

EMPLOYMENT CHANGES IN THE CZECH POPULATION OVER 50 YEARS OF AGE

Marie Dohnalová – Kateřina Legnerová

Abstract

The article deals with the topic of job change in people over 50 years of age. Support for the employment of these individual is also the goal of the Strategic Framework of Employment Policy in the Czech Republic until 2030 as well as the Social Inclusion Strategy. The authors conducted research, which also included an analysis of existing research focused on the employment of people of pre-retirement age in the Czech labour market. Research results confirm that people older than 50 years more frequently use references of friends and acquaintances. The paper presents results of the research using a questionnaire survey among 80 respondents over the age of 50 who changed jobs during the last year. The aim of research was to establish reasons why people change jobs, the time how long they searched for a new job, the advantages and disadvantages associated with the age of 50+, career plans of respondents for the future period and the representation of different age groups of employees in new organisation. The authors encourage finding new tools and new ways how to reach 50+ age group and allow them to continue with their jobs.

Key words: employment, pre-retirement age, age 50+

JEL Code: M12, M14, O35

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a visible increase in the number of older people in many countries around the world, and there are growing concerns whether existing social policies can fairly address the needs of all age groups in the society (Ghosheh, 2008; Boissonneault et al, 2020). In 2017, the Czech Republic's government adopted the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030, which also takes into account the sustainable development goals of the United Nations. This conceptual document sets the direction of the Czech Republic's development for the next decade with the aim of improving the quality of life of the population in all regions. It is focused on sustainable development of social, economic, and local aspect, similar to the governments of many other countries (Böcker & Meelen 2017). From the point of view of the

labour market, the relevant vision is given that in 2030, people in the Czech Republic will be able to get a decent job at any age. The demographic trend of aging population is emphasized. Due to the aging of the population, there is a decrease in human resources in organisations and the concept of age management is emerging (Chang et al, 2020).

The document deals with support of so-called silver economy and lifelong learning support of maintaining or returning seniors to the labour market, intergenerational solidarity so as to create conditions for the transfer of experience. According to Douglas & Roberts (2020) and Villegas (2020) the older people are also more engaged in work. The Strategic Framework of Employment Policy until 2030 was developed at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in 2019. The goal of the employment policy is a functional Czech labour market, which is based on cooperating and effective employment services. The Strategic Framework of Employment Policy describes age discrimination in the labour market. It relates to persons who are disadvantaged because they are either so-called too young - a group of young people under 25 or people 50+. In 2019, 37.5 percent of the total number of jobseekers were over 50, and at the end of June 2019 jobseekers over the age of 55 represented a quarter of all job seekers (Strategic Framework of Employment Policy, 2019). The Social Inclusion Strategy combines topic of employment with poverty and social exclusion. Relationship between long-term unemployment and poverty is particularly close. Almost half on unemployed persons are at risk of poverty (Goll, 2015). The creative new approaches will contribute to reducing long-term unemployment and social innovation, as stated by Dearing (2018) in the diffusion of innovation theory. New innovative approaches represent better solution compared to available alternatives, i. e. they are more efficient, effective, sustainable and fairer and thus create new social relationships.

1 Methods and materials

The authors have been involved for a long time in the employment of disadvantaged social groups. Within their research, they analysed existing research focused on the employment of people in pre-retirement age in the Czech labour market.

Aim of the research: to find out reasons why people over 50 changed jobs during the last year, time associated with new job searching, advantages and disadvantages associated with age group of 50+, career plans of respondents for the future period and representation of different age groups of employees in the new organisation.

Research sample: 110 respondents over the age of 50 who changed jobs during the last year. The questionnaire was completed by 80 people over the age of 50 years, i.e. the response rate was 73 %.

Of the total number, 62 respondents were aged 50 to 59, 18 respondents were over 60 years old; 36 women and 44 men took part in the questionnaire survey.

The research took place in the period of October and November 2020.

Data collection methods:

- analysis of previous research
- questionnaire survey

Methods of data analysis and processing:

- statistical procedures
- thematic analysis of documents

2 Results and discussion

Tab. 1: Previous employment sector

Private for-profit	43	54 %
State (public)	34	43%
Non-profit	3	3%

Source: own research

In majority of cases, the respondents remained employed in the sector of their previous employment. Currently, most of them (46) work in a medium-sized company (up to 250 employees), 22 respondents work in a small company (up to 10 employees) and 12 respondents in a large company (over 250 employees). The distribution according to the sectors in which the respondents work is as follows: 38 respondents work in a private for-profit company, 34 in a state and 2 in a non-profit organisation, and 6 respondents identified themselves as self-employed.

Tab. 2: Current employment sector

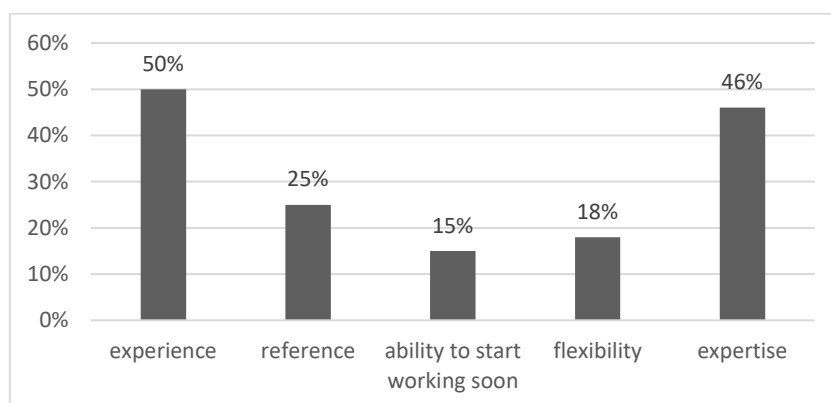
Private for-profit	38	48 %
State (public)	34	42 %
Non- profit	2	2 %
Self-employed	6	8 %

Source: own research

Sectors of employment of the respondents' range across the labour market: health care, education, agriculture, industry, logistics, banking, IT, social services, gastronomy, handicraft production, administration and services.

The majority of respondents cited experience (50% of respondents), acquaintances or references (25%), ability to start working soon (15%), flexibility (18%) and expertise (knowledge required for performing the work 46%) as reasons why they have been hired and why they got the job and which factors were decisive.

Fig 1: Reasons for employment



Source: own research

The research results confirm that persons over 50 years use references of friends and acquaintances more frequently. Twenty % of respondents did not experience difficulties in job searching, 14% experienced troubles related to their age when searching for a job, 14% had difficulties with induction training (length, reluctance of colleagues), 7% had difficulties with insufficient education and 10% with salary conditions.

Tab. 3: Difficulties associated with job search

No difficulties	20 %
Age	14 %
Induction training	14 %
Salary conditions	10 %
Insufficient education	7%

Source: own research

Half of the respondents were seeking work for a period longer than four months, a third of respondents almost immediately changed job and the rest of respondents searched for job in the range of 1 month to 4 months.

Respondents highlighted friendliness, openness and expressed interest as the pros of the interview and some respondents (3) were uncomfortable with questions about their health, sometimes respondents found the interview too short and incisive.

The question about the advantages they have over younger employees was understood differently by the respondents. Twenty five % of the respondents do not think that have any advantage compared to younger employees. Others mentioned as a benefit of their age more experience and conscientiousness in work, the fact that their children are grown up and that they are more flexible compared to younger colleagues with families and small children and fact that they do not have a problem staying overtime. They also perceive good time management, thanks to their experience, as their advantage.

Tab. 4: Advantages of employees aged 50+

Experience	46 %
Flexibility	17 %
Time management	12 %
None	25%

Source: own research

As for the disadvantages associated with age, 57% of respondents perceive as a disadvantage fatigue and reduced physical fitness, 10% considers PC and IT technologies as a disadvantage because it is more challenging for them compared to younger generation and learning takes more time for them, 7% considers lack of language skills as a disadvantage and 20% do not think they have any age-related disadvantages.

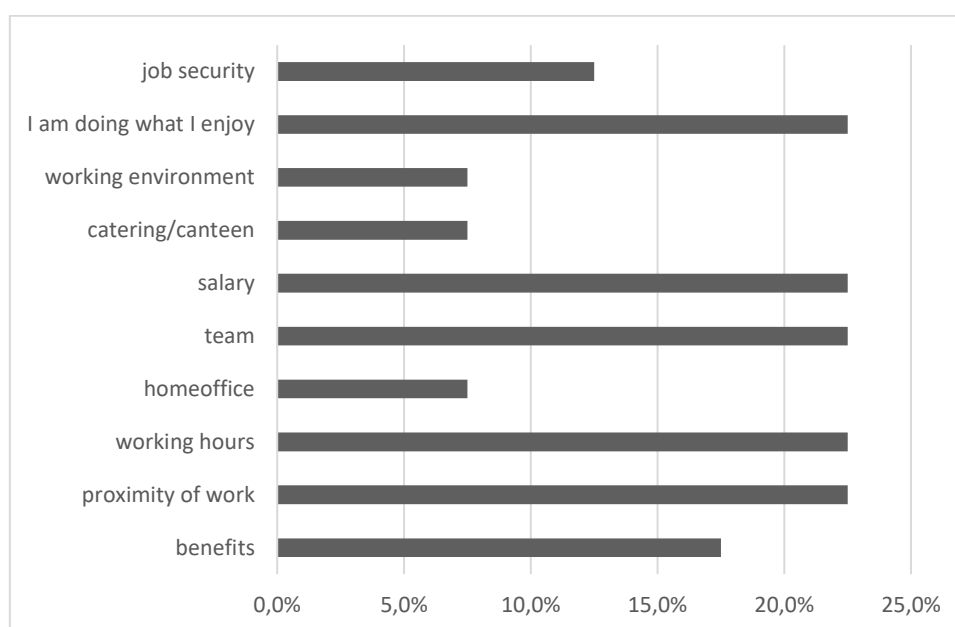
Tab. 5: Disadvantages of employees aged 50+

Computers and technology	10 %
Lack of understanding of new procedures	6 %
Reduced physical fitness	57%
Lack of language skills	7%
None	20%

Source: own research

The question focused on job satisfaction and its pros and cons showed a diverse range of answers. Respondents reported the following pros: finance, salary, working hours, proximity of workplace and home and employment benefits.

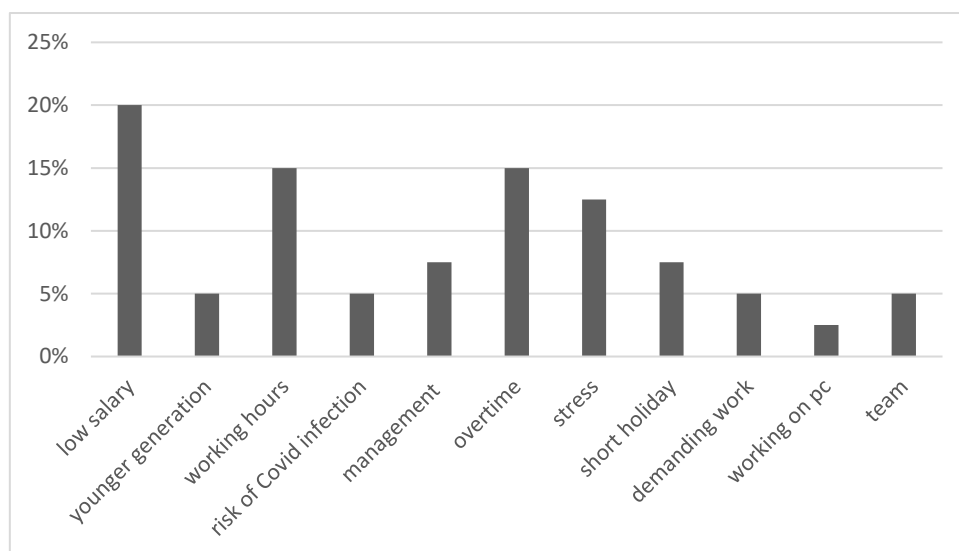
Fig. 2: Satisfaction at work – positives of work



Source: own research

Regarding negatives associated with their current employment, respondents most frequently reported low salary, working hours, overtime, stress, management of the company and limitations in the choice of the holiday period. Two respondents reported a risk of Covid-19 infection as a negative and two reported relationships with younger generation also as a negative.

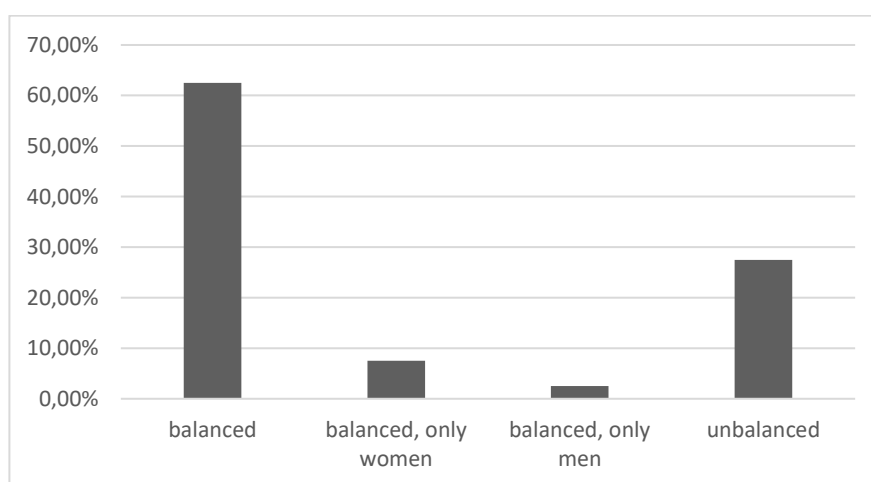
Fig. 3: Satisfaction at work – negatives of work



Source: own research

When asked about the balanced representation of different age groups of employees in the organisation, 62.5% of respondents answered that there is a balanced representation of age groups in their organisation, 10% of respondents said that the balanced representation of groups exists, but the organisation employs mostly women (administration) or men (industry), the remaining 27.5% of respondents think that there is an unbalanced age representation in their organisation.

Fig. 4: Balanced representation of different age groups of employees



Source: own research

Regarding respondents' career plans for the next period, 72.5% of respondents plan to work for the current employer full-time, 17.5% want to work for the current employer part-time, only 1 person wants to retire, and 3 persons plan to get a different job.

Fig. 5: Career plans for the next period



Source: own research

Most respondents like to do their job and would like to keep it until retirement. Some respondents who have been searching for a job during the last year and had to accept a job that does not suit them completely due to the current Covid-19 pandemic are planning to change job. Situation for job searching was difficult, especially for people in the field of gastronomy for whom the pandemic could be one of the reasons why they were searching for a new job.

Tab. 6: Career plans for the next period

Work for the current employer full time	58	72%
Work for the current employer part-time	14	18 %
Retire and change jobs	0	0%
Retire and start a business	0	0%
Retire and no longer work	2	3 %
Other	6	7 %

Source: own research

Conclusion

The aim of the research was to find out the reasons why respondents changed job, the time of searching for a new job, the advantages, and disadvantages of the 50+ age group. In their previous employment, respondents worked mainly in small companies, medium-sized

and large ones. The results of the research carried out by thematic analysis of documents and a questionnaire survey of 80 respondents 50+ who changed jobs during the last year also indicate the respondents' career plans for the next period and the representation of different age groups of employees in the new organisation. It was established that people older than 55 years of age use references of friends and acquaintances more frequently. When they changed job, in most cases respondents remained working in the sector in which they had previously been employed. Currently, most respondents (46) work in a medium-sized company (up to 250 employees), 22 respondents work in a small company (up to 10 employees) and 12 respondents work in a large company (over 250 employees). The breakdown by sectors in which the respondents work is as follows: 38 respondents work in a private for-profit company, 34 respondents in a state company, 2 respondents in non-profit organisation, and 6 respondents identified themselves as self-employed. Although one fifth of respondents do not think they have any age-related disadvantages, the authors encourage finding new tools and new ways how to reach 50+ age group and allow them to continue with their jobs.

References

Böcker L.&Meelen T. (2017) Sharing for people, planet or profit? Analyzing motivations for the intended economic economic participation. *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2016.09.004> .

Boissonneault M. & Mulders J.O. & Turek K. & Carriere Y. (2020) A systematic review of causes of recent increases in ages of labour market exit in OECD countries. *PLoS ONE* 15 (4): e0231897. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0231897>

Dearing, J.W., & Cox, J.G. (2018). Diffusion of innovations theory, principles, and practice. *Health Affairs (Project Hope)*, 37 (2), 183-190. doi: 10.1377 / hlthaff.2017.1104

Douglas, S. K., & Roberts, R. A. (2020). Older and more engaged: The influence of an employee's age on work engagement. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 20(4), 73-84.

Chang E.S. & Kanno S. Levy S. & Wang S.Y. & Lee J.E. & Levy B.R. (2020) Global reach of ageism on older persons' health: A systematic review. *PLoS ONE* 15 (1): e0220857. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220857>

Ghosheh N. (2008). Age discrimination and older workers: Theory and legislation in comparative context. Geneva: International Labour Office.

Goll J.C. & Charlesworth G. & Scior K. & Stott J. (2015) Barriers to Social Participation among Lonely Older Adults: The Influence of Social Fears and Identity. *PLoS ONE* 10 (2): e0116664. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0116664>

Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030. Available at: <https://www.cr2030.cz/strategie/>, cited 27.3. 2021

Strategic Framework of Employment Policy until 2030. Available at: <https://www.komora.cz> , cited on 27.3. 2021

Social Inclusion Strategy 2021-2030. Available at: <https://www.mpsv.cz/strategie-socialniho-zaclenovani-2021-2030> , cited on 27. 3. 2021

Villegas, S. G. (2020). Different yet similar: Multi-generational professionals and their sentimentality towards reciprocity. *Journal of Business Diversity*, 20(1), 66-79. <https://doi.org/10.33423/jbd.v20i1.2708>

Contact

Marie Dohnalova

Charles University, Faculty of Humanities

Patkova 213/5, 182 00 Prague

marie.dohnalova@fhs.cuni.cz

Katerina Legnerova

University of Economics, Faculty of Business Administration

W. Churchill sq. 4, 130 67 Prague

katerina.legnerova@vse.cz