

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Management



Bachelor Thesis

The Practice of Age Management in selected Czech Organizations

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CZECH UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES PRAGUE

Faculty of Economics and Management

BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Jitka Nouzová

Economics and Management

Thesis title

The Practice of Age Management in selected Czech Organisations

Objectives of thesis

The main objective of the practical part is to determine the extent of the conscious or unconscious application of Age management and its methods in selected Czech organisations.

Partial goals are based on individual pillars of age management at the organisational level, and include:

- 1) Knowledge of the age structure of employees in the organisation
- 2) Fairness of attitudes towards ageing employees
- 3) Management, who understands the importance of individuality and diversity
- 4) Good and feasible age management strategy
- 5) Maintenance of working ability and motivation and willingness to continue working
- 6) High level of knowledge and working competence
- 7) Organisation of work and working environment
- 8) Valuable life

Methodology

The thesis will use scientific methods, in particular logical methods, such as analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction. The theoretical background will be based on analysis of secondary sources, studying the scientific papers and literature about Age Management and Human Resource Management.

The primary data will be analysed by means of a quantitative survey.

The proposed extent of the thesis

30 – 40 pages

Keywords

Age Management, demography development of population, the Czech Republic, survey

Recommended information sources

- CIMBÁLNÍKOVÁ, Lenka, Jiří FUKAN, Bohumíra LAZAROVÁ, Dagmar NAVRÁTILOVÁ, Petr NOVOTNÝ, Radka ODRAZILOVÁ, Zdeněk PALÁN, Milada RABUŠICOVÁ, Milena RAJMONOVÁ, et al. Age Management pro práci s cílovou skupinou 50+: metodická příručka. Vyd. 1. Praha: Asociace institucí vzdělávání dospělých ČR, 2012, 160 s. ISBN 978-80-904531-5-9.
- ŠTORÁVÁ, I. – FUKAN, J. Zaměstnanec a věk aneb Age Management na pracovišti. Praha: JENA. 2012. 84 s. ISBN: 978-80-87137-35-2
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- URBANCOVÁ, Hana a Tomáš HLAVSA. Age Management Principles in Czech Agrarian Sector. AGRIS on-line Papers in Economics and Informatics, 2014, roč. VI, č. 3, s. 93-102. ISSN: 1804-1930.

Expected date of thesis defence

2017/18 WS – FEM (February 2018)

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled " The Practice of Age Management in selected Czech Organizations " by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break copyrights of any their person.

In Prague on 30.11.2017

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank to my supervisor, Mr. Richard Selby, for his help, feedbacks, advice and his willingness to answer all my questions during the thesis writing.

Použití Age managementu ve vybraných Českých organizacích

Souhrn

Bakalářská práce se zabývá řízením za základě věku a jeho implementací ve vybraných českých organizacích. V rozvinutém světě populace rychle stárne. Chceme-li si tedy udržet náš hospodářský růst a vyhnout se sociálním problémům, musíme najít způsob, jak lépe řídit naši pracovní sílu.

Práce vysvětluje osm hlavních pilířů age management, spolu s dalšími souvisejícími tématy, jako jsou věkové stereotypy, pracovní schopnost, současná situace na národní úrovni. Kvantitativní průzkum byl proveden na základě osmi hlavních pilířů a každý z nich byl samostatně analyzován a porovnán s teoretickými nálezy, aby se dalo lépe porozumět současným nedostatkům implementace strategií age managementu.

Závěrem je výzkum shrnut a jsou uvedeny doporučení ve které oblasti age management jsou potřeba zlepšit.

Klíčová slova: Age management, demografický vývoj populace, Česká Republika, dotazníkové šetření, věkové stereotypy, index pracovní schopnosti

The Practice of Age management in selected Czech Organizations

Summary

The bachelor thesis is concerned with Age management and its implementation in selected Czech organizations. The population is rapidly aging the developed world. If we want to keep our economic growth and avoid social problems, we need to find a way, how to manage our workforce better.

The thesis explains, the eight main pillars of Age management, with the other related topics as age stereotypes, work ability, current situation on national level. The quantitative survey was done, based on the eight main pillars and each pillar was separately analyzed and compared to the theoretical findings to better understand the current drawbacks of implementation of age management strategies.

In conclusion the research is summarized and recommendation are given, on which areas of age management implementation should be improved.

Keywords: Age Management, demography development of population, the Czech Republic, survey, Czech organization, age stereotypes, work ability index

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1 Introduction

The fact, that a person enjoys longer life is advantageous not only for the individual, but also for the whole society. However, in the last few decades, a more modern way of living is associated with lower birth rates. These two facts together cause a significant increase in the average age in the west world. If we want to keep economic growth and avoid numerous society problems, older people and other disadvantaged age groups must be included among the economically active.

However, those goals, are not easy to achieve and have specific demands. Age Management is just trying to define these demands and meet them. Although concept of age management is often talked about in connection only to older workers, it does not focus solemnly on them but on all age groups. For instance, fresh graduates from schools, moms, or even people of working age. That is, it solves, and in the future, will solve, the problems of each of us. Nevertheless, most people have not met this concept, and that's why, in the first theoretical part. I am introducing it, together with working ability or age discrimination, which are an integral parts of age management. Special focus is given, different program implemented in Czech Republic on national level.

As I have mentioned above, age management is not yet very known concept, but some of the dimension or pillars are implemented in the organizations, without the organizations knowing, that it belongs to the measure of age management. That is why I am trying to find, how much and if, which pillars of the age management policies are being implemented in selected Czech organizations.

Objectives and Methodology

1.1 Objectives

The main objective of the practical part is to determine the extent of conscious or unconscious application of age management and its methods in the selected Czech organizations.

Partial goals are based on individual pillars of age management at the organizational level, and include:

- 1) Knowledge of the age structure of employees in the organization
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1.2 Methodology

The thesis will use scientific methods, logical methods, such as analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction. The theoretical background will have based on analysis of secondary sources, studying the scientific papers and literature about Age Management and Human Resource Management.

The primary data will be analyzed by means of a quantitative survey.

To achieve the outputs for the empirical part of the thesis, we choose a quantitative research that allows us to cover a larger representative sample of people and obtain more objective data, that we can further statistically process. Surveys of this kind are often referred to as pedagogical surveys, since primary objective of the research is not to demonstrate the relationship between phenomena, but only to identify and describe the situation, state or occurrence of a certain phenomenon, we are talking about the so-called

descriptive research problem. This method was chosen about the nature and extent of this work.

Through the questionnaire survey technique, information was obtained through written questions from a relatively large number of respondents. It is the most used method of obtaining data in pedagogical research in the form of pre-prepared and carefully formulated questions, to which respondents respond in writing. The questionnaire was created in electronic form and have collected a response via the web interface of the service provider. Based on the generated key and link, respondents were given the opportunity to answer questionnaire questions within the defined time window, due to incomplete or erroneous filling in the control mechanisms. The investigation was non-public, anonymous, and respondents were warned that the data would be treated discreetly and in accordance with the ethical and moral code. The purpose of the questionnaire and the use of the answers obtained were described in its introduction. The submitted questionnaire contained 18 questions. Respondent could always choose 1 from 3- 4 different answers. There was one open question included. The results were obtained by the research in electronic form after its conclusion. For individual questions, the data were summarized into absolute and relative frequency tables, based on which charts were created.

The core research sample is the human resources staff or the staff performing their role. To compile a sample, we used a list of current email contacts, obtained from UZS (Union of Employers' Associations of the Czech Republic) database, meeting the conditions of the base file from which we randomly selected 300 respondents. 172 completed the questionnaire correctly, 114 respondents only displayed the questionnaire and 14 were not completed. Thus, the overall return on the questionnaire was 57.33%.

The analysis of the research results, the details of which correspond to partial questions, will be dealt with in practical part of the bachelor thesis.

Literature Review

In the first chapter we will focus on definition and the basic terminology, relating to the topic of age management. It is essential to get acquainted with the theoretical starting points of the work and to inform about the meaning of the areas to which the work will relate.

1.3 Demography change: aging population

The concept of aging can be distinguished at the level of individuals and society. In individuals, aging refers to all the changes that occur over the course of life time. Those included all physical, psychological, and social processes. (National Institute on Aging, 2011). Aging of human organism is inevitable. On the contrary population in demographic sense, can grow young again by increasing the share of young people.

Population ageing has become a global issue. People defined as “old” will represent an increasingly larger part of our society (Cimbálníková, Fukan, et., 2011, p. 7). In social development context changes in the age structure are much more important than mere numerical growth or decline of population.

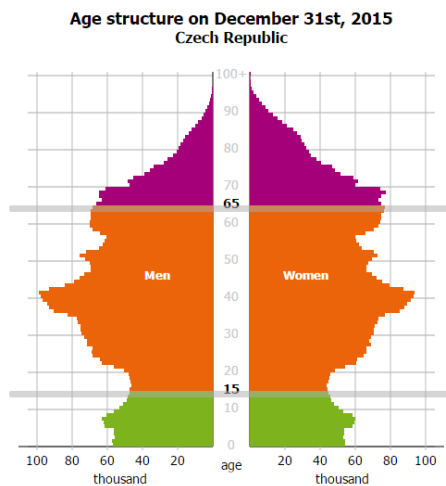


Figure 2: Age structure 2015

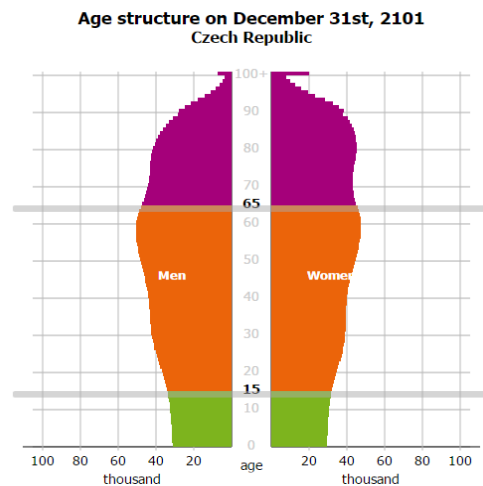


Figure 2: Age structure 2101

Source CZSO, 2017

age	Mill.	%
65+	1.93	18.3
15-64	7	66.3
<15	1.62	15.4
Total	10.55	100

Fig. 3: age groups in 2015

Source CZSO, 2017

age	Total	%
65+	2498583	32.5
15 - 64	4248249	55.3
<15	936820	12.2
Total	7683652	100

Fig. 4: Age groups in 2101

As can be seen from Fig.1 and 2 the share of people aged 15-64 should drop from 68.4% to 55.3%, the proportion of children from 15.4% to 12.2%. Thus, the average age of the population increases from 41.3 to 50.0. The age category 65 and over will be the only part of the population that will grow in number and will constitute almost one-third of the population.

The older population is itself ageing. The share of older persons aged 85 years or over (the “oldest old”) in Czech Republic was 0,2 mil in 2013 and it is expected to grow to 0,8 mil by 2060. That means fourfold increase. (MPVS, 2017). Another phenomenon we can observe is the “feminization” of population aging. This is mainly due to the fact, that woman usually outlive the man. (Gavrilov, 2013). Especially women predominate in the highest age groups. At the beginning of 2015, the Czech Republic aged 65 years and over accounted for 1,102 mil. Women made up (59%). At the age of 80-89 years, women accounted for two-thirds and over 90 years of age even three-fourths of seniors. (CZSO, 2015).

Those changes occur due to numerous reasons. The major one being low birth rate and the increase in life expectancy. (Ilmarinen 2008, p. 19; Cimbálníková, et al., 2011, p. 9). The fertility rate needed to maintain a stable population is 2.1 children per woman. (Cimbálníková, et al., 2011, p. 9). In 2015 the fertility rate in Czech Republic, or average number of children born per woman, reached only a 1.57 children per woman (CZSO, 2015), which is not sufficient to re-populate.

The increase in life expectancy is mainly caused by the rapid advancement in medicine. As shown in table 3, the life expectancy in Czech Republic grew in last 25 years from 68, 1 to 75,8 for man and from 75,4 to 81,4 for woman. This trend is predicted to continue and in 2101 will increase to 91 for woman, 87 for man. (CSZO, 2015).

Table 1: The life expectancy in Czech Republic

Year	1989	2015	2101
Man	68,1	75,8	87
Woman	75,4	81,4	91

Source: CSZO (2015)

As it is clear from the information discussed above. This age structure shift will have a major impact on health care systems, social support systems and labor market. Economic growth of country can slow down, because of shrinking and aging of labor force. (Gavrilov 2013). Decline in productivity can occur due to larger share of the working population being employed in caring activities (Employer Attitudes to Older Workers: Analysis Report).

Especially social security system will become burdened. Therefore state legislatures are already trying to increase the number people in the workforce. In the Czech Republic this is being achieved primarily by increase of the statutory retirement age. (Šatava, 2015).

But we need to understand that demographic changes are not only problem of state legislations, but also individual companies. They will need to acknowledge this phenomena, to keep the competitive advantage. Finally, the workers will have to adapt to the new situation on the job market. As stated by Naegele and Walker in their publication *A guide to good practice in age management 2006*, p. V, "The common objective for all should be a "develop the skills and employability of older people while maintaining the health, motivation and capacities of workers as they age."

1.4 Age stereotypes and ageism

To fully understand the concept of ageism. Stereotype must be explained first. It was derived from the Greek words stereos (= solid) and typos (= shock) and this concept was introduced in 1922 by W. Lippman. Stereotype is a steady image in the consciousness of people, who are usually taken from sources other than their own social experience and are taken from the closest social environment, created primarily by family upbringing, behavior patterns of parents and or from recognized authorities. (Maříková [et al.] 1996: 1229 – 1230).

As reported by (Trusínová, 2012, p. 131) the three basic characteristics, that lead to stereotyping in society are age, gender and ethnicity. "Knowledge of the age of another can evoke people's expectations of his or her abilities, experience, health, or involvement in various family and social roles." In view of these facts, we can conclude that age can be one of the fundamental characteristics that can make people more areas of life to discriminate - the work area may be one of them (Štorová & Fukan, 2012).

1.4.1 Ageism

Ageism, social prejudice against old age. It was used by Robert Butler, the first director of the National Institute on Aging in the United States in 1969. He was one of the first to talk about age discrimination. "Old age stereotypes stem from early and simplified assessment and black and white thinking," Tošner explains. (Age Management magazine September 2012) Another author, who deals with this concept is Palmore. In 1990, he included in the definition of ageism "prejudices and negative stereotypes about old people or manifestations of discrimination against an older person or a group of elders". (Palmore 1990).

A key limitation of those definition is that it does not include young people. Although age stereotyping can also affect them. Ageism is an ideology that is "based on shared beliefs about the qualitative inequalities of the individual phases of the human life cycle, manifested through the process of systematic, symbolic and real stereotyping and discrimination of persons and groups based on their chronological age and / or their belonging to a particular generation" (Vidovičová 2005), (Štorová & Fukan, 2012).

1.5 Work Ability

Aging of workers is accompanied by changes in their physical and mental abilities. However, we need to consider, that everybody is different and lifestyle factors, such as physical leisure activities, can have a significant impact on the balance between work capacity and work requirements. These requirements may cause health problems and consequently loss of manpower in case of insufficient alignment with the physical and mental capacity of the employees. The so-called work capacity is based on the balance

between the resources of the worker and the work requirements imposed on him/ her (Novotný, Bosničová, et al., 2014, p. 74). It is an assessment of how good a worker is in the current job position, what is the outlook for the future, in terms of work demands and his/her health and mental disposition. (Novotný, Bosničová, et al., 2014, p. 79).

Work performance is therefore closely related to work ability, which is influenced not only by the worker's health status, but also by other factors that affect the working life of an individual at different stages of life. (Cimbálková, Fukan, etc. 2012, pp. 28-29) Among these other factors are the requirements of the work, the working conditions of the organization, the family background or the activities of a close community and society.

Other authors also complement the expertise and skills, values, attitudes, motivation and work itself (Novotný, Bosničová, et al., 2014, p. 74). "Work ability is the basis for the quality of work and the retention of older employees in employment. It relates to health, professional abilities, job content and working conditions. Finnish technical studies have confirmed that investment in job retention has produced results over the next several years (Novotný, Bosničová, et al., 2014, p. 81).

Compared to younger workers, the differences in work capacity among workers over 45 are much larger, with approximately 15-30% of workers in this age group having an average or bad work ability index. This information is confirmed by the fact that the work performance and the ability to work is directed not only by the employees themselves, but also by their superiors or HR managers of the enterprise. If enterprises that employ older workers do not take preventative and remedial measures and do not adapt changes, workers will be threatened with deteriorating of their working capacity (Novotný, Bosničová, etc., 2014, p. 83). Štorová and Fukan (2012, p. 5) add that research results show that "... managers and leadership are key players in influencing work ability." Their knowledge of older workers and the willingness to find the optimal solution to work with age, has an impact on increasing the working capacity of aging workers.

Workers at the FIOH in Helsinki described work capacity as a multi-story building and organized this model into a so-called 4-floor working ability. See picture 2 below.

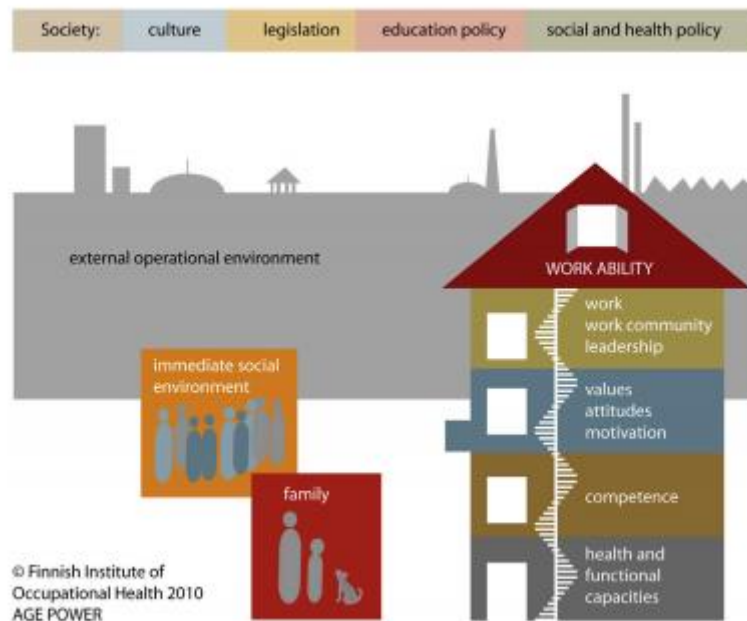


Figure 5: House of working ability

Source: FIOH

Within the house on each floor there are factors that affect the worker's working capacity daily, the interconnection of individual floors and their interaction is represented by the staircase. The bottom of the first floor is health and functional capacity, in the other, competence, in other values, attitudes and motivations, and the last fourth floor is characterized by the style of management, the workplace and the working conditions.

The management or managers are responsible for this top floor, and they can organize and change the floor if necessary. The main responsibility for the first two floors is with the workers, and the other two with the employer, while the healthcare and occupational safety are a key factors. External factors "outside the house" (family, friends, etc.) also have some affect, but not so directly and every day. Nevertheless, these influences are also very important because they can affect the working ability of an individual throughout their lives in different ways (Štorová, Fukan, 2012, p. 40).

As a tool for assessing working ability, the Finnish staff created a self-assessment questionnaire with standardized questions - Work Ability Index. It is a subjective way of measuring work capacity, using a questionnaire consisting of seven basic areas. This questionnaire differs from others by not only looking at basic employee data, but also about their mental, physical, or health options for work.

The result of the evaluated questionnaire is a numeric value ranging from 7 to 50 points. We can divide the values into the following ranges:

- group of 7-27 points: represents a low-skill category,
- group of 28-36 points: represents category with an average working ability,
- group of 37-43 points: category with a good working ability,
- group from 44 to 50 points: category with excellent of working ability.

The result of the questionnaire is compared with the reference values, that represent the established average work ability, either for a woman or a man of the same age and the same type of work (Štorová, 2015)

1.6 Age management

In the following chapter, we will define the basic concepts of Age management. Later in the text, the acronym AM for age management will be used.

1.6.1 Definition of Age management

Age management has many definitions. Walker (1997) defines it as „ *referring to the various dimensions by which human resources are managed within organizations with an explicit focus on ageing and, also, more generally, to the overall management of the workforce ageing via public policy or collective bargaining.* “

The definition by Walker is not complete, since it does not consider other age groups, but only the older workers. Because as describes by Ilmarinen (2012) age management is a process, where „ *age related factors should be taken into consideration in daily management, including work arrangements and individual work tasks, so that everybody, regardless of age, feels empowered in reaching their own and corporate goals.* “ That is also conform by Štorová (2015) and Prokurat (2012) stating that age management should consider all age groups of the population: graduates, parents with young children, carers and other family members and the generation of an aging population.

In short, AM can generally be defined as a strategy for managing employees regarding their age, while maintaining the main principle, that each employee can make the most of his potential, without being discriminated against because of his or her age.

The emergence of AM is attributed to Helsinki's Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH), which has been addressing the aging of the population since the 1980s. The reason for the interest in this area was mainly due to the demographic changes in Finland and the number of the population group born at the end of the Second World War. Therefore, a large amount of labor force would leave the labor market in the future, with many job vacancies again being difficult to fill.

Because of these problems, the FIOH has had to answer two basic questions:

- How long can people work?
- What age is the right to retire?

In addressing these fundamental issues, as was already discussed above, the FIOH has come up with a new method of measuring work capacity called the work ability index (WAI). Several studies have been conducted using this method to create the bases for creating programs to support the aging population in the labor market. Successful results achieved in Finland have become the basis for Age Management application in other European countries and around the world (Štorová, 2015).

1.6.2 Levels of Age management

Managing the workforce that is aging is a matter of interest on many levels. The objectives and the instruments for achieving them are set differently within these levels. In general, we can distinguish three basic levels in which the interests of stakeholders in AM are expressed and implemented. Members of all three main levels should be interested in age management tools.

These levels are:

- the national level covering the whole society,
- the organizational level representing the companies,
- the individual level, which includes individuals.

Therefore, it is not possible to transfer all responsibility for Age Management to just one level, whether on age policy, responsible person or business measures.

Each of the levels looks at Age Management from a different viewpoint and thus carries a degree of responsibility. Figure 1 below shows all the levels with their main goals and the tools needed to achieve them. We are going to focus mainly on the organizational level, we cannot forget the other two levels of Age Management, that affect it to a certain extent. (Cimbálníková et al., 2012).

1.6.2.1 National level

Age Management and its public interest are currently linked to maximizing the contribution of aging employees to economic and social development. From this point of view, important questions are addressed regarding the aging population as a real problem that is threatening social development. This level is represented primarily by the state. But because of globalization it can be partly defined by different international and transnational institutions. With its activity in this field, the state is working to match demand and supply on the labor market, tackle employment and unemployment issues and seeks to remove the adverse effects of demographic developments caused by aging populations. Managing an aging workforce requires public intervention, mostly because many aspects of the problem are not covered by the market. The public interest is therefore expressed in the so-called "age" policy.

1.6.2.2 Organizational level

The implementation of Age Management at the organizational level is mainly linked to the need to plan, maintain or manage its employees strategically, with respect to their age. As Gerhard Naegele and Alan Walker (2006, A Guide to Good Practice in Age Management 2006, s. 1) point out, "Future economic growth, competition and efficiency will increasingly depend on how effectively employers will be able to use an aging workforce.". An important element for the enterprise is therefore to adapt the capabilities of the employees to the needs of the enterprise and thereby increase the overall productivity of the work. Consequently, the interest will be constantly growing because of

labor force development towards a higher proportion of older age workers, which many organizations are aware of today.

Previously, it was common for young job seekers to be enough for the labor market and the usual practice was often the early retirement of older workers, who had to free the space for the new employees. Today, the situation is much more difficult. As the An European Age Management Network 2007, p. 14, discuss the problems and challenges most often arise in cases such as company restructuring, market development, organizational change, technological development, greater loss of skills, leaving of experienced staff, lack of manpower. Then there are other company specifics that can be a reason for searching age management measures: pressure to lower costs, consumer demands, changing production needs, efforts to maintain a skilled workforce, or changing social values within the company. Therefore, employers should become more and more aware of their share of responsibility, and they should also respect the fact that health protection at work, adequate workload, healthy social environment at work is a social responsibility of employers

1.6.2.3 Individual level

Lastly, it is necessary to mention the relationship of individuals and age management. Demographic changes clearly lead to legislative changes, that imply not only later retirement, but also the changing economic situation of people. The main concern of the individual should therefore be, to associate the fact that, he / she is trying to maintain and restore his / her own employment. At the same time, they should look and think about gaining and retaining such working skills, that will enable them to find adequate compensation, in case of loss or replacement of the current job, which is now a very big challenge for aging workers. Aging and gradual waning of strength, either physical or mental, varies from person to person and may sometimes be only subjective. It is therefore difficult to clearly set the age limit when people are not able to perform their work in full. Determining such a threshold would most likely be the cause of discrimination.

The interest of the individual level also lies in the achievement of the overall satisfaction in life, which is given by quality work and private life and their mutual

alignment. Employees, however, must expect that they will be at work over a long period of time and should therefore consider their work capacity. Even in the case of an already advanced career, it is good to plan for a future job and to think about other job opportunities. Employees' great advantage is the ability to take merit of their older age, such as the experience that empowers the employee not to embark on insolvable work tasks, or resolves situations more effectively, because he has dealt with them in the past. Every employee should be open to lifelong learning and developing their skills and knowledge, whether in the workplace or in their own life. (Štorová & Fukan, 2012).

1.6.3 Pillars of age management

To match the needs of the organization and the needs of its employees in achieving good long-term economic performance, it is necessary to find, set and maintain models and practices, that would harmonize these needs regarding the individual possibilities of employees in relation to their age. Age management means not only a comprehensive solution at all levels, but its proper implementation in organizations brings new direction in addressing demographic changes in workplaces. The promotion of its principles and methods should always be in line with the corporate culture. Meaning it should always work in hand with the attitude of managers towards workers and their needs, which reflects the visions and goals of the organization. (Ilmarinen, 2008, pp. 233-236)

To do that a group of experts (Finnish Institute of Occupational Health 2003) defined the following eight fundamental pillars of AM, that are characterized by interdependence, and their fulfilment is a prerequisite for the proper functioning of Age Management. The implementation of these pillars must be tailored to the individual processes implemented within the company's HR activity, processing of strategic materials, as well as in-house directives. (Ilmarinen 2005).

Basic pillars of AM:

- 1) Knowledge of the age structure of employees in the organization
- 2) Fairness of attitudes towards ageing employees

- 3) Management, who understands the importance of individuality and diversity
- 4) Good and feasible age management strategy
- 5) Maintenance of working ability and motivation and willingness to continue working
- 6) High level of knowledge and working competence
- 7) Organization of work and working environment
- 8) Valuable life

1.6.3.1 Knowledge of the age structure of employees in the organization

People working in the firm and are responsible for decision-making should be well acquainted with the issues of age at the workplace as well as with its future development. It refers to the age structure of employees, the needs of younger employees, retirement, dismissals, etc. (Cimbálníková et al., 2012 p. 39-42)

1.6.3.2 Fairness of attitudes towards ageing employees

A fair or good attitude towards old age is seen in the positive approach of senior staff to aging employees, their knowledge, skills, and their efforts to overcome obsolete opinions and age prejudices that make it impossible for them to take full advantage of their strengths and consequently complicate intergenerational cooperation in working collectives and teams.

It highlights the key role of a solid management, which knowing the diversity of each employee individual needs and the degree of his / her working ability, chooses the right course of his / her management to support and motivate the worker. Differences in needs allow management to form age-mixed working groups that involve both intergenerational dialogue and the transfer of valuable experience and skills (Ilmarinen, 2008, p. 236-238).

1.6.3.3 Management, who understands the importance of individuality and diversity

Management applies individual approaches to different age groups of employees. This means choosing individual approaches to the needs of employees and their work choices, so that they find the best way to guide and motivate them to work.

1.6.3.4 Good and feasible age management strategy

The goal of the age strategy is to eliminate the risk of a company's lack of workforce in the future. The age strategy becomes an integral part of the company's already employed strategy, that allows for the creation of procedures, that ensure acceptable working environment as well as good working relationships, also with respect to the older generation of workers.

1.6.3.5 Maintenance of working ability and motivation and willingness to continue working

The role of this pillar is to find a balance between the demands placed on the employee and his / her work potential, in accordance with the knowledge of all the factors that can affect the work capacity of the employees. It is particularly about providing training programs for employees, effective work organization and health at work.

1.6.3.6 High level of knowledge and working competence

It can be achieved not only by promoting lifelong learning for employees, but by setting up procedures for the direct transfer of knowledge and skills within the organization. Not only from older to young people, but also vice versa, because in such intergenerational communication at the professional level we find the most valuable knowledge sources.

1.6.3.7 Organization of work and working environment

The role of this pillar is to set up and monitor the organization of work, working time or physical and mental requirements for work that are in line with the possibilities and needs of employees of different ages. For example, the ways we can improve or influence working hours, workload etc.

1.6.3.8 Valuable life

By applying all the previous pillars in the organization, we contribute to ensuring that the worker's satisfaction, recognition and well-being are achieved throughout their working lives. Preparing to leave active working life is natural with the support of experts in the organization. In the framework of seniors' plans, there is also the possibility of using

former employees as valuable sources of experience, for example during trainings etc. (Ilmarinen, 2008, p. 236-244).

For the visual representation of the interdependence and interconnection of individual pillars, that together form the Age management see diagram done by Ilmarinen (2005).

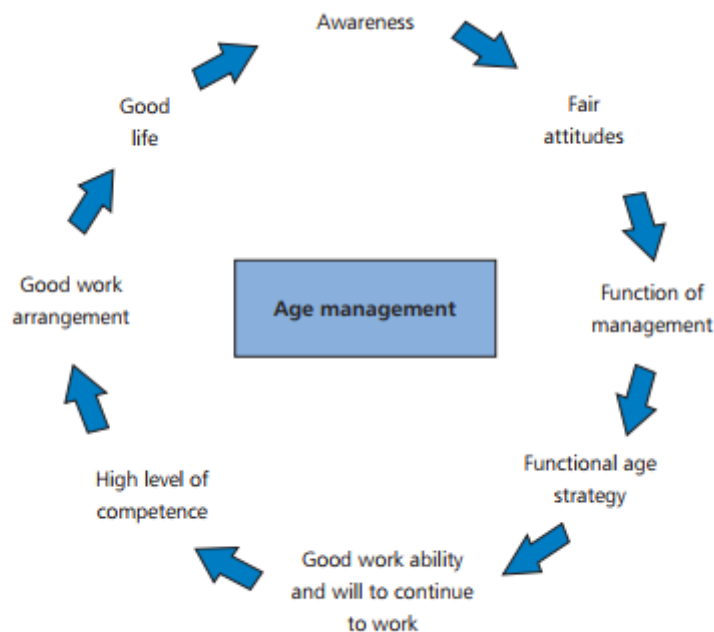


Figure 6: Age management pillars
Source: Ilmarinen (2005)

1.6.4 Age management in Czech Republic

The implementation of the Age Management process and tools in the Czech Republic shows up at various economic and social levels. As a member state of the European Union, the Czech Republic strives to implement European Union policies and strategies, that focus on demographic aging, human resource development with the regard to age, employment policy, increasing competitiveness, reducing barriers in the labor market or anti-discrimination measures.

These are, for example, the Europe 2020 Strategy in which the European Commission advert to demography changes and low employment – especially of older workers – as Europe’s two basic deficiencies. (Cedefop 2015, p.13) or the Diversity Charter, which originated at the instigation of the European Commission to spread the idea

of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Another example is the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, issued by the European Commission in October 2000. (Kalousová, Štern, Žákavec, & Zábřženská, 2015)

At the national level, the problems of Age management were first noticed by the The Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Czech Republic, which developed and implemented Age Management Strategy in the Czech Republic in 2010-2012. (AIVD, 2014). It was done based on the international cooperation with contacts from Finland, the motherland of the AM concept. The main objective of this project was to draw attention to the problem of population aging and thus the employment problem of persons over 50 years of age. Maybe more importantly so, to also offer the basic tools of the Age Management and ensure their publicity. (Novotný, Bosničová, et al., 2014, p. 8)

The basic building blocks of this project were the transfer of the following Age Management tools from Finland.

Age management training - implemented in 2011, when 45 experts in adult education were acquainted and trained. The training was done by experts from the Finnish Occupational Health Institute and was held in Prague, Brno and Olomouc.

Work Ability Index - The aim of the project was to verify this methodology within the Czech Republic. Verification was carried out in Brno on a sample of 72 unemployed persons aged 50 and over (35 women, 37 men) (Novotný, Bosničová, et al., 2014, p.143)

Two methodological guides were also published within the project. These publications, Age Management: Komparativní analýza podmínek a přístupů využívaných v České republice and another publication was Age Management pro práci s cílovou skupinou 50+. (AIVD, 2014)

After the completion of this project, a new project under the title **Implementation of Age Management in the Czech Republic** was set up as a follow-up. The project was also set up under the leadership of the The Association of Adult Education Institutions in the Czech Republic. Realization of this project was carried out between 2013 and 2015. Blikop Werk was the key partner in the implementation of this project. This organization,

operating in the Netherlands, has extensive experience with the implementation of the Age Management principles and with working with employees aged 50 and over. The main goal of this project was to create Age Management tools to address the activity of employees aged 50 and over on the labor market. (AIVD, 2013)

All activities of these projects are aimed at implementing the National Action Plan for Active Aging for the period 2013-2017 in the Czech Republic. This plan focuses primarily on the following areas: - implementation of a policy aimed at solving the problem of aging in the Czech Republic, - ensuring and protecting the human rights of older people, - ensuring lifelong learning, - employing older individuals and seniors, - volunteering and intergenerational cooperation, quality living environment for seniors, - healthy aging, - senior care (Národní akční plan, 2013)

In the mentioned National Action Plan prepared by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic (MPSV), the concept of age management is one of its strategic objectives, among the main challenges of this strategic document are, to ensure that this concept is widely publicized and incorporated into the personnel management of organizations and their social responsibility (National Action Plan, 2012, p. 18). The principles of age management are also considered in the National Action Plan for Corporate Social Responsibility in the Czech Republic, led by the Ministry of Industry and Trade (Novotný, Bosničová, etc., 2014, p. 8).

2 Practical Part

The main research question is: Are the HR managers aware of, and are they applying concepts of age management i.e. the management of human resources, considering their age and needs?

The questions were developed to test, if the organizations apply, either consciously or unconsciously, tools of age management. As it is mentioned above, the questions were based on individual pillars of age management at the organizational level with the reference to publications by Cimbáľková (2012) and by Ilmarinen (2005), where they give instruction on how to evaluate of the implementation of the individual pillars of AM.

Those pillars include:

- 1) Knowledge of the age structure of employees in the organization
- 2) Fairness of attitudes towards ageing employees
- 3) Management, who understands the importance of individuality and diversity
- 4) Good and feasible age management strategy
- 5) Maintenance of working ability and motivation and willingness to continue working
- 6) High level of knowledge and working competence
- 7) Organization of work and working environment
- 8) Valuable life

2.1 Results and discussion

We have devoted 2-3 research question to each of those pillars mentioned above. Each pillar will be analyzed separately. The overall conclusion and the recommendation will be done in the last chapter.

2.1.1 Knowledge of the age structure of employees in the organization

Question 1: Do you have and actively use information about the age composition and how it develops over time?

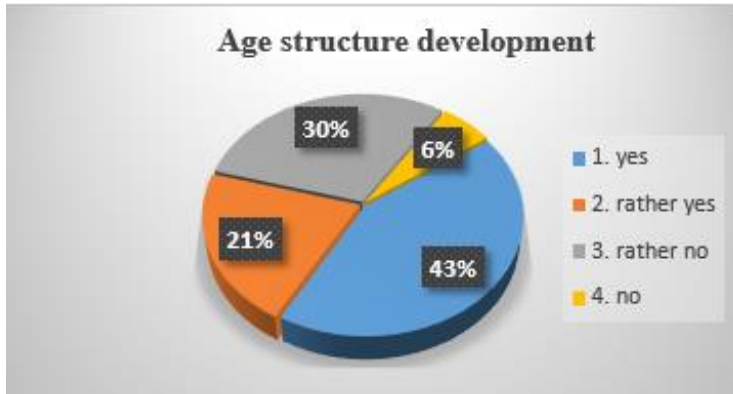


Figure 3: Age structure development

Question 2: Does your organization makes plans of what age groups of employees will need in next 5-10 years?

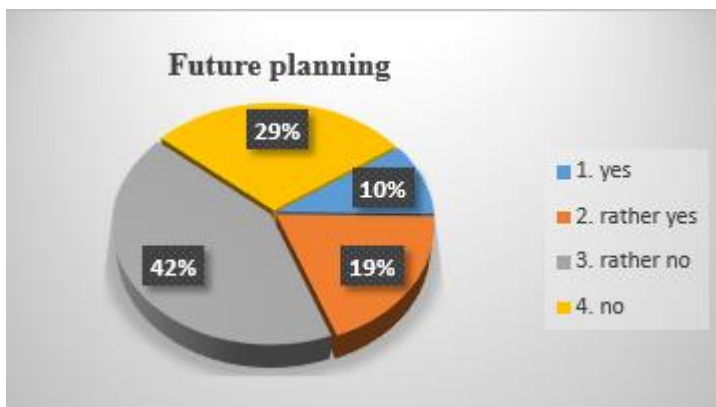


Figure 4: Future planning

The results of the first question show, that 43% of the respondents in their work, have and actively use the information about the age structure of the employees, and another 21% are more likely to respond positively. This demonstrate, that organizations do recognize the need for knowing the age structure and its development, but not yet have any strategy how to keep or influence it, since a majority of 71% of respondents said their organizations did not make such plans, 42% rather not and 29% not.

There is no practical use of the obtained information's. This can prove to be a complication in the future, as Alan Walker and Philip Taylor (1999) point out, careful planning and preparation is one of the main keys to successful implementation of AM, together with the understanding, that workforce is growing older and the young employees will become scarce.

2.1.2 Fairness of attitudes towards ageing employees

Question 3: Do you take persons age into account, when hiring new employee?

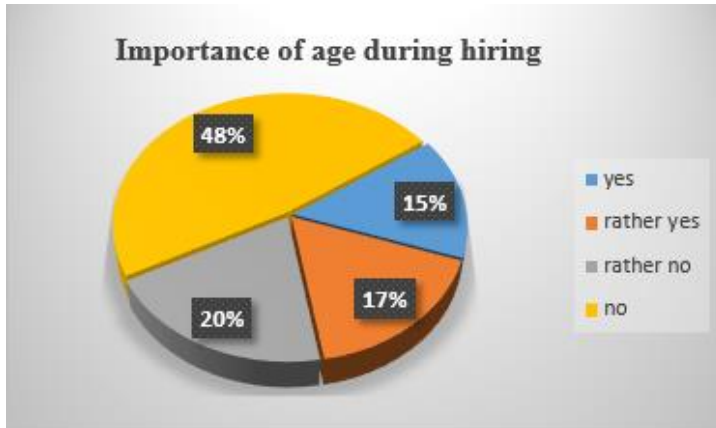


Figure 5: Importance of age during hiring

Question 4: Have you ever noticed in the organization of your current employment, that people from management would have different approaches to young or older workers - so-called age discrimination during the past year?

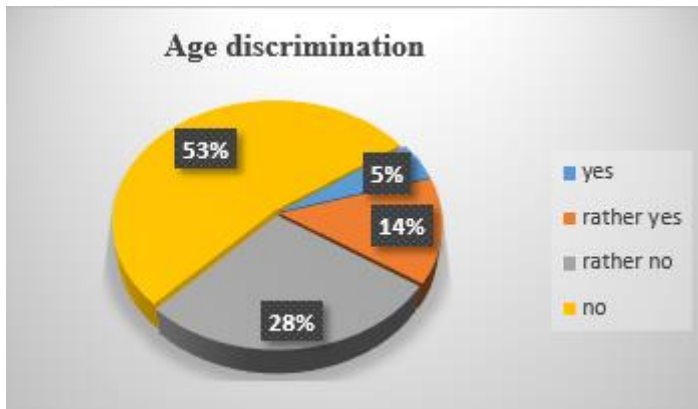


Figure 6: Age discrimination

As was mentioned in the literature review (Štorová & Fukan, 2012, pp. 16-19), it is necessary to overcome the prejudices and stereotypes about older workers. The importance of fair attitude to aging, or the pursuit of such an approach, have been confirmed by this research, 48% of the respondents do not take age into account, when hiring new employee and 20% rather did not. Only 15% chose the positive answer. Also, the possible manifestations of age discrimination can be considered as only marginal as only total of 19% of respondents have met with age discrimination of which 5% certainly and 14% rather did.

Especially with this question, it would be appropriate to point to the introductory general note on the possible overstatement of the attitudes. As Riach (2009) indicate, managers often only talk about and are aware of the problems, but it does not reflect in their everyday policies. The survey done in 2001 by El Palmore found that the experience of ageism or age stereotyping was widespread and frequent among those respondents.

So, although only a small part of the respondents admitted that age play role in their attitude towards their employees, it is necessary to constantly raise awareness of the demonstrable strengths and limitations of different age categories and to influence the negative age-related prejudices, since the business case for employing age diverse workforce was conformed in numerous studies for instance by Brooke and Taylor (2005), McNair (2012, s. 9), (Brooke, 2003) to name just couple.

2.1.3 Management, who understands the importance of individuality and diversity

Question 5: In your opinion does the management respond well to individual needs of its employees?

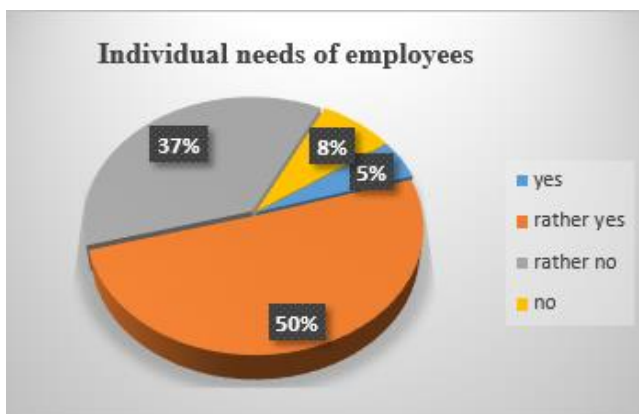


Figure 7: Individual needs of employees

Question 6: Is your organization able to get young and old employees work well together?

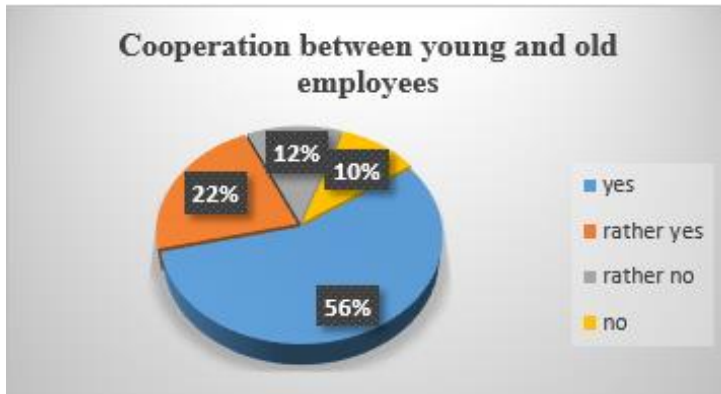


Figure 8: Cooperation between young and old employees

The chart shows that 50% of respondents assess the success of the organization's responses to the different needs of workers positively and 5 % even very positively. We can also clearly describe the second question as positive. Which confirms that equality and cooperation between people of different ages is working without major difficulties. It is, of course, a question of whether this is really the merit of management, or rather of the ability of employees to support each other, to help and to pass on important information to ensure good working conditions and relationships. In any case, we can appreciate the management's results from the fact that it creates conditions for such cooperation.

2.1.4 Good and feasible age management strategy

Question 7: Are you or your supervisors aware of the meaning of term age strategy?

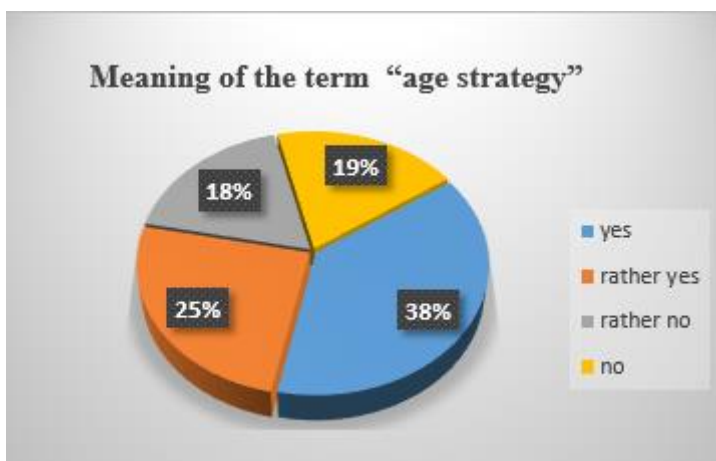


Figure 9: Meaning of the term "age strategy"

Question 8: Have you or any human resource managers in your organization ever attended a seminar on the importance of managing people regarding their age?



Figure 10: Education of managers in managing employees regarding their age

Despite the fact, that the managers are clearly quite familiar with the term of age strategy, i.e. 38% of the respondents know the meaning of age strategy and 25 % is rather familiar with the term. Most respondents, total of 64%, have confirmed that education of their own, or of managers in the organization, practically does not address issues of aging and human resource management regarding age. In the literature, the readiness of management of the organization is considered crucial and managers are referred to as those, through whom age management is translated into practice. TAEN (2007) reported, that when Walker and Taylor's Removing Age Barriers research case studies were followed up app. 10 years after, many organizations attempting new ideas during the research, were no longer trying them. The main reason for this was, that the HR manager promoting those ideas left. The message is, if age management is to be successful, it strongly depends upon genuine commitment from the top of the organization. But it is clear from the research results, that the level of management preparedness in organizations is, very low. An organization without this knowledge, does not perceive its employee changing life role and individual needs. Managers without the knowledge of the influences and factors that affect the employee's working capacity will not choose a sufficiently individual approach at different stages of their working life. It is therefore essential to strengthen management training in this area as soon as possible.

2.1.5 Maintenance of working ability and motivation and willingness to continue working

Question 9: Does your organization contribute to its employees, regardless of their age, to activities that help improve their fitness, health or overall maintain working ability? (it can be visit to the nutrition specialist or financial support for gym membership etc.)



Figure 11: Contributions of the organization to promote health and fitness of its workers

Question 10: Does your organization offer your employees a shift to a less demanding job, if their work performance falls due to their age?

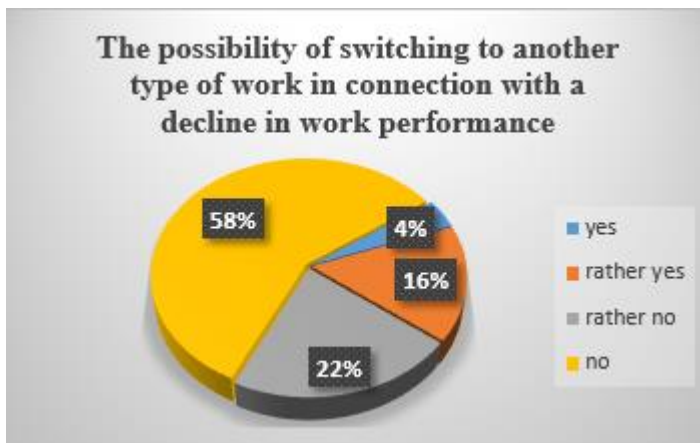


Figure 12: The possibility of switching to another type of work relating to a decline in work performance

It is surprising to find negative results in the area, which is almost self-evident. Literature and simple logic say that the biggest asset for organization and employees is their health and motivation to work. When asked whether an organization contributes to health and fitness activities for its employees, 25% of respondents said yes and regularly.

A positive response, but with the addition of an irregularity, was 29% of the respondents and 46% responded that the employer did not contribute to such activities.

Why is it so difficult to search for methods to maintain health and motivation? In relation to maintaining work capacity and motivation, the results show that the approach of the organizations is not at all accommodating, and support for activities that improve the fitness of employees was found only in less than half of the sample. There are there most likely economic reasons, that prevent organizations from setting up measures to promote, for example, sports, recreation or rehabilitation to improve physical and mental well-being. Or this factor could be simply overlooked in human resource management. Furthermore, the fact that most organizations do not offer workers the switch to less demanding work, if their work performance is declined with age is alarming. As we can see in the chart above, 77% of respondents answered negatively. In 20% of cases this option is offered by the organization and only in 4% of those cases it can be used by employees. Therefore, activities that have a positive impact on improving the fitness of employees should be supported in the medium term.

2.1.6 High level of knowledge and working competence

Question 11: Does your company offer any training, learning opportunities?



Figure 13: Learning opportunities offered by organization

Question 12: Does your organization support employees irrespective of their age, if they choose to study or increase their qualifications (e.g. taking leave outside the holiday plan, taking unpaid leave, etc.)?

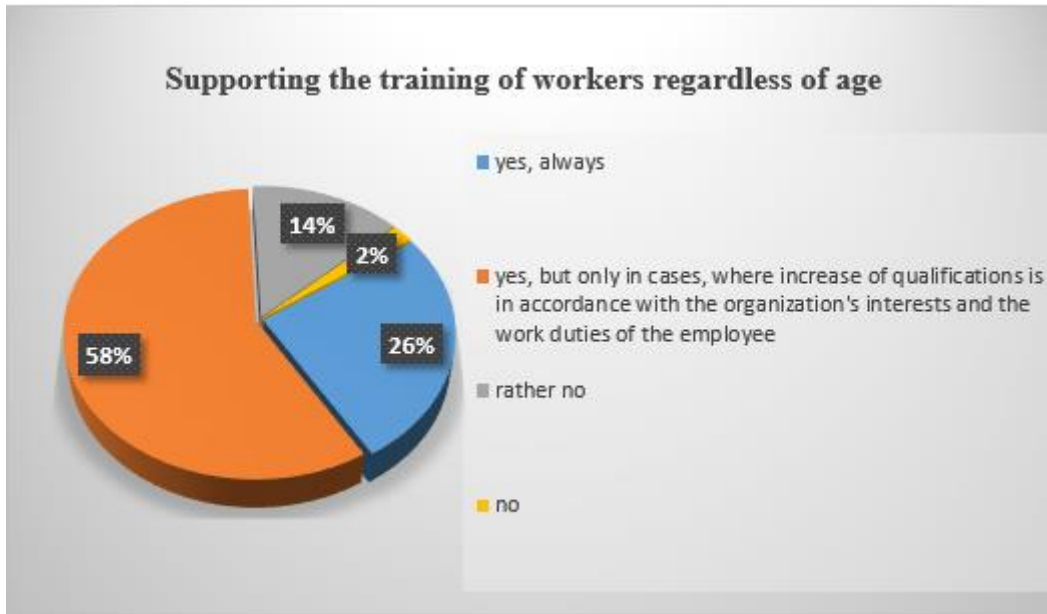


Figure 14: Supporting the training of workers regardless of age

Question 13: Are specific procedures in your organization designed to transfer the knowledge and skills of older employees to younger people (mutual consultation, job sharing, etc.)?



Figure 15: Intergenerational transfer of knowledge and experience in an organization

Age Management emphasizes the continuous improvement of staff expertise and competencies, which are a prerequisite for successful fulfilment of the requirements of their working life. In area of support for lifelong learning, the approach of organizations can be considered as welcoming, especially if the condition of the organization's interests is fulfilled with the work of the employee.

If the increase in worker qualifications follows the employer interest, the aid is, of course, higher than in the case of education beyond the current or possible future work of the employee. Each education is a benefit for both employees and employers. It is important to acknowledge and systematically support these efforts of employees, who want not only to increase their knowledge but also to focus on developing their attitudes, skills and competencies, that are crucial to their competitiveness on labor market. The transfer of knowledge among the various experienced workers within the organization is ongoing, but only about 27% of respondents are confident about the setting of these procedures.

2.1.7 Organization of work and working environment

Question 14: Does your organization adapt the working environment and work organization to the needs of different age groups of employees (home office, work-time arrangements, catering, etc.)?

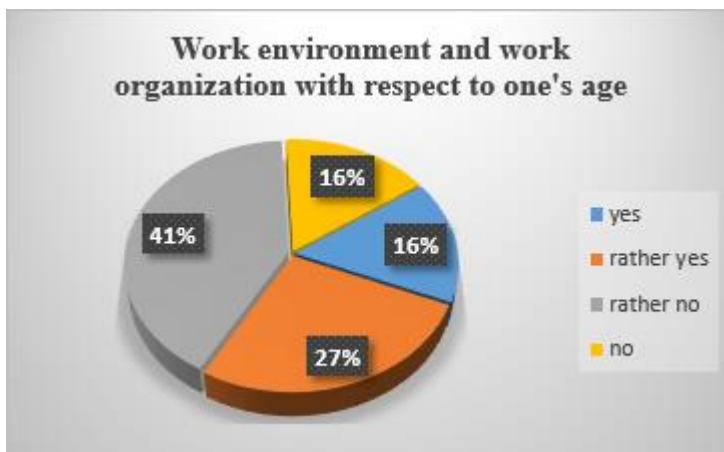


Figure 16: Work environment and work organization with respect to one's age

Question 15: Does your organization allow flexible working hours for employees about changes in their life role? (parenting, care for the aging parents, study, etc.)

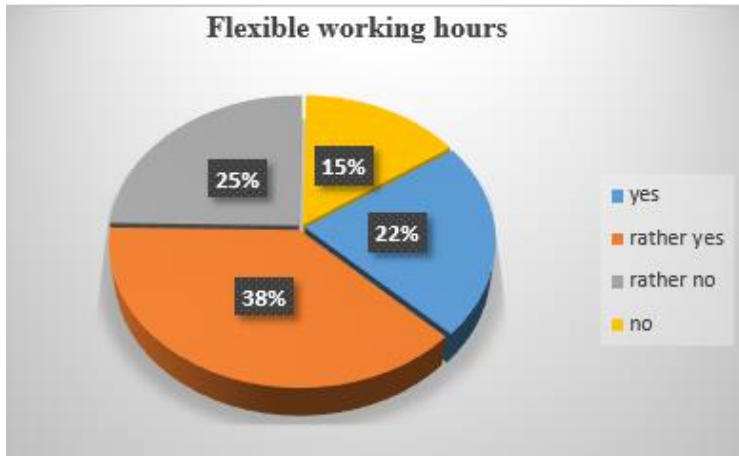


Figure 17: Flexible working hours

According to theory, the form of work organization is important in addition to the appropriate content of work activity. It states that, along with the promotion of a healthy working environment, we can significantly influence the length of employee's work activity. Our research has shown that work organization and work environment are supported in different ways by organizations. We can only assume that this is related to cost. While the support of workers in changing life roles is relatively high (flexible working time) in adapting the working environment to aging employees (e.g. ergonomic office equipment and workspaces), respondents admit only relatively low reluctance.

2.1.8 Valuable life

Question 16: Does your organization provide older workers with training or other professional assistance in preparation for their transition from active working life to retirement?



Figure 18: Assistance or training, when leaving the workforce

Question 17: Does your organization appeal to its former employees to offer them additional work or involvement in the organization even after retirement?

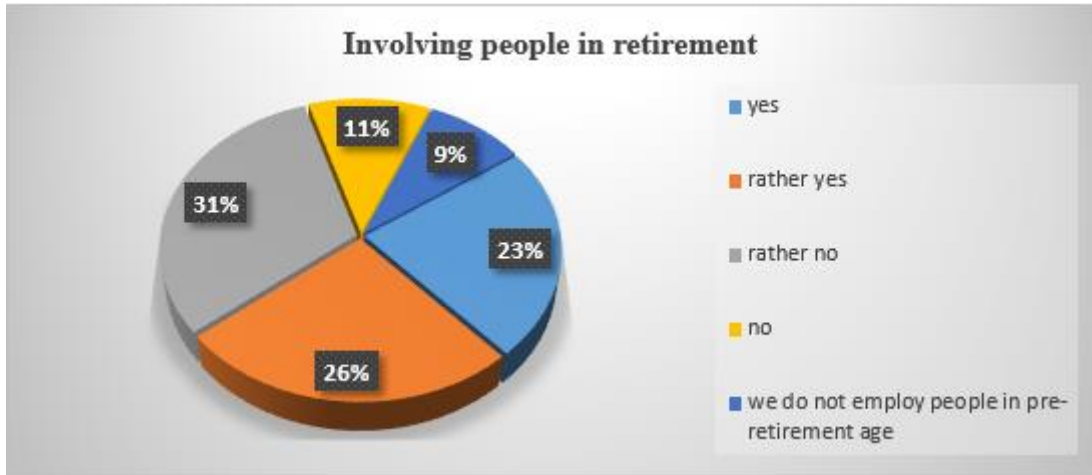


Figure 19: Involving people in retirement

The departure from workforce has positive and negative consequences for employees. They get more free time and get rid of job responsibilities, but they also lose their contacts, social positions and positive self-realization. Moreover, in view of the long-term practice and life experience, their knowledge and skills can be passed on to younger people. From the research results, the professional assistance, before retirement is minor, it is an area that needs to be addressed and developed in the future.

But the fact that almost half of the organizations use outgoing employees for mentoring or, if they are retired, in the retirement age they offer other work activities is very positive.

2.1.9 Age management

Question 18: Do you know the term "Age management"?

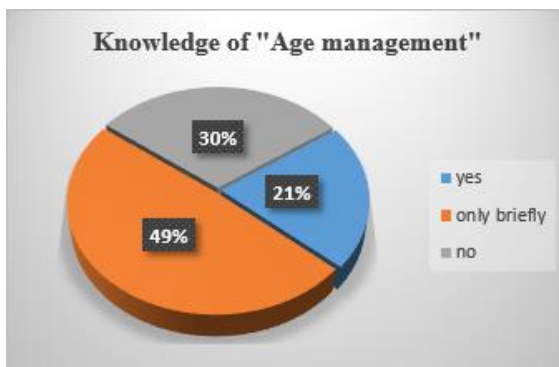


Figure 20: Knowledge of "Age management"?

As we can see in figure 18., 70% of respondents have some, at least minor knowledge of Age management concept.

Shortly, we can say that organizations are doing, what they think is best for maximizing their interests, i.e. the application of age management practices is a means of stabilizing their workforce and performance.

Although the research was conducted on a limited sample of respondents, its results can be generalized into the following three framework recommendations for practice:

- it is necessary to strengthen management training as well as personnel managers as soon as possible
- in the medium term to support activities that have a positive impact on the improvement of employees' condition
- in long-term planning to prepare for changes in the age structure of the population, to monitor development and in advance to form an aging staff composition plan

In the further research, it would be appropriate to compare the level of age management among different types of organizations, between organizations of different sizes, the diversity of domestic companies and companies with foreign participation, the development of the age management application in time (trend analysis).

Conclusion

The gradual increase in the average age of the population will bring significant economic and social problems over the years, and employers will face a growing shortage of quality workforce. Population aging is a global problem whose solution is becoming one of the most debated issues of the future. Are human resource managers or other top management personnel ready for this situation? Are they looking for ways and opportunities to address it at the level of organizations to ensure that they have sufficient quality workforce?

One option of dealing with this issue is Age Management. It is a new, comprehensive way of managing human resources, which considers the skills, experience and potential of staff beyond their age and helps address the consequences of demographic changes in workplaces. Performance and occupational claims are constantly rising, and the retirement age is also shifting. Organizations need to create the conditions for an employee to stay longer in the workplace and feel comfortable despite their possible health problems and age limitations. Age management is a tool that sets management principles in an organization, that increase not only work productivity and competitiveness, but also a sense of well-being and satisfaction for its employees.

The main prerequisites for its successful application are above all, very good knowledge of the age structure in the organization, the fair attitude to old age and the preparedness of management to an individual approach to managing employees with elements of strategic thinking.

The objective of my thesis was to assess the level of knowledge of the age management policies and if they are being implemented in selected Czech organizations. This could be done knowingly as part of age strategy, but also the organizations do not have to be aware, that their human resources or other measures are part of age management. The results have shown that without knowing the concept of age management, the organization uses its procedures with varying degrees. There are areas such as education and managerial readiness, working environment, working ability and lifelong learning for employees, who deserve greater attention and development in the future. Research has also shown positive aspects, particularly in promoting

intergenerational solidarity and cooperation, skills sharing and, finally, the transfer of work and life experiences.

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