetic factors that make individuals suitable for different activities and professions. Even though human capital resources are embodied in people, they cannot be linked directly with potential demographic resources. Human capital is not synonymous with human resources. Individuals accumulate human capital in unique ways and have access to different resources of human capital. Human capital may be successfully multiplied through investing or, to the contrary, it may be neglected and depreciated (if one fails to update the knowledge once gained). Systematic investment is usually assumed to be linked with expenditures on education and training. However, it should be noted that not every kind of learning causes a person to develop and increase productivity. Thus every investment should be purposeful and well-considered, especially in libraries that often have limited funds for training²².

As has already been noted, human capital is intrinsically linked to a person. It cannot be sold or exchanged, and a library as the employer may only use it via its employees. Thus, it is said that human capital is at the disposal of a library, but the library will never be its owner. In this context, HR policy is crucial in building team motivation, preventing employee turnover, and preventing experienced and innovative employees from quitting and taking their knowledge, experiences, and possibilities.

The use of human capital by organisations is analysed within the framework of the human resource management theory developed in the USA in mid 20th century by Peter Drucker, Douglas McGregor, Rensis

Likert and Abraham Maslow. However, the opinion that humans rather than machines or other tangible assets are the most important components of an organisation and the driver of its success was not popular until the late 20th century. A person is a driver behind inanimate resources. Apart from human capital, all other resources are, as Jac Fitz-Enz called it, “inert potential”²³. The same approach was adopted in library science, too. It was determined that because libraries provide services rather than managing archives, librarians are more important than resources to make libraries attractive and promote pro-readership and pro-education attitudes²⁴.

Investing in human capital and return on investment in human capital are increasingly popular concepts. Numerous analyses suggest that organisations that achieve the best results and are the most effective in their operations pay much attention to human resource management²⁵. Effective use of human capital available to librarians is also important. Failure to make practical use of knowledge and skills available to a library and passive attitudes and lack of engagement in social affairs reduce the quality of human capital²⁶.

Human capital embodied in the library employee team is strongly linked with social capital. Human capital attributes, such as knowledge, skills, competencies, experience, are strongly correlated to trust, relations, ability to collaborate and build a team, which, in turn, are attributes of social capital. Human capital and social capital strengthen one another, laying the foundations for added value for employees and customers. Some researchers, such as James Coleman, even claim that social capital is an element of human capital²⁷. This claim is founded on the results of a research according to which the participation of individuals in networks of connections and their position within groups influence their professional performance and life success, regardless of their education and professional experience.

A comprehensive review of human capital measurement methods that could be used in libraries was conducted by Larry White. He also suggested possible strategies for the development of human capital in libraries²⁸. Town²⁹ discussed the concept of human capital evaluation in libraries. He noted that, despite many publications on the capital itself, there were no dedicated methods to measure the capital in various types of libraries. He also noted that the

framework of human capital evaluation is based on the following four dimensions:

i. Capacity – the human capital volume that a library holds, and consequently a surrogate for the work that it can generate and produce. Capacity is not merely the number of employees but rather the work done by them. Every employee could stop working because of illness or absence or could do their work less efficiently.

ii. Capability – the ability of the library to perform or achieve using its human capital resources. It is associated with the competencies and qualifications of librarians.

iii. Climate of effect – how people feel about work in the library and how it translates to their performance of professional duties.

iv. Culture of momentum – an atmosphere of action and mobilisation to change and innovate.

To sum up the deliberations on human capital, it should be noted that people are the source of innovative library services, and they develop new solutions, process knowledge and create other forms of capital (e.g. relational capital, reputation capital or brand capital). Because information resources can now be collected in electronic databases accessible online, libraries gradually cease to perform the role of archivers of tangible collections. Meanwhile, the social goals of libraries are gaining importance, which is associated with a focus on readers. However, the activity of libraries should not be limited to interest in patrons – their needs and satisfaction. It is also important to pay close attention to library employees, who are the most important resource of the library. Effective evaluation of human capital may help make decisions concerning budget allocation, recruitment, employee training and advancement of library services³⁰. It would also be interesting to determine the impact of the age of librarians on their social attitudes, and their social activity, willingness to help others, trust in others or level of individual social capital. These issues, which were included in the research, are discussed in the subsequent part of the paper.

According to the research results conducted in various social and professional groups, age is one of the factors affecting the type and density of social relations. Social capital research suggests that young respondents express their distrust the most often. The tendency to trust others increases with age, but at the same time, older people have fewer social contacts³¹.

This can affect professions that rely on trust and social contacts. The nature of social contacts and their intensity and frequency depend on and harmonise with the life cycle. In some cultures, they may be analysed in gender, which strongly determines the model of social behaviours and the shape of social networks. Meanwhile, studies conducted in libraries suggest possible correlations between the age of librarians and professional burnout³². Analyses of the average age of librarians in various kinds of libraries are also interesting³³.

The purpose of the analysis was to determine whether, with age, librarians change their attitudes towards their working environment. Conduct, motivation, engagement and trust in others all play an important role in the provision of library services, given that libraries are determined to develop other social functions and tasks apart from information functions. The attitudes of the personnel may significantly affect the provision of services and their final effect. In the case of managerial personnel, they may even determine the choice of projects implemented in the library and the portfolio of services offered by the library. Data on the attitudes of library personnel may be useful in HR processes, such as selection of training or management methods, programming incentive systems, etc. Although it is extremely difficult to change attitudes and motivations, librarians may strive to compensate for the most evident defects and develop the desired behaviours.

Objective of the study

- To determine whether, depending on age, librarians have:
 - different levels of trust in others;
 - different levels of individual social capital;
 - different social activity and civic engagement;
 - different sizes of social networks; and
 - different attitudes to remote contacts/electronic services.

Methodology

The analysis presented in this paper is a part of research on the individual social capital of librarians³⁴. The research started in the second half of 2018 and is still in progress³⁵. It included an online survey, which was sent to librarians working in various kinds of libraries in 20 countries across the world: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belarus, Canada,

Czechia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, UK and USA. A total of 6,593 librarians answered the survey. The respondents represented different types of libraries and positions within libraries. They were divided into three age groups:

- persons aged 30 years or younger;
- persons aged between 31 and 50 years;
- persons aged 50 years or older.

Statistical evaluation of the results depending on the age of librarians consisted of two types of calculations. Table 1 presents differences in ordinal variables and scale variables depending on age. The Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to these data to verify differences depending on age. The Dunn's multiple comparison test was calculated for general significant statistics of that test. "a<b" means that the age group 30 years or younger scored statistically significantly lower for the analysed variable than the older group of 31 to 50 years. Chi-square test statistics were calculated for nominal variables (Table 2). All the significance tests were calculated at statistical significance alpha level =0.05.

The level of individual social capital was calculated using the resource generator – the standardised Questionnaire for the Measurement of Individual Social Capital (KPIKS), developed by the Polish psychologist Rafał Styła³⁶ (Styła, 2009), based on a tool prepared by Martin van der Gaag and Tom Snijders³⁷ – the Dutch researchers of individual social capital (Van der Gaag, Snijders, 2004, 2005).

Analysis

According to the research, individual social capital is the lowest in the age group 30 years or younger. In the other age groups after 31 years of age, the level is comparable. Studies conducted in other professional groups reveal the same trend. Age does not affect the number of acquaintances, i.e., an individual's social network size.

The older the respondents, the higher their civic engagement – they attend public meetings for residents concerning practical issues where they live more frequently. Also, persons aged 50 years or older attend public meetings more often than the younger groups. With age, the number of interventions an individual undertakes in a year also increases – it should be noted that interventions such as, for example, notifying the newspaper, radio, TV station,

Table 1 — Kruskal-Wallis test and Dunn's post-hoc test of multiple comparisons between ordinal variables

	Age												Kruskal-Wallis Test	Dunn's test	
	a – 30 years or younger				b – 31 to 50 years				c – 50 years or older						
	M	n	MD	SD	M	n	MD	SD	M	n	MD	SD	H	p	
Individual social capital level	64.91	557	69.00	13.07	66.97	3200	70.00	11.06	66.83	2836	69.00	10.97	9.699	0.008	a<b; a<c
Number of acquaintances	20.36	381	10.00	49.23	27.35	2538	10.00	67.89	25.30	2283	10.00	56.87	2.577	0.276	-
Are there persons actively engaged in social work in your library? Specify the number of such persons	2.51	555	1.00	5.65	2.93	3186	1.00	7.99	3.27	2816	1.00	6.68	15.204	0.000	a<b; a<c; b<c
How many times in the last year did you attend a public meeting for residents concerning practical issues in the place where you live?	1.00	555	0.00	2.39	1.63	3198	1.00	3.33	2.22	2830	1.00	5.91	143.774	0.000	a<b; a<c; b<c
How many times in the last year did you attend a public meeting not related to your work?	2.88	554	1.00	10.69	2.86	3199	1.00	6.63	3.40	2828	2.00	7.88	58.177	0.000	a<b; a<c
How many times in the last year did you sign a petition or protest or attend a demonstration?	2.60	556	1.00	4.40	2.46	3194	1.00	5.96	2.65	2824	1.00	8.92	9.600	0.008	a>b; c>b
How many times in the last year did you inform a newspaper, radio or TV station, school management, police or other authorities about a problem (verbally or in writing)?	0.88	557	0.00	4.03	0.97	3195	0.00	3.70	1.10	2834	0.00	3.07	21.944	0.000	a<b; a<c; b<c
How many times in the last year did you help raise money or donate money to a specific purpose?	3.78	555	2.00	8.65	4.33	3191	2.00	7.49	5.13	2827	3.00	9.19	67.209	0.000	a<b; a<c; b<c
How many times in the last year did you help collect things or donate things in a charity event?	2.05	554	1.00	5.36	2.81	3194	2.00	4.65	3.20	2830	2.00	6.45	101.153	0.000	a<b; a<c; b<c

school managers, the police or authorities about various problems that need solving are a form of civic engagement and are recognised as one of the indicators of social capital. Meanwhile, participation in petitions or demonstrations decreases with age.

With age, the social activity of librarians increases—the older they are, the more frequently they participate in fundraisers or other charity events, and volunteer for their community, church, district, village or town or do social work for the needy. With age, the willingness to agree to have one's salary reduced to avoid the layoffs of other workers increases, too. Older librarians more often notice the

social engagement of other librarians and the fact that managers promote pro-social activities in their libraries. The older an employee, the more often they believe that more individuals are actively engaged in helping others in their library. However, the youngest volunteers tend to engage as volunteers the most often.

Trust in other people and the library as an organisation also increases with age. The older a person, the more willingly they trust most colleagues. Meanwhile, employers aged 30 or younger are the ones who trust their bosses the most.

Responses concerning life aspirations also form an interesting picture. The most important thing for all

Table 2 — Chi-square test of dependencies on the question “Do the attitudes/responses/level of social capital of young librarians differ from the responses of older persons”

		Age						Chi2 test
		30 years or younger (n=557; 8.4%)		31 to 50 years (n=3200 48.5%)		50 years or older (n=2836; 32.0%)		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	
Library type	Public	218	39.1%	1206	37.7%	1162	41.0%	Chi2(8)=41.449; p<0.001
	Academic	215	38.6%	1149	35.9%	875	30.9%	
	School	18	3.2%	233	7.3%	230	8.1%	
	Scientific (non-academic)	78	14.0%	392	12.3%	347	12.2%	
	Other	28	5.0%	220	6.9%	222	7.8%	
Position	Director	30	5.4%	462	14.4%	681	24.0%	Chi2(4)=337.998; p<0.001
	Manager	48	8.6%	813	25.4%	812	28.6%	
	Librarian (line worker)	479	86.0%	1925	60.2%	1343	47.4%	
Position	Managerial personnel	78	14.0%	1275	39.8%	1493	52.6%	Chi2(8)=41.449; p<0.001
	Line worker	479	86.0%	1925	60.2%	1343	47.4%	
Size of the town where a library is located	Village	67	12.0%	355	11.1%	371	13.1%	Chi2(6)=29.411; p<0.001
	Town with up to 100,000 residents	99	17.8%	804	25.1%	751	26.5%	
	Town with 100,000 to 500,000 residents	156	28.0%	849	26.5%	747	26.3%	
	Town with more than 500,000 residents	235	42.2%	1192	37.3%	967	34.1%	
Gender	Female	471	84.6%	2695	84.2%	2522	88.9%	Chi2(2)=29.664; p<0.001
	Male	86	15.4%	505	15.8%	314	11.1%	
Have you ever volunteered for your community, church, district, village or town, or have you ever done social work for the needy?	Yes	413	74.1%	2574	80.4%	2342	82.6%	Chi2(2)=21.982; p<0.001
	No	144	25.9%	626	19.6%	494	17.4%	
Did you work as a volunteer over the last five years?	Yes	298	53.5%	1497	46.8%	1274	44.9%	Chi2(2)=13.913; p=0.001
	No	259	46.5%	1702	53.2%	1562	55.1%	
What do you think is the impact of people like you on the life of the local community?	Major	123	22.1%	720	22.5%	687	24.2%	Chi2(6)=8.931; p=0.177
	Average/not much	234	42.0%	1463	45.7%	1270	44.8%	
	Minor	152	27.3%	801	25.0%	702	24.8%	
	None	48	8.6%	216	6.8%	177	6.2%	
Do you agree that “Most people can be trusted”?	Yes	231	41.5%	1608	50.3%	1777	62.7%	Chi2(2)=137.42; p<0.001
	No	326	58.5%	1592	49.8%	1059	37.3%	
Is the library an institution that can be trusted?	Yes	524	94.1%	3033	94.8%	2721	95.9%	Chi2(2)=6.234; p=0.044
	No	33	5.9%	167	5.2%	115	4.1%	
Do you agree with the statement: “I can trust most of my colleagues at work”?	Yes	374	67.1%	2109	65.9%	2115	74.6%	Chi2(2)=55.504; p<0.001
	No	183	32.9%	1091	34.1%	721	25.4%	
Do you agree with the statement: “I can trust my boss”?	Yes	402	72.3%	2120	66.3%	1949	68.8%	Chi2(2)=9.625; p=0.008
	No	154	27.7%	1077	33.7%	885	31.2%	
Do you think libraries should be more active in establishing relations with their patrons in the Internet, second life, Internet fora, blogs, etc.?	Yes	458	82.2%	2360	73.8%	2030	71.6%	Chi2(2)=27.266; p<0.001
	No	99	17.8%	840	26.3%	806	28.4%	
Choose the statement that you agree with the most.	To develop, the library needs coordinated activity of the governing authorities, managers and employees.	503	90.3%	2884	90.1%	2527	89.1%	Chi2(2)=1.936; p=0.380

(contd.)

Table 2 — Chi-square test of dependencies on the question “Do the attitudes/responses/level of social capital of young librarians differ from the responses of older persons” (*contd.*)

		Age						Chi2 test
		30 years or younger (n=557; 8.4%)		31 to 50 years (n=3200 48.5%)		50 years or older (n=2836; 32.0%)		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	
Would you agree to have your salary reduced to:	Avoid layoffs in the library	76	13.6%	733	22.9%	687	24.2%	
	Give a chance for employment to a person in serious need	52	9.3%	362	11.3%	350	12.3%	
	I would agree under a different condition	175	31.4%	1000	31.3%	709	25.0%	
	I would not agree under any conditions	138	24.8%	583	18.2%	496	17.5%	
The appearance of the library and its immediate surroundings is the responsibility of:	The management	48	8.6%	124	3.9%	123	4.3%	Chi2(4)=45.236; p<0.001
	The management and employees	126	22.6%	892	27.9%	900	31.7%	
	The management, employees and patrons	383	68.8%	2184	68.3%	1813	63.9%	
Do the managers of your library promote pro-social activities?	Yes, they believe them to be an element of the library mission	195	35.0%	1110	34.7%	1129	39.8%	Chi2(4)=29.77; p<0.001
	Yes, provided they do not affect the basic library services, and the librarians do not neglect their work	278	49.9%	1668	52.1%	1422	50.1%	
	No, they try to avoid such projects, which are time and money consuming	84	15.1%	422	13.2%	285	10.0%	
Do you know a librarian who volunteers for the community, church, district, village or town, or social work for the needy?	Yes	344	61.8%	2153	67.3%	1967	69.4%	Chi2(2)=12.814; p=0.002
	No	213	38.2%	1047	32.7%	869	30.6%	
What is important for you in your life?	Be someone or with someone popular and admired	42	7.5%	142	4.4%	110	3.9%	Chi2(2)=14.659; p=0.001
	Be able to do only what I want to do	278	49.9%	1180	36.9%	885	31.2%	Chi2(2)=75.954; p=0
	Be professionally successful	160	28.7%	756	23.6%	654	23.1%	Chi2(2)=8.356; p=0.015
	Be financially successful	118	21.2%	550	17.2%	436	15.4%	Chi2(2)=12.151; p=0.002
	Always have friends	287	51.5%	1734	54.2%	1588	56.0%	Chi2(2)=4.518; p=0.104
	Have a loving family	388	69.7%	2483	77.6%	2169	76.5%	Chi2(2)=16.592; p<0.001
	Help the needy	106	19.0%	765	23.9%	780	27.5%	Chi2(2)=22.077; p<0.001
	Look good and attractive	22	4.2%	107	3.6%	81	3.1%	Chi2(2)=2.363; p=0.307
How many times in the last year did you attend a public meeting for residents concerning practical issues in the place where you live?	Low civic engagement	362	65.0%	1540	48.1%	1128	39.8%	Chi2(2)=130.954; p<0.001
	High civic engagement	195	35.0%	1660	51.9%	1708	60.2%	

(contd.)

Table 2 — Chi-square test of dependencies on the question “Do the attitudes/responses/level of social capital of young librarians differ from the responses of older persons” ()

		Age						Chi2 test
		30 years or younger (n=557; 8.4%)		31 to 50 years (n=3200 48.5%)		50 years or older (n=2836; 32.0%)		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	
Would you agree to have your salary reduced to:								
How many times in the last year did you sign a petition or protest or attend a demonstration?	Low civic engagement	202	36.3%	1260	39.4%	1199	42.3%	Chi2(2)=9.502; p=0.009
	High civic engagement	355	63.7%	1940	60.6%	1637	57.7%	
How many times in the last year did you inform a newspaper, radio or TV station, school management, police or other authorities about a problem (verbally or in writing)?	Low civic engagement	412	74.0%	2181	68.2%	1845	65.1%	Chi2(2)=18.809; p<0.001
	High civic engagement	145	26.0%	1019	31.8%	991	34.9%	
Number of acquaintances	Up to 5	130	34.1%	803	31.5%	729	31.8%	Chi2(4) = 2.578; p = 0.631
	6-19	134	35.2%	888	34.8%	825	36.0%	
	20 or more	117	30.7%	860	33.7%	739	32.2%	

librarians, regardless of age, is having a loving family and always having friends. The need to be popular and admired decreases with age. For persons aged between 31 and 50 years, it is usually important to be able to do only what they want to do. For young people, professional and financial success also matters. The older the respondents, the more important it is for them to have a loving family and help the needy. The professional aspirations of young persons are a good thing because striving for professional success also means engagement in work and willingness to act, build and innovate – which may have a positive impact on the library. Meanwhile, willingness to help others, manifested by older librarians, may help create a positive atmosphere at work and an atmosphere of trust among the local community.

According to data presented in Table 2, the youngest librarians (up to 30 years of age) more frequently than their older counterparts work in academic or scientific libraries. In the oldest group (50 years or more), Librarians work in public libraries more often than younger librarians. Perhaps young librarians connect their future with an academic career – they pursue an academic career and work simultaneously. Another reason may be the salary system. To confirm this correlation, separate analyses would have to be conducted in every state because each of the countries included in the research has a different system of remunerating librarians.

As was expected, the older the librarians, the higher positions they hold, which means that the professional advancement system in libraries recognises the experience of librarians. Older

librarians tend to live in towns of up to 100,000 residents. The oldest librarians are usually women.

According to the research, older librarians prefer traditional face-to-face contact. They are less willing to agree that libraries should develop electronic services and be more active in establishing relations with patrons on the Internet. Also, they are more distanced from patrons than younger librarians. They tend to think that the appearance of the library and its immediate surroundings is the sole responsibility of the managers and employees. Meanwhile, younger librarians need to engage patrons in taking care of the library as their common good and a shared value.

Discussion

These results confirm the results of other studies conducted in different groups of respondents³⁸. The most important characteristic features of the professional group of librarians include:

- A higher level of individual social capital level among older persons;
- A higher level of trust in others among older persons (except a high level of trust in superiors among persons aged 30 years or 30 years or younger);
- A higher level of civic engagement among older persons (except participation in demonstrations, which is more popular among younger persons);
- A higher level of social activity and willingness to help others among older persons (except volunteerism);
- Focus on professional success among younger persons vs focus on the family and friends among older individuals;

Table 3 — General trends and behaviours depending on the age of librarians

Younger persons	Older persons
Lower level of individual social capital	Higher level of individual social capital
Less trust in others	More trust in others
Lower civic engagement	Higher civic engagement
Lower social activity	Higher social activity
Focus on professional success	Focus on family and friendship
Junior positions in the library	Senior positions in the library
Focus on the development of electronic communication and services	Focus on face-to-face contacts
Engaging patrons in the “life” of the library	More distance from library patrons
More frequently work in academic libraries	More frequently work in public libraries

- Older persons more frequently hold senior positions in libraries;
- Younger persons are more willing to develop electronic services and communicate via electronic means;
- Younger persons tend to engage patrons in the “life” of the library and reduce distance;
- Older persons more frequently work in public libraries and younger persons – in academic libraries.

The results of the research are briefly summarised in Table 3.

Conclusion

The analysis has shown that the age of librarians statistically significantly differentiates their behaviour and social attitudes. The information obtained in the research may help improve library management processes. Data on behaviour and social attitudes may better allocate employees and match their tasks and roles to their profiles. For example, young persons focused on success should participate in new projects and innovative teams and plan changes and help implement new solutions. Meanwhile, older librarians may focus on building trust in the library, offering support to the local community and engaging in inclusion processes. Of course, certain attributes are more common in each age group does not mean that every person in that group will have the most typical features associated with their age. Thus, it is important to analyse general trends and the individual characteristics of the personnel. It should also be noted that the diversity of behaviours and attitudes associated with age and different experiences may be successfully used in many fields.

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