

**„Actions of a socially responsible employer towards employees  
at the retirement age”**

THE SUMMARY OF THE PHD DISSERTATION

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The demographic situation determines a new area of challenges in the human resources management domain. The share of people in the post-working and late productive age is increasingly significant for the structure of the total population. Moreover, the forecasts indicate that this process will deepen, and therefore at the macro level an increasing burden on the state budget will be noticed with expenditures on retirement benefits, health care, care services, with increasingly lower tax revenues. In these circumstances, the issue of maintaining economic activity of 50+ people becomes of strategic importance.

The extension of an individual's life is accompanied by the extension of a person's psychophysical efficiency. This tendency is often neglected in social perception of 50+ group.

For the modern organization, the idea of age management takes on particular importance against the background of demographic changes. In a broad sense, the development of an employee is a process taking place in periods defined for the duration of his career, for which his age is of key importance. Each stage of development should prepare an employee for the next, higher level of professional challenges, connected with a new dimension of their maturity.

Maintaining the professional activity of employees is therefore related to the ability to manage their careers. Here we can distinguish the organizational and individual context, associated with the decision-making of the employee himself in terms of setting and achieving goals. At the level of organization the indicated area of activities should have a form of process connected with planning, implementation and monitoring. Paying attention to the importance of its stage of development, may allow to take into account the individual aspect in relation to the needs and expectations of employees. The area of the discussed process related to planning career paths of employees 50+, as it results from the literature review and statements of the respondents, has gaps.

Emerging problems in the area of human resources management in organizations, against the background of a progressing trend related to the aging of the population of professionally active employees, allowed to define the research problem. It was referred to the analysis of factors shaping HR policy of organizations towards employees in the retirement age.

Based on the review of the collected literature, it was confirmed that the problem is also relevant to the necessary future actions to be taken by organizations, and specifically addresses the following issues:

- increasing longevity of people is accompanied by a higher level of their psychophysical fitness at around retirement age,
- changing lifestyles of people 50+ contribute to the increase of the group of employees around retirement age in the labour market, who more and more often declare their willingness to maintain broadly understood life activity, including mentioned professional activity,
- employers more and more often indicate shortages of employees at the stage of recruitment and selection (especially qualified ones, with specific specializations),
- specialists of human resources management indicate that actions for employees in the peri-pension age may facilitate employers to fill the indicated shortages,
- there is a need at the organizational level of pension programs to implement solutions enabling employers to continue cooperation with these employees after reaching retirement age,
- there is a need to increase knowledge on the possibilities of activation of mature employees (at the retirement age) within the organizations' human resources management framework,
- there is also a need for greater involvement of employers at the operational level in the area of their social responsibility.

In these circumstances, the main objective of this dissertation is to determine the strategic role of activities aimed at employees in the peri-senior age, which are part of the CSR idea and elements of HR policy that foster the management of their potential in the long term. The main objective was assigned the following specific objectives:

- diagnosing the needs of employees at the retirement age in terms of support and its scope in relation to participation in processes preparing them for maintaining professional and non-professional activity at retirement age,
- defining the motives of maintaining the professional activity of employees reaching retirement age,
- to identify the reasons why organizations do or do not undertake actions aimed at preparing employees to maintain professional and non-professional activity at retirement age,
- identify possible barriers to the implementation of activities aimed at preparing employees to maintain their professional and non-professional activity at retirement age and extra-occupational activities at retirement age,

- description of benefits for the organization resulting from the implementation of activities for people around retirement age.

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors influencing the prolongation of professional activity of peri-retirement age workers.

The following research questions were formulated to guide the research work:

- What are workers' motives for staying active in the workplace and peri-occupational activities?
- What needs and expectations do employees report regarding actionable steps to prepare them for retirement or other activity?
- What measures do employers take to adapt their human resource management processes to the needs of peri-retirement age workers related to in relation to maintaining their professional and peri-occupational activity?
- What barriers do organizations face when implementing the above mentioned activities?
- What is the knowledge of employers and those directly responsible for human resource policy making about preparing employees for retirement or identifying other options for retention of professional and peri-occupational activities?
- What other activities can employers take to adjust human resource management processes to the needs of pre-retirement employees related to maintaining their professional and peri-professional activity?
- What benefits can organizations have from implementing measures for peri-retirement workers?
- What is the scope of activities of a socially responsible employers?

The literature analysis of research methods guided the selection of qualitative methods for the planned research. In addition, qualitative research seemed appropriate to the author for understanding the attitudes that determine the maintenance of labor force participation of peri-retirement age workers over the course of their lives. Direct statements of the respondents allow us to learn and describe the research material from the position of the respondent. It should be noted here that it is the experience that is important for qualitative research. Referring this remark to social experience, it should be remembered that each person, each employee, may perceive in a different way what he or she experiences, and this in another aspect has a significant impact on social cognition.

The empirical material collected by the author has been presented in six chapters preceded by an introduction and a conclusion. The theoretical and empirical character of the dissertation is reflected in its structure. The first chapter discusses issues related to the aging of societies in relation to demographic analysis, related to the aspect of the idea of positive aging and extending the life span of an individual. The analysis of activities within the management of employees The second chapter of the dissertation contains an analysis of activities within the scope of managing employees of different ages and changes that affect the way they pursue their careers. In the third chapter, the area of employers' social responsibility takes on a new dimension in the context of personnel policy. The methodology of qualitative research is discussed in the fourth chapter, indicating the rationale for the applied research method and its limitations. The collected empirical material, presented in the fifth chapter, which allowed to confront the knowledge on people at pre-retirement age obtained during direct interviews with them, with the material coming from the literature review. The research results made it possible to construct, in chapter six, a model of age management in an organization and formulating recommendations, which allowed to achieve the aim of the thesis.

Considering the scope of data obtained in the study, the author hopes that it will become a valuable addition to the literature on human resources management in relation to 50+ employees. Framing the issue in relation to the aspect of a socially responsible employer made it possible to give it an original character. The author is aware of the fact that her dissertation does not exhaust all the issues concerning employees in the retirement age. She hopes, however, that her research work may inspire other researchers and business practitioners in this regard. In this situation, taking up the topic of "socially responsible employer actions towards employees In this situation, taking up the topic of "socially responsible employer actions towards employees in the peri-retirement age" may contribute to filling the gap existing in this area.

**Keywords:** pre-retirement workers, age management, career paths, labor force participation of mature workers