

2. Individual differences in average output were greater within each age group than between different age brackets. Substantial proportions of older workers performed better than the average for younger groups. Among the women in the 45-54 age group, 47 percent produced more than the average of the women in the 35-44 group. Even among the group aged 55 to 64, about one-third of the men and women performed better than the average for those aged 35 to 44.

Another study of office workers by the Bureau of Labor Statistics^{4/} covered about 6,000 employees of five Federal Government Agencies and 21 companies in private industry. Occupations included typing, secretarial work, filing and record maintenance, key punch, and operation of business and duplicating machines. The study produced three important findings:

- a. The difference in output per man-hour between age groups was for the most part insignificant. Taking the group aged 35 to 44 as the standard, all other groups were within two percentage points in output, except those under 25 who dropped 7.6 percent below the base. Lack of experience appeared to be the main reason for the younger workers' lower performance. Workers aged 45 and over produced as much as the younger ones with an equal degree of accuracy. Those aged 65 and over generally averaged as high as any of the others.
- b. There was considerable variation among workers within age groups, as in the industrial studies. A large proportion of older workers exceeded the average performance of the younger groups.
- c. Workers in the older age groups had a steadier rate of output, with less variation than workers in the younger age groups. Frequently, an individual would produce at least twice as much as some other workers in the same age group. About 45 percent of those aged 45 or over had a higher rate of output than the average of those aged 35 to 44.

These findings are in line with the results of a study by the Canadian Department of Labor. In two large department stores, the records of sales employees showed that the older ones performed as well as the younger ones, and sometimes better. Workers hired over 40 tended to out-perform those hired below 30.

Another BLS study of Federal mail workers' job performance in 1961 confirmed earlier findings that differences in output by age are slight, and there is greater consistency of performance in the older age groups. Older workers performed at a steadier rate with less variation than did those in the younger age groups, and those aged 60 and over were 60 percent more consistent than those under 25. The index of

^{4/} U.S. Department of Labor. Comparative Job Performance by Age--Office Workers. Bulletin 1273. Washington, U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1960. 36 p.