

# Age Management Aspects in the Czech Republic\*

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The article deals with the current situation of age management and general issues arising from the age structure of employees that are already encountered or will be encountered by the majority of managers. The main objective of the article is to evaluate the implementation of age management in organisations in the Czech Republic and to examine relationships between the implementation of age management and selected qualitative variables. The data (n = 549) was collected by means of a questionnaire technique. The research results show that the majority of organisations in the Czech Republic do not currently employ age management at the organisational level. The most important factors affecting the implementation of age management include the number of employees in the age group 50 and over, the economic sector and the size of the organisation.

**Keywords:** age management, implementation, benefits, organisation, survey, Czech Republic (JEL: J11, M12, M54)

## 1. Introduction

In the Czech Republic, the term ‘age management’ is relatively new. Its concept was introduced in the country due to an international project implemented between 2010 and 2012 in cooperation with the Finish Institute of Occupational Health. Age management is a type of management that takes into account the age of the employees who work in an organisation (Cimbálníková et al. 2012). Skoglund and Skoglund (2005) add that age management refers to activities whose purpose is to promote a comprehensive approach to tackling demographic changes in the workplace and to combat age barriers and discrimination. According to Walker (1999), such activities promote diversity in the organisation. According to the European Commission (2011) and Ziekemeyer (2005), all employees should be given the opportunity to fulfil their potential and they should not be disadvantaged because of their age. The core objective of the concept is to support a comprehensive attitude to addressing a demographic situation that is not favourable (not only in the Czech Republic) throughout all economic sectors (Bejtkovský 2012). According to Čadil, Pavelka, Kaňková and Vorlíček (2011), the number of young people employable in the future will keep decreasing in the

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Czech Republic, while the number of people 50 and over (50+) will significantly increase (Smrčka/Arltová 2012). Age management, therefore, points out that even employing elderly people does have its advantages, and thus deals also with demographic changes in the workplace (Ng/Law 2014). It follows from the above that the concept of age management is important not only at the socio-political but also at the organisational level, which is also confirmed by the research of Galea, Houkes and De Rijk (2014).

It may be concluded that, based on the demographic development in the Czech Republic and other European countries, the implementation of age management is a must in the future. Considering the employees' age is also important in terms of source approach to creating a competitive advantage. Employing experienced 50+ employees and their cooperation with younger talented individuals represent one of the possibilities for the effective utilisation of human potential in order to increase business performance. Thanks to the effective utilisation of the potential of employees of all age groups, an organisation has a greater chance to take advantage of opportunities and to eliminate threats from the external environment (Nemoto 2013; Sarioglu 2013). However, emphasis must be placed on continuous learning of employees of all age groups (Cimbáľníková et al. 2012). Each organisation manages its employees and their knowledge and the right approach of management of the organisation to employees' age and their individual training and development can help them to achieve a long-term competitive advantage (Askenazy 2013; Galea et al. 2014). Fojtů (2011) points out that younger employees are generally preferred to their elders in the Czech Republic. Yet the research results and best practice examples from Czech organisations show that older employees mean enrichment for the organisation (Fojtů 2011).

With respect to the research focused on age management in foreign countries and the limited information about the situation in the Czech Republic, this article concentrates on covering the knowledge gap. It gives answers to the research question: *'In what ways do organisations implement age management at the organisational level?'*

The main objective of the article is to evaluate the implementation of age management in organisations in the Czech Republic and to examine relationships between the implementation of age management and selected qualitative variables. The examined variables in relation to age management in the selected organisations include the economic sector, the number of employees in the 50+ age group and the size of organisations.

The article is structured as follows. The first part and second part of the article concentrate on theoretical background and compare the results of surveys conducted with the outcomes presented in publications specialising in the given topic. The third part describes the methodology of the survey. The fourth part is

dedicated to an evaluation of outcomes of a quantitative survey. The fifth part discusses results and the sixth part focuses on the overall conclusions.

## 2. Theoretical background

### *Age management*

Age management is a part of human resource management that can be applied in all organisations. With regard to age, employment and life cycle of employees, it is necessary to create a favourable environment for employees from all age groups in all organisations, allowing their skills to be used and their needs to be met (Silverstein 2008). In the past years, demographic changes had a significant impact on the age structure of employees in organisations (Smrčka/Arltová 2012; Urbancová/Vnoučková 2014; Vnoučková 2014). Human resources (HR) have become more diversified and provide significant and new challenges for human resource management and leadership (Hertel/Van der Heijden/Lange/Deller 2013).

According to ICF Consulting Services (2007), the term age management is widely used in today's developed societies, however, there's no consensus on its uniform definition so far. This is due to the fact that it spans several fields (Cimbáľníková 2011). The importance of analysis of employee age groups and effective sharing of information on this issue is highlighted by Taylor and Walker (1994), Walker (2005) or Žnidaršič and Dimovski (2009).

The content of the age management concept can be defined at three levels: individual, organisational and socio-political (ICF Consulting Services 2007; Cimbáľníková et al. 2012; Štorová 2012). Kociánová (2012) adds a fourth level – a collective one. The scope of the concept is considerably wide and spreads to each of the individual supporting pillars of economy, ranging from the people who are holders of knowledge, the teams of people who together create values and contribute to the performance of an organisation, and last but not least, the people who contribute to the prosperity of the society as a whole.

The individual level focuses on individual employees, their ability to work, health and quality of life, social relationships and benefits of older employees for organisations (ICF Consulting Services 2007; Cimbáľníková et al. 2012; Kociánová 2012; Ng/Law 2014). According to Kociánová (2012), the collective level includes strategies developed by a dialogue between the unions and employers. Contrary to them, the organisational level deals with developing and maintaining skills and labour, passing on knowledge, practices of human resource management, and dealing with changes in work organisation and working time (ICF Consulting Services 2007; Cimbáľníková et al. 2012; Kociánová 2012). The organisational level is a key area in the modern concept of human resource management in today's highly competitive environment. The organisational level can be influenced directly by organisations, hence it is necessary to

deal with it. The socio-political level is supported by the state governments themselves, especially in the issues of active ageing, improving the health and quality of life, reducing the cost of pensions, healthcare and social care (ICF Consulting Services 2007; Cimbálníková et al. 2012; Kociánová 2012). However, organisations can influence the socio-political level only indirectly. Although ICF Consulting Services (2007), Cimbálníková et al. (2012), Štorová (2012) and Ng and Law (2014) underline all levels of age management, the organisational level is considered to be crucial in terms of the implementation of age management (Uhlenberg 2000; Ilmarinen 2012; Janssen/Sen/Bhattacharya 2015).

According to Eurostat (2015), there will be up to one-third of the population aged 65 and older around 2050, which is in accordance with the predictions of the Czech Statistical Office (2013) for the Czech Republic. A correct organisational strategy setting subsequently assists with the implementation of specific instruments and procedures leading to the development of individuals as well as organisations. Despite the fact that a demographic development differs in each of the European Union (EU) member states, this is a global societal problem (Cimbálníková et al. 2012).

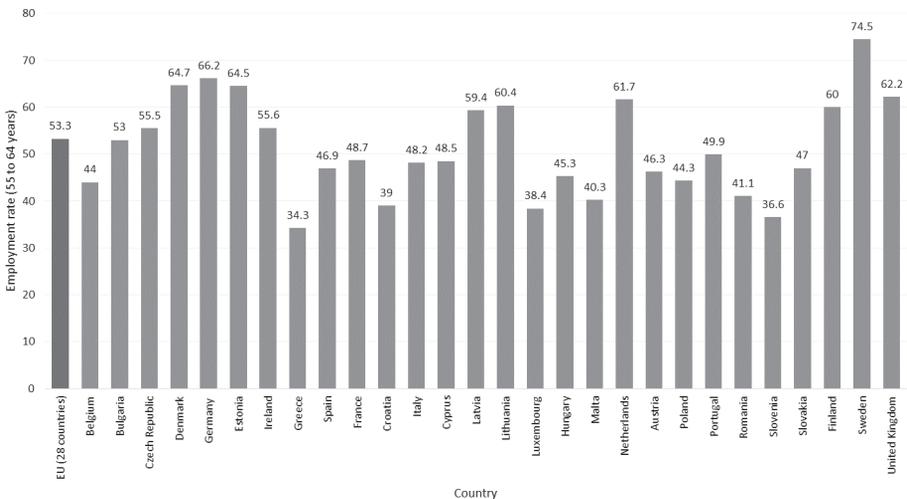
### *Demographic and socio-economic development in the Czech Republic*

The current labour market in the Czech Republic reflects a number of significant socio-economic changes that happened in the past twenty-three years. Between 1993 and 2016, the factors that were influencing employment rates were changing significantly. There were significant changes taking place mainly in the youngest age group and in the elderly productive age group. In 1993, the number of persons employed aged 15-24 years was exceeding the number of persons employed aged 55-64 years by 2.5 times. Twenty years later, however, the number of persons employed in the oldest productive age group was 2.6 times higher than the number of persons employed in the youngest age group spanning ten years of life (Czech Statistical Office 2015). The employment rate in persons in the 55-64 age range was close to 50% between 2011 and 2013, while between 1993 and 1996, it was around 34%, which can be considered a relatively high increase. In 2015, the employment rate for elderly persons employed was between 50% and 65% in twelve EU member states; the highest by far being that of Sweden (74.5%) (Eurostat 2016). Comparison of employment rates in selected EU countries in 2015 in the 50 to 64 year age group is shown in Figure 1.

Another factor influencing the situation in the labour market was the involvement of previously marginalised groups in the labour market, specifically, persons of retirement age, students and young mothers with children. Their greater involvement was, nevertheless, prevented particularly by the shortage of part-time employment positions. Part-time employment is a trend in Scandinavian

countries that try to increase the competitiveness of organisations and eliminate negative situations in the labour market, in order to reflect future demographic changes in the population (Petráš/Mikulec 2005; Askenazy 2013; Galea et al. 2014).

**Figure 1: Employment rate of older employees, age group 55-64 in 2015**



Source: Eurostat (2016)

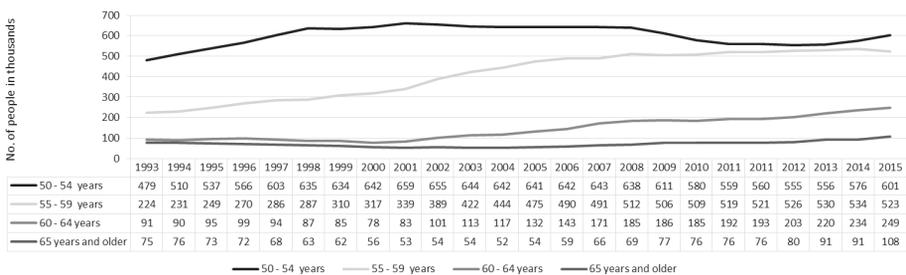
Overall, in comparison with other countries of the European Union, the Czech Republic has a lower unemployment rate in the long-term (the lowest unemployment rates in January 2017 were recorded in the Czech Republic (3.4%) and Germany (3.8%) (Eurostat 2017)). In 2015, labour productivity rose in the Czech Republic compared to previous years, when it was stagnating. Relatively few people work part-time in the Czech Republic (5.5%; compared to the Netherlands, for example, up to 50%), to which one of the longest durations of time worked in the main job is related. The Czech Republic has historically had a dominating area of industry and compared to the majority of EU countries, a significantly higher unemployment rate for women compared to the rate for men (Czech Statistical Office 2014).

### *The age structure of employees in the national economy*

Bejtkovský (2012) states that employing people aged 50+ years has been unattractive for organisations in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic so far. The employees who lose their job around 50 years of age currently struggle to find a new position, which is confirmed by research performed by Cimbáľníková et al. (2012), with the predominate reason being the fact that man-

agements anticipate a lower labour productivity, more frequent health problems, or unwillingness to learn new things in elderly employees. However, based on research (e.g. Bejtkovský 2012; Cimbálníková et al. 2012; Ng/Law 2014), it is concluded that this is rather a myth. It is necessary to change the view of managements on employing employees aged 50+ years and to reduce the risks that will arise from a shortage of employees in the national economy for organisations in the future. The evolution of the age structure of employees in the Czech Republic since 1993 is shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Evolution in the age structure of employees in the Czech Republic in thousands**



Source: Czech Statistical Office (2016)

However, there is a need to create specific working conditions for elderly employees. For older employees, it is possible to adapt working time (Askenazy 2013) so that such practice is beneficial both for the employees (in terms of a physical load) and for the organisation (using flexible forms of employment or flexible forms of working time organisation). According to Svobodová (2003), it is possible to introduce, for example, specific mentoring and training courses for the purpose of adopting new and increasing existing technical skills, to reduce overtime and multi-shift work, to shorten working times as well as the length of weekly working times. Other instruments include modernising the labour market in order to increase its flexibility and safety, reinforcing the strategic framework of cooperation of all those involved in education, focusing on lifelong learning and flexible learning schemes connecting different education sectors, supporting the identification of competences acquired through further education as well as enhancing synergies between the areas of education and work organisation (Young/Weir/Starkes/Medic 2008, European Commission 2014).

### 3. Data, survey sample and methodology

The article was prepared based on the analysis of primary and secondary sources, synthesis of knowledge, induction, deduction and comparison. Scientific articles dealing with age management were analysed within the secondary sources. The data for the evaluation were collected in a primary quantitative sur-

vey by means of a questionnaire and the data collection respected the ethical aspects of research.

### Survey sample

The primary data were obtained through an anonymous electronic questionnaire survey focused on the age management issue carried out between 05/2014 and 05/2015. To enhance the quality of the questionnaire survey, contact details were obtained from the Albertina database of organisations in the Czech Republic. Albertina is a unique database containing important information about 3 million organisations in the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic with 200 search parameters. The sample consisted of 549 organisations. The selection was intentional, taking into account pre-determined criteria (the economic sector and the size of an organisation according to the headcount). Only one respondent was asked to fill in the questionnaire in each of the organisations. Respondents in a managerial position filled in the questionnaire for their organisation. With respect to the matter examined, it was important to find out what the percentage of employees in the age group 50+ was in the organisations. Representatives of the participating organisations specified that they had at least one employee in the age group 50+. The group of up to 5% of employees over age 50 was represented the most (31.3%) in the majority of the organisations. 20.6% organisations employ 6 to 10% employees over age 50, 12.4% organisations employ 11 to 15% employees over age 50, 12% organisations employ 16 to 20% employees over age 50 and 11.7% organisations employ 21 to 30% employees over age 50. 4.7% organisations have more than a third of their employees in the examined age group, 7.3% organisations have more than 41% of their employees over age 50, most of them being agricultural undertakings that were burdened by lower staff turnover rates. The sample structure is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sample structure in percentages**

<b>Economic sector</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Tertiary</b>	<b>Total</b>
	19.9	20.2	59.9	<b>100</b>
<b>Size</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium-sized</b>	<b>Large</b>	<b>Total</b>
	53.2	25.5	21.3	<b>100</b>
<b>Main ownership</b>	<b>Czech</b>		<b>Foreign</b>	<b>Total</b>
	78.1		21.9	<b>100</b>

Source: Own survey

The questionnaire consisted of four parts including 30 questions in total. The first part was focused on age management (23) and the second part was focused on classification questions (7). The following classification questions were considered: the economic sector, the size of the organisation, the main ownership of

the organisation, the business area in the Czech Republic, the percentage of employees over age 50, the turnover rate, the turnover according to the age structure of employees in the organisation. Most of the questions were closed-ended. In total, the following twenty-six null hypotheses ( $H_0$ ) examining relationships between two variables were tested (see Table 2 and the results and tables in the Results chapter).

**Table 2: Tested null hypotheses**

No.	There is no relationship between the implementation of age management in organisations:	Decision (Rejecting $H_0$ )
H <sub>0</sub> 1	and the economic sector.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 2	and the number of employees in the 50+ age group.	Yes
H <sub>0</sub> 3	and the size of the organisation.	Yes
	<b>There is no relationship between the level of age management:</b>	
H <sub>0</sub> 4	and the economic sector.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 5	and the size of the organisation.	Yes
	<b>There is no relationship between the number of employees aged 50+ in the organisation:</b>	
H <sub>0</sub> 6	and the economic sector.	Yes
	<b>There is no relationship between benefits of age management in the form of:</b>	
H <sub>0</sub> 7	retaining key employees and the economic sector.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 8	retaining key employees and the size of the organisation.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 9	obtaining talents and the economic sector.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 10	obtaining talents and the size of the organisation.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 11	improving motivation and work performance and the economic sector.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 12	improving motivation and work performance and the size of the organisation.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 13	improving the organisational climate and the economic sector.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 14	improving the organisational climate and the size of the organisation.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 15	improving the organisational culture and the economic sector.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 16	improving the organisational culture and the size of the organisation.	Yes
H <sub>0</sub> 17	improving an organisational reputation and the economic sector.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 18	improving an organisational reputation and the size of the organisation.	Yes
H <sub>0</sub> 19	the employer's brand building and the economic sector.	Yes
H <sub>0</sub> 20	the employer's brand building and the size of the organisation.	No

No.	There is no relationship between the implementation of age management in organisations:	Decision (Rejecting $H_0$ )
H <sub>0</sub> 21	achieving a competitive advantage from the implementation of age management and the economic sector.	Yes
H <sub>0</sub> 22	achieving a competitive advantage from the implementation of age management and the size of the organisation.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 23	improving crisis management and the economic sector.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 24	improving crisis management and the size of the organisation.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 25	increasing organisational performance and the economic sector.	No
H <sub>0</sub> 26	increasing organisational performance and the size of the organisation.	No

Source: Own survey

### *Data processing*

The data were processed by means of absolute and relative frequencies using Microsoft Excel 2013 and IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Testing was done by Pearson's chi-square test of independence in association tables and contingency tables. The level of significance was set at 0.05. In the event of null hypothesis rejection (Asymp. Sig. < 0.05), an alternative hypothesis was accepted. The alternative hypothesis says that there is a relationship between two variables. Cramer's V indicates a measure of the strength of the relationship. To interpret the strength of Cramer's V, a scale according to De Vaus (2002) was used.

## **4. Results**

### *Age management implementation in the Czech Republic*

The research results show that age management is employed by only 29.3% (161 organisations). 70.7% of organisations have not implemented any age management initiatives at all. The most frequent reasons for it being the facts that they do not consider age management important (43%), they do not have suitable employees – specialists who would carry out age management initiatives (39.4%), and the time and finances required for the purpose (21.4%). 28.1% of respondents said that the culture of the organisation does not support age management (majority-owned foreign organisations). 23.2% of the participating organisations that have not employed age management yet intend to do so in the course of the following 5 years because they are aware of its need in the future.

Of the 29.3% of the participating organisations that employ age management, 68.9% implement age management initiatives intuitively and do not have any set of measures used to implement them. 31% of them have a set of measures applied for individual employee age groups and employees in the age group 50+ in the first place. Responsibility for age management lies most often with managers

(69%). The HR department or the HR manager are responsible for age management only in 31% of organisations.

Age management benefits become the most apparent with respect to the ability to retain key employees (70.8%), an increase in the performance of the whole organisation (47.8%) and an improvement in motivation and work performance of the employees in the examined age group of 50+ (47.8%). The respondents specified 3.9 benefits on average per one organisation. More benefits that were observed by the organisations that employ age management are shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Benefits of age management implementation**



Source: Own survey

### *Results of Pearson's chi-square test of independence*

Pearson's chi-square test of independence examines relationships between two variables. Results of Pearson's chi-square test are displayed in Table 3. It also shows the Asymp. Sig. for Pearson's chi-square statistic (so-called p-value). The alternative hypothesis says that there is a relationship between two variables.

**Table 3: Results of Pearson's chi-square test of independence for hypotheses H01-H06**

No.	There is no relationship between:	Asymp. Sig.	Decision (Rejecting H0)	Value of Cramer's V	Strength of the relationship
H <sub>01</sub>	the implementation of age management in organisations and the economic sector.	p = 0.088	No	x	x
H <sub>02</sub>	the implementation of age management in organisations and the number of employees in the 50+ age group.	p = 0.010	Yes	0.184	Low
H <sub>03</sub>	the implementation of age management in organisations and the size of the organisation.	p = 0.007	Yes	0.135	Low
H <sub>04</sub>	the level of age management and the economic sector.	p = 0.387	No	x	x
H <sub>05</sub>	the level of age management and the size of the organisation.	p = 0.000	Yes	0.424	Substantial
H <sub>06</sub>	the number of employees aged 50+ in the organisation and the economic sector.	p = 0.003	Yes	0.164	Low

Source: Own survey

Eight out of twenty-six tested null hypotheses were rejected and eighteen null hypotheses were not rejected. The results of the Pearson's chi-square test revealed that there is a relationship between:

- the implementation of age management in organisations and the number of employees in the 50+ age group (p = 0.010, Cramer's V = 0.184, the strength of the relationship coefficient is low) (H<sub>02</sub>),
- the implementation of age management in organisations and the size of the organisation (p = 0.007, Cramer's V = 0.135, the strength of the relationship coefficient is low) (H<sub>03</sub>),
- the level of age management and the size of the organisation (p = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.424, the strength of the relationship coefficient is substantial) (H<sub>05</sub>),
- the number of employees aged 50+ in the organisation and the economic sector (p = 0.003, Cramer's V = 0.164, the strength of the relationship coefficient is low) (H<sub>06</sub>).

In view of the fact that there is a relationship between the implementation of age management in organisations and the number of employees in the 50+ age group, Table 4 below shows the age structure of employees aged 50+ according to the organisation size.

**Table 4: Age structure of employees aged 50+ according to the organisation size**

Size	Number of employees in the 50+ age group (in %)							Total
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41+	
Small organisation	115	53	26	32	26	12	28	<b>292</b>
Medium-sized organisation	36	34	22	19	16	6	7	<b>140</b>
Large organisation	21	26	20	15	22	8	5	<b>117</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>549</b>

Source: Own survey

Table 4 illustrates that within small organisations, there are 9.6% organisations that employ more than 41% people aged 50+, while within medium-sized organisations, there are 5% of them that employ 41% and more people aged 50+. Within large organisations, there are only 4.3% that employ 41% and more people aged 50+. Table 5 shows the age structure of employees aged 50+ according to the economic sector.

**Table 5: Age structure of employees aged 50+ according to the economic sector**

Economic sector	Number of employees in the 50+ age group (in %)							Total
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41+	
Primary	21	16	16	17	16	9	14	<b>109</b>
Secondary	28	25	16	16	13	3	10	<b>111</b>
Tertiary	123	72	36	33	35	14	16	<b>329</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>549</b>

Source: Own survey

With regard to the results, we can conclude that in the primary sector, there is a higher number of employees aged 50+ compared to the secondary or tertiary sector. A total of 12.8% of agricultural and forestry undertakings (the primary sector) have more than 41% of employees in the 50+ age group, in the secondary sector it is 9% and in the tertiary sector, it is 4.9%.

Apart from that, relationships between benefits of age management and the economic sector and the organisation size were also examined. The results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Results of Pearson's chi-square test of independence for hypotheses H07-H026**

Benefits	Economic sector		Organisation size	
	Asymp. Sig./ Decision (Re- jecting H0)	Value of Cramer's V	Asymp. Sig./ Decision (Re- jecting H0)	Value of Cramer's V
		Strength of the relationship		Strength of the relationship
Retaining key employees	p = 0.405/No	x	p = 0.221/No	x
Obtaining talents	p = 0.091/No	x	p = 0.326/No	x
Improving motivation and work performance	p = 0.093/No	x	p = 0.070/No	x
Improving the organisational climate	p = 0.429/No	x	p = 0.164/No	x
Improving the organisational culture	p = 0.686/No	x	p = 0.023/Yes	p = 0.117 Low
Improving an organisational reputation	p = 0.159/No	x	p = 0.039/Yes	p = 0.109 Low
Employer's brand building	p = 0.011/Yes	0.128 Low	p = 0.071/No	x
Achieving a competitive advantage	p = 0.011/Yes	0.129 Low	p = 0.053/No	x
Improving crisis management	p = 0.793/No	x	p = 0.379/No	x
Increasing organisational performance	p = 0.093/No	x	p = 0.733/No	x

Source: Own survey

The results of the Pearson's chi-square test revealed that there is a relationship between:

- benefits of age management in the form of improving the organisational culture and the size of the organisation ( $p = 0.023$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.117$ , the strength of the relationship coefficient is low) ( $H_016$ ),
- benefits of age management in the form of improving an organisational reputation and the size of the organisation ( $p = 0.039$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.109$ , the strength of the relationship coefficient is low) ( $H_018$ ),
- benefits of age management in the form of the employer's brand building and the economic sector ( $p = 0.011$ , Cramer's  $V = 0.128$ , the strength of the relationship coefficient is low) ( $H_019$ ),
- benefits of age management in the form of achieving a competitive advantage from the implementation of age management and the economic sector ( $p =$

0.011, Cramer's  $V = 0.129$ , the strength of the relationship coefficient is low) ( $H_021$ ).

Benefits are the greatest in the respective areas for organisations operating in the tertiary sector.

## Discussion

In spite of the fact that some of the demographic prognoses can now be confirmed, age management still is quite unknown in the Czech Republic, both at the theoretical and practical level. However, based on the existing research results, it can be stated that implementing principles of age management will be essential in the future, which is confirmed also by Bejtkovský (2012). The research shows that adoption of age management measures brings benefits to organisations and also shows that the proposed solutions do not have to constitute a disproportionate financial burden for them.

At present, when the full retirement age has been increasing not only in the Czech Republic and the dynamics of economic and political changes is long lasting, it is necessary to flexibly address the changes within the labour market by searching for and implementing new solutions. The possibilities of adapting to the ever-changing competitive environment include, among others, work rationalisation (Petráš/Mikulec 2005; Askenazy 2013; Galea et al. 2014). Consequently, it can be stated that there are new forms of employment and working time organisation growing more and more in Europe (Askenazy 2013) that are characterised by flexibility in terms of the needs and interests of all involved, i.e. employers, employees as well as unemployed individuals (Valentová 2007; Galea et al. 2014).

In the area of working practices and working time organisation, it is necessary to follow trends and to create specific working conditions for employees aged 50+ (Svobodová 2003; Bejtkovský 2012; Askenazy 2013). How an organisation sets working time, how it modifies it and how it treats individual groups of employees with respect to age management can be seen as a tool for stimulating employees of an organisation. If working time is adapted to suit both the employees and the management, the employees will be more motivated, which might help encourage improvement in performance of individuals and thus of the whole organisation (Svobodová 2003; Askenazy 2013).

Using individual forms of working time organisation and employment depends not only on organisational conditions (the organisational structure and culture, practices applied, etc.) according to Galea et al. (2014), but also on individual groups of employees who are employed in the organisation (Nemoto 2013). Preferences of individual groups differ depending mainly on age, sex, length of professional experience, whether employees have a family or not, etc. (Sarioglu 2013).

With respect to the age structure of employees in the national economy and the age management concept, it should be noted that even though the implementation of age management measures is associated with expenses, such expenses are not high (Reibová 2012). Within age management, it is necessary to reflect the financial costs of sick leave (Galea et al. 2014), loss of critical knowledge of the employees who retire (Urbancová 2012) and the related costs of training of a new worker (Stacho/Urbancová/Stachová 2013), costs of development of the environment in which the undertaking is carrying out its business activities, the way of thinking, technology (Štorová 2012) and related demands on improving knowledge (Lišková/Tomšík 2013). According to Štorová (2012), in view of the above, there are problems with availability of labour force arising, because those born in years with a high birth rate are followed by those born in years with a lower birth rate, which results in the lack of labour force, thus the importance of age management is increasing not only at the socio-political level, but also at the organisational level in the first place.

One of the possible solutions to the problem with the current and future workforce in all sectors of the national economy, is increasing the size of the economically active population, so that as many economically active individuals as possible, who are able and willing to work, are integrated into working life. They should include not only young people (graduates) but also people aged 50+. In order to address the need for employees, several countries (the Czech Republic makes no exception) have been gradually raising the retirement age. However, the results of research performed by Bejtkovský (2012), Cimbálníková et al. (2012) and Ng and Law (2014), show that that is only a partial solution to this complex problem. For the changes to be successful, it is necessary to use, in particular, the ability of organisations to manage that area and to effectively use the potential available in the labour market. Utilisation of such potential is influenced by many factors that the age management concept addresses. Each organisation in the national economy should already be affected by the consequences of demographic changes and should be trying to provide a suitable working environment and conditions aimed at the extension of the active age of the population. The overall conclusion is that age management currently aims generally on the socio-political level, on the contrary, the organisational level is not discussed enough according to Cimbálníková et al. (2012).

Based on the conducted research and comparison of results with foreign research, the following recommendations can be given to organisations to help them implement age management more effectively:

1. To inform employees about the issues of age development and the importance of adapting conditions for the 50+ employee category by, for example, conferences, manuals, meetings with the participation of psychologists, physicians and the management of organisations.

2. To eliminate ageism on the part of young employees towards the category of 50+ employees by encouraging intergenerational cooperation.
3. To emphasise job security for the category of 50+ employees when the management meets with employees during appraisal or job interviews.
4. To retain outstanding employees not only until their retirement age but also to find forms of cooperation that will be attractive for both employees and employers once the employee retirement age has been reached and to implement such flexible arrangements.
5. To offer a variable portfolio of benefits for different age groups of employees, including the 50+ group, and to present them to employees.
6. To place emphasis on continuous learning and the opportunities for professional growth in all age groups.
7. To encourage physical fitness of employees, e.g. by health prevention programmes, health protection in the workplace, promotion of physical activity and healthy lifestyle of employees.
8. To create a suitable working environment and to adapt the work organisation to employee needs.
9. To increase the effectiveness of the job performance in the group of 50+ employees, to systematically carry out, for example, the Hogan tests focusing on personality, performance and relationships in this employee group. To cooperate with psychologists in their evaluation. With respect to the identified development in the 50+ employee group, flexible working arrangements may subsequently be implemented.

The proposed recommendations do not have to place a large financial burden on organisations. Some of the recommendations are feasible without relatively high organisational efforts and financial costs, which is also confirmed by the research of Urbančová and Čermáková (2015).

Urbančová and Čermáková (2015) state that the majority of agricultural businesses (75.7%) do not implement age management activities. If they do carry it out, it is usually small agricultural businesses that are at issue, which incur on average 6 to 10% of operational costs on age management. These are businesses which, to a large extent (88%), utilize stimulatory incentives to motivate all categories of employees and are aware of the amount of direct costs (on average between CZK 1,000 to 5,000 per 1 employee in small businesses) and indirect costs (on average up to CZK 50,000 per 1 employee in small and medium businesses) which are connected with the training and departure of experienced employees. 76% of the monitored businesses stated that employing older employees does not have any impact on increasing the wage funds in the given business (Urbančová/Čermáková 2015).

The implementation of the recommendations and the subsequent change in the perception of and approach to the employment of 50+ employees in the organi-

sation will positively influence their job performance, motivation and satisfaction. It may also be concluded that costs will be reduced and organisations' profits will increase. Furthermore, the employer brand will be promoted and the entire society's quality of life will be improved.

## 5. Conclusion

The inclusion of age management into business represents a new, modern management strategy that includes not only the economic interests of an organisation but also the demographic and social interests. Promotion of age management consists of an effective utilisation of labour potential of the employees from all age groups to upgrade their skills and improve their knowledge. That leads to building the confidence of the employees in the organisation and improving communication inside as well as outside the organisation, which can be seen in the positive link between the implementation of a modern management strategy and economic prosperity. This concept can be beneficial for positive relations among interested groups, it can consolidate trust in the organisation, and, last but not least, it builds the employer's brand.

The theoretical contribution of the article is not only a summary of knowledge and raising awareness of the professional public, HR specialists and managers on age management at the organisational level, but also an evaluation of age management benefits resulting from this level. The article deals with issues that are very topical not only for the Czech Republic because it gives recommendations on how to implement age management at the organisational level. The practical contribution of the article is primarily aimed at managers since it gives an overview of the results and analysis of the current state of age management at the organisational level. These results may be a prerequisite for creating best practices that will enable a raising of awareness of age management in all economic sectors. The results will also help HR specialists and managers to raise their own awareness of the possibilities to implement age management.

The article is limited by its relatively narrow focus on the organisational level and the sample. On the contrary, the majority of existing data is associated only with the socio-political level. With respect to the demographic development it is necessary to concentrate also on the organisational level so that organisations can be provided with information about the possibilities of implementing age management in time, and thus the risks of present and future demographic changes may be reduced. The analysed sample of organisations is adequate for obtaining the data and makes it possible for the authors to describe the probable general situation in the area of age management in the Czech Republic (i.e. generalisation to the sample), but not to generalise the results to all organisations in the Czech Republic. However, it is a problem of most research, including the research of Ilmarinen, J. (2006) and Cimbálníková et al. (2012).

Aspects of age management in the Czech Republic will also be examined in the subsequent period. Further research will be focusing on the aspects of age management in year-on-year comparisons, the use of flexible working practices and the cooperation of physicians, managers and HR specialists in the implementation of the Work Ability Index.

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