

Relaciones laborales para el futuro: políticas de gestión de la edad para la retención de trabajadores de mayor edad

Ana Raquel Cardoso de Souza Rodrigues¹; Ana Cláudia Rodrigues² y Ana Maria Gonçalves Lourenço Roque Santos Pinto³

Recibido: 8 de junio de 2018 / Aceptado: 7 de mayo de 2019

Resumen. El envejecimiento de la fuerza de trabajo traduce una revisión urgente en la RRHH. Así, deben adoptarse mecanismos para retener a los trabajadores séniores de mayor edad. Esta investigación desea comprender la influencia de las prácticas de RRHH, adecuadas para ellos, en su decisión de permanecer activos en el mercado de trabajo. Para eso, se realizó un estudio exploratorio a partir de un cuestionario dirigido a la población activa portuguesa, respondido por 434 sujetos mayores de 50 años. Los datos se analizaron mediante análisis estadísticos descriptivos y de frecuencia, ANOVA y regresiones lineales. Los resultados evidenciaron la adopción de prácticas específicas de RRHH como promotoras de la retención de estos trabajadores. Se identificaron diferencias significativas, cuando se compararon por sexo, sector y tamaño de la empresa. Los resultados sugieren pistas de intervención que pueden mejorar las prácticas de RRHH aumentando la retención de estos trabajadores.

Palabras clave: prácticas de recursos humanos; trabajadores séniores; gestión de la edad; intención de permanecer activo.

[en] Labour relations for the future: aging management policies to retain older workers

Abstract. Workforce ageing translates urgent revision in HRM. To answer this challenge, mechanisms to retain older workers must be adopted. This research aims to understand the influence of HRM practices, suitable for older workers, in their decision to remain active in the labour market. To achieve this, an exploratory study was conducted, using a questionnaire addressed to the active Portuguese population, answered by 434 subjects, age 50+ years old. Data were analysed using statistical descriptive and frequency analyses, ANOVA's and linear regressions. Findings evidenced the adoption of specific HRM practices as promoters of older worker's retention. Significant differences were identified, when compared by sex, sector and company size. Findings suggest intervention clues that can improve HRM practices to increase the retention of these workers.

Key-words: human resource practices; older workers; age management; intention to remain active.

Contents. 1. Introduction. 2. Method. 2.1. Participants and procedure. 2.2. Measures. 2.3. General procedures and data analysis. 3. Findings. 4. Conclusion. 5. References

¹ CEOS-RH
arcsrodrigues@gmail.com
Instituto Politécnico do Porto

² Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração do Porto e CEOS-RH
anarodrigues@iscap.ipp.pt

³ Instituto Politécnico de Castelo Branco, Escola Superior de Gestão
anapinto@ipcb.pt

Cómo citar: Cardoso de Souza Rodrigues, A. R.; Rodrigues, A. C. y Gonçalves Lourenço Roque Santos Pinto, A. M. (2020). Relaciones laborales para el futuro: políticas de gestión de la edad para la retención de trabajadores de mayor edad. *Cuadernos de Relaciones Laborales*, 38(1), 59-84.

1. Introduction

In 2060 more than half of the Portuguese population will be 65 years old or older (European Commission, 2015). Indeed, declining birth rates, coupled with declining mortality rates along with the rising of the average life expectancy, have led to an aging population in both Portugal and most developed countries.

These demographic changes have an impact on the composition of the Portuguese workforce that will become aged (Pinto, Ramos y Nunes, 2015). The aging of the European workforce is widely recognized in the literature (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006; National Statistics Institute, 2014; Pinto, Ramos y Nunes, 2015; Pordata, 2016; Winkelmann-Gleed, 2011). As a result, the demographic situation, the aging of the workforce and the management of older workers have become a political concern for both governments and employers (DeLong, 2004; Eurostat, 2015; Winkelmann-Gleed, 2011). However, most organizations are not prepared to deal with the challenges associated with older workers (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006).

Nonetheless, population ageing has a strong impact on the world of work (Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006) and requires changes in both labour market and human resources [HR] strategies and policies (Ciutiene y Railaite, 2015). In fact, the maintenance of this workforce composed of older workers in the labour market has been a concern of governments, in general, and human resource management [HRM], in particular (Armstrong Stassen, 2008; Barroca, Meireles y Neto, 2014; Pinto, Ramos y Nunes, 2015). In this sense, several authors have focused their attention on the factors that promote this retention. Indeed, it is well established in the literature that the retention of senior workers is of the utmost importance due to the (expected) labour shortage and competition for talent (Armstrong-Stassen y Lee, 2009; Armstrong-Stassen y Schlosser, 2011; Armstrong-Stassen y Ursel, 2009; Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006; Kooij et al., 2008; Shacklock y Brunetto, 2011).

One of the most studied factors has been age management in organizations. Age management practices is an opportunity to stay for as long as possible in the organization and to constantly adapt to change through training and practice in old age (Fabisiak y Prokurat, 2012). For Ciutiene and Railaite (2015) age management can be understood as a set of measures to mitigate the consequences of aging that allow the person to remain productive despite his age. Taking this into account, to ensure the productivity of various age groups, it is essential to provide adequate working conditions and to pay more attention to age management practices of the members of the organizations (Ciutiene y Railaite, 2014). A good practice in age management is one that fights age barriers, promotes age diversity and provides an environment where each individual is able to reach his or hers potential without prejudice related to the individuals age (Walker, 2005).

In order to face this demographic situation, organizations must prepare their policies and practices, adapting them to the reality that is approaching (Beatty y Visser, 2005). To successfully adapt to dynamic changes in the workforce, organizations must ensure that their organizational policies and actions are designed in a way that encourages and promotes continued investment in older workers (Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006). HR practices aimed at meeting the needs and desires of older workers may be seen by the latter as a sign that the organization values their contribution, so they respond by remaining active in it (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008).

However, little research has been done in the development and implementation of efficient HRM practices that fit an aging workforce (Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006). In addition, according to Hedge, Borman and Lammlein (2006) until recently, few organizations have focused on developing and implementing comprehensive policies and practices for older workers. This may be because there is a discrepancy between the HRM practices implemented by the organization and HRM practices valued by the workers (Pinto, 2015).

Thus, it is important to understand the capacities, motivations, interests and expectations of these workers to develop such practices (Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006). Armstrong-Stassen and Ursel (2009) suggest that the challenge for employers is to make the workplace attractive and appealing to older workers in order to encourage them to stay in the organization, and the challenge for researchers is to determine which practices oriented towards older workers are most effective in producing this retention. Therefore, it seems to be essential to contribute to the identification and promotion of organizational practices related to the age, employability and intention to remain active of older workers, this being the main goal of the present investigation.

2. Method

The model of Quivy and Campenhoudt (2013) was adopted to guide our research. We decided on an exploratory study to obtain new knowledge about the subject under analysis, describing the results obtained and seeking to establish relationships between the variables under investigation. Therefore, after analysing the existing literature, we establish the following hypothesis:

H1: Portuguese enterprises use appropriate HRM practices for older workers.

H2: Age-appropriate HR strategies favour the intention to remain active.

2.1. Participants and procedure

A website was created to disseminate and facilitate the participation in the study. This link was sent to several private enterprises, professional orders and unions. Our population concerned all individuals aged 50 years old or older, working in Portugal. Therefore, we used a non-probabilistic sampling technique, namely, criterion sampling, meaning, selecting segments of the population according to pre-defined criteria (Coutinho, 2015). After confirmation of both inclusion / exclusion criteria, we achieved a sample size of 434 subjects. The demographic characteristics of the sample can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents ($n=434$)

Demographic characteristics	Mean	SD
<i>Age</i>	55,43	4,099
<i>Sex</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	176	40,6
Female	258	59,4
<i>Marital status</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Single	39	9,0
Married/ living with a partner	303	69,8
Divorced	72	16,6
Widowed	20	4,6
<i>District of residence</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Azores	18	4,1
Aveiro	14	3,2
Beja	12	2,8
Braga	12	2,8
Bragança	13	3,0
Castelo Branco	5	1,2
Coimbra	85	19,6
Évora	16	3,7
Faro	12	2,8
Guarda	7	1,6
Leiria	43	9,9
Lisbon	48	11,1
Madeira	7	1,6
Portalegre	5	1,2
Porto	61	14,1
Santarém	24	5,5
Setúbal	17	3,9
Viana do Castelo	7	1,6
Vila Real	5	1,2
Viseu	23	5,3
<i>Literacy level</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Primary education	36	8,3
Secondary education	82	18,9
Professional course	21	4,8
Pre-Bologna degree	191	44,0
Post-Bologna degree	29	6,7
Master degree	68	15,7
PhD	7	1,6

Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding the job and enterprise characteristics of the sample, this can be examined in table 2.

Table 2. Job/enterprise characteristics of the respondents ($n=434$)

Job/enterprise characteristics	Mean	SD
<i>Years in the same function</i>	26,66	9,350
<i>Years in the same enterprise</i>	22,42	10,182
<i>Enterprise sector</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Public	296	68,2
Private	127	29,3
Public-private	11	2,5
<i>Enterprise sector of economic activity</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Agriculture, livestock, hunting, forestry and fishing	41	9,4
Manufacturing	17	3,9
Electricity, gas, steam, hot and cold water and cold air	3	0,7
Collection, treatment and distribution of water; Sanitation, waste management and depollution	4	0,9
Construction	20	4,6
Wholesale and retail trade; Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles;	32	7,4
Transport and storage	4	0,9
Accommodation, catering and similar	21	4,8
Information and communication activities	4	0,9
Financial and insurance activities	4	0,9
Consulting, scientific, technical and similar activities	26	6,0
Administrative and support services activities	25	5,8
Public Administration and Defence; Mandatory Social Security	31	7,1
Education	157	36,2
Human health activities and social support	38	8,8
Artistic, entertainment, sporting and recreational activities	1	0,2
Other services activities	6	1,4
<i>Enterprise size</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Micro-enterprises or start-up's	42	9,7
Small enterprises	57	13,1
Medium enterprises	126	29,0
Large enterprises	209	48,2

Source: Own elaboration.

2.2. Measures

Sociodemographic and organizational data questionnaire. The questionnaire included questions regarding the individual's age, sex, marital status, district of residence and literacy. Also, to characterize labour related data, questions were

posed concerning the individual's profession, function, years in the function and years in the enterprise in which the subject works. Finally, questions were raised regarding enterprises in particular, namely, the sector, the economic activity sector and the size.

HR practices scale used was developed by Armstrong-Stassen (2008) and consists of a list of 28 HR practices, integrated into seven HR strategies. Subjects were asked to select to what extent they think that the organization in which they work is engaged with each of these practices. The answers are evaluated on a Likert scale from one (not doing this at all) to five (highly engaged in doing this).

Importance of HR strategies was developed by Armstrong-Stassen (2008). This scale aims to assess the importance of HR strategies in influencing the individual's decision to remain active in the workforce. Each respondent is asked to identify how much each of the seven strategies (eg, *flexible working options* strategy) influences his decision to remain in the labour market and is asked to respond in a Likert scale from one (not at all important) to five (extremely important).

Reasons why organizations are not engaging in the HR practices scale (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008) consists in a list of nine possible reasons why organizations are not committed to HR practices. To answer, the subject must select all of those that he considers to be true. There is also an *other* option, which the individual can fill freely.

Intention to remain (Armstrong-Stassen y Ursel, 2009), is composed by three items that aim to assess the respondents' intention to remain working in their organization. To answer the subject must select a Likert scale from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree).

2.3. General procedures and data analysis

Data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences [SPSS] (version 23.0). Missing values were not considered, because the instrument was elaborated online and had validation assumptions that required a response, so the absence of one is due to items considered *not applicable*, meaning, the response was not required. Also, outliers were inexistent.

Because the variable sector (*public, private and public-private*), specifically, *public-private*, had only 11 observations, it was decided to create a new variable, changing the sector variable to be composed of two categories, namely *public and private and public-private*.

Due to the large sample size, we assumed that the presented data approaches a normal distribution, and did not carry out a normality analysis (Coutinho, 2015; Pestana y Gageiro, 2008).

Because there was a large sample size of the same area (education), we chose not to consider the economic activity sector in the data analysis. Instead, public or private and public-private ownership was considered, assuming that the public sector has the same HRM practice, so no differences would be expected, nor would the data be skewed.

Next, the internal consistency was assessed, checking the Cronbach's alpha, of the scales used, as can be seen in the table 3.

Table 3. Analysis of the internal consistency of the scales used in the investigation

Scale	Number of items	$n=434$	Internal consistency ¹
HR practices	28	$\alpha=0,951$	Very good
Importance of HR strategies	7	$\alpha=0,897$	Good
Intention to remain	3	$\alpha=0,893$	Good

Source: Own elaboration.

Concerning data analysis, we used descriptive statistics and frequencies analyses to clarify the hypotheses under study. Also, means were compared using ANOVA tests and linear regression was used to analyse the variance of HR strategies in determining the intention to remain active. It should be stressed that, using all statistical tests, we tried to verify differences by comparing data with sociodemographic variables.

3. Findings

Concerning the perception of the adoption of age-appropriate HRM practices (hypothesis 1), the results of the sample regarding their organizations can be analysed in Table 4.

Table 4. Extent to which mature employees perceived their organization to be engaging in the human resource practices ($n=434$)

	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
<i>Flexible work options</i>				
Providing flexible work schedules (days/ hours worked).	2,24	2	1	1,256
Providing a reduced work week (part-time).	1,81	1	1	1,179
Offering job sharing (two people sharing a full-time position).	1,95	1	1	1,153
Offering unpaid leave (education, elder or parental care).	2,49	2	1	1,275
Providing options to work from home.	1,53	1	1	0,980
<i>Job design</i>				
Providing challenging and meaningful assignments.	2,70	3	3	1,179
Creating new roles for mature employees.	2,00	2	1	1,113
Redesigning jobs to be more appealing to mature employees.	1,79	1	1	1,025
Ensuring mature employees have input in determining their workload.	2,06	2	1	1,204
Providing opportunities to transfer to a less stressful/strenuous job.	1,96	2	1	1,115

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
<i>Mature employee training</i>				
Targeting mature employees for training to update their job skills.	2,20	2	1	1,119
Targeting mature employees for training to acquire new skills.	2,12	2	1	1,127
Providing access to new technology that will assist mature employees in performing their job.	2,47	2	2	1,165
Providing the same opportunities as younger employees to be promoted or transferred.	2,88	3	4	1,247
<i>Manager training</i>				
Providing age awareness training programs for managers (how to manage mature employees and how to avoid bias in appraising the performance of these employees).	1,75	1	1	0,974
Educating managers about effective ways to utilize mature employees.	1,68	1	1	0,929
<i>Performance evaluation</i>				
Ensuring mature employees have input in setting performance standards.	2,32	2	1	1,212
Conducting fair performance appraisals (free from age bias).	2,79	3	4	1,266
Providing mature employees with useful feedback about their job performance.	2,35	2	1	1,209
Providing feedback to mature employees in a supportive manner.	2,31	2	1	1,234
<i>Compensation</i>				
Offering incentives for continued employment.	1,65	1	1	1,022
Increasing financial compensation.	1,42	1	1	0,846
Improving benefits by providing more vacation time and additional time off.	1,66	1	1	1,047
<i>Recognition and respect</i>				
Recognizing the accomplishments of mature employees.	2,28	2	1	1,215
Recognizing the experience, knowledge, skill and expertise of mature employees.	2,46	2	2	1,198
Recognizing the role that mature employees can play (e.g. serving as mentors).	2,55	2	1	1,282
Ensuring that mature employees are treated with respect by others in the organization.	2,68	3	3	1,269
Showing appreciation for a job well done.	3,04	3	4	1,271
Note: minimum scale value=1 maximum scale value=5				

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected and constructed as presented in Armstrong-Stassen (2008).

As can be seen, all means of each practice (except for *showing appreciation for a job well done* that holds a mean value of 3,04) are below the average quotation point

(3) of the quotation scale (1 to 5), which suggests a weak adoption of these practices by Portuguese enterprises or, at least, in the perception of their implementation. However, observing the results, there is an internal variability to the perception of each practice. That is, in analysing the median values and the modes of the scores distribution, we find that there is probably an effect of extreme scoring. Take the example of the practice *conducting fair performance appraisals*, where the mean is 2,79, however, the median point of the observations is 3, and the response mode is 4. These data suggest that several subjects scored with very low levels, influencing the mean of the observation. This is important for understanding the diversity of intra subject opinions.

The less perceived practice of HRM practices adopted by organizations according to the respondents is *increasing financial compensation* (mean = 1,42). However, economic holdings influence workers' decision to remain active (Flynn, 2010). It should be noted that Armstrong-Stassen (2008) obtained different data, the less perceived practice in her study was *age awareness training programs for managers and educating managers*. In our study the practice perceived as highly implemented by workers was *showing appreciation for a job well done* (mean = 3,04). Also on this issue, Armstrong-Stassen (2008) obtained different data for the career employment population, which identified *conducting fair performance appraisals* as the most engaged practice.

Taking into account that some practices are more implemented (or more perceptive) than others, we have elaborated a table (5) with the ranking of the most perceived age appropriate HRM practices, in order to identify this trend.

Table 5. The top 10 age-appropriate HRM practices, more perceived as existent in Portuguese enterprises.

Practice	Rank
Showing appreciation for a job well done.	1
Providing the same opportunities as younger employees to be promoted or transferred.	2
Conducting fair performance appraisals (free from age bias).	3
Providing challenging and meaningful assignments.	4
Ensuring that mature employees are treated with respect by others in the organization.	5
Recognizing the role that mature employees can play (e.g. serving as mentors).	6
Offering unpaid leave (education, elder or parental care).	7
Providing access to new technology that will assist mature employees in performing their job.	8
Recognizing the experience, knowledge, skill and expertise of mature employees.	9
Providing mature employees with useful feedback about their job performance.	10

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected and constructed as presented in Armstrong-Stassen (2008).

It is interesting to note that almost all practices of the *Recognition and Respect* strategy (4/5) are in this top 10. In addition, half (2/4) of the practices of the *Mature employee training* and *Performance Evaluation* strategies were also included in this ranking. In this sense, it is important to highlight the study by Pinto (2015) where the author emphasizes that the workers recognized performance evaluation as one of the most present practices in the organization. It should be stressed, however, that our

results support that firms are not yet very committed to adopting appropriate practices for senior workers (Armstrong-Stassen, 2008; Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006), largely because they do not know how to do it (Armstrong Stassen y Ursel, 2009). Nonetheless, HR managers generally do not have the decision-making power to implement many of these HR practices, which may potentially justify the fact that none of the *Manager training* and *Compensation* practices are found in this Top 10, because they are intrinsically related to monetary values. However, we aim to understand the factors that influence the decision of older workers to remain in the labour market. Regarding the influence that each HR strategy has in this decision, analyse table 6.

Table 6. Importance of HR strategies in influencing the decision of mature workers to remain in the workforce

	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
Flexible work options	3,27	4	4	1,397
Job design	3,69	4	4	1,101
Mature employee training	3,48	4	4	1,176
Manager training	3,37	4	4	1,278
Performance evaluation	3,59	4	4	1,076
Compensation	3,88	4	5	1,306
Recognition and respect	4,35	5	5	1,112
Note: minimum scale value=1 maximum scale value=5				

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected and constructed as presented in Armstrong-Stassen (2008).

The results show that all strategies have an above average weight, with *recognition and respect* being the one that weighs the most on this decision, followed by *compensation*, *job design*, *performance evaluation*, *mature employee training*, *manager training* and, lastly, *flexible work options*. Our results are in line with those of Armstrong-Stassen (2008), who found that, in general, senior workers value *recognition and respect* as a variable that most influences their decision to remain active, followed by *compensation*. The author stresses the importance that this workers attribute to their competencies, knowledge, experience and roles such as mentoring, that they can perform within the organization. However, our results diverge from this author's study in that the third most valued strategy was *flexible work options*, with the variable less influential being *training and development opportunities*; and in our study, *job design* was the third most influential, with least valued being *flexible work options*. Furthermore, our results are similar to Pinto's (2015), whose Portuguese sample, like ours, also identified the practices of *rewards* and *recognition* as the most valued by the workers. In addition to these two practices, in Pinto's study (2015) workers also identified *participation* as influential in the decision to retire. Also, concerning the most perceived practices Pinto's (2015) sample identified those related to *performance evaluation*. Again, in data analysis, medians and modes are higher than the mean values of the strategies, and once again a high intra-subject disparity is suggested. Also, a national variable can be of importance, when analysing these topics.

In search for possible differences, we analysed age-appropriate HRM practices, comparing the analysis by sex, and the results are expressed in table 7.

Table 7. Extent to which mature employees perceived their organization to be engaging in the human resource practices ($n=434$) – by sex

	Female ($n=258$)		Male ($n=176$)		F	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>Flexible work options</i>						
Providing flexible work schedules (days/hours worked).	2,24	1,239	2,25	1,285	0,012	0,912
Providing a reduced work week (part-time).	1,74	1,123	1,93	1,251	2,719	0,100
Offering job sharing (two people sharing a full-time position).	1,96	1,170	1,93	1,131	0,097	0,756
Offering unpaid leave (education, elder or parental care).	2,62	1,258	2,30	1,280	6,707	0,010
Providing options to work from home.	1,54	0,986	1,50	0,974	0,197	0,657
<i>Job design</i>						
Providing challenging and meaningful assignments.	2,74	1,150	2,64	1,221	0,753	0,386
Creating new roles for mature employees.	1,98	1,119	2,01	1,106	0,061	0,805
Redesigning jobs to be more appealing to mature employees.	1,69	0,973	1,93	1,085	5,614	0,018
Ensuring mature employees have input in determining their workload.	2,00	1,185	2,15	1,229	1,496	0,222
Providing opportunities to transfer to a less stressful/strenuous job.	1,92	1,117	2,01	1,114	0,582	0,446
<i>Mature employee training</i>						
Targeting mature employees for training to update their job skills.	2,20	1,101	2,20	1,148	0,001	0,978
Targeting mature employees for training to acquire new skills.	2,11	1,089	2,14	1,183	0,064	0,801
Providing access to new technology that will assist mature employees in performing their job.	2,35	1,135	2,63	1,193	6,022	0,015
Providing the same opportunities as younger employees to be promoted or transferred.	2,89	1,287	2,88	1,189	0,011	0,918
<i>Manager training</i>						
Providing age awareness training programs for managers (how to manage mature employees and how to avoid bias in appraising the performance of these employees).	1,70	0,971	1,84	0,975	1,481	0,224
Educating managers about effective ways to utilize mature employees.	1,64	0,885	1,75	0,989	1,481	0,224

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

	Female (n=258)		Male (n=176)		F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>Performance evaluation</i>						
Ensuring mature employees have input in setting performance standards.	2,23	1,203	2,44	1,217	3,007	0,084
Conducting fair performance appraisals (free from age bias).	2,75	1,270	2,85	1,261	0,709	0,400
Providing mature employees with useful feedback about their job performance.	2,28	1,173	2,45	1,255	2,211	0,138
Providing feedback to mature employees in a supportive manner.	2,19	1,193	2,49	1,274	6,446	0,011
<i>Compensation</i>						
Offering incentives for continued employment.	1,53	0,951	1,84	1,094	10,071	0,002
Increasing financial compensation.	1,31	0,721	1,59	0,982	11,003	0,001
Improving benefits by providing more vacation time and additional time off.	1,65	1,015	1,69	1,095	0,154	0,695
<i>Recognition and respect</i>						
Recognizing the accomplishments of mature employees.	2,19	1,189	2,42	1,244	3,918	0,048
Recognizing the experience, knowledge, skill and expertise of mature employees.	2,32	1,143	2,68	1,248	9,537	0,002
Recognizing the role that mature employees can play (e.g. serving as mentors).	2,36	1,208	2,83	1,337	14,694	0,000
Ensuring that mature employees are treated with respect by others in the organization.	2,56	1,250	2,85	1,279	5,685	0,018
Showing appreciation for a job well done.	2,93	1,250	3,19	1,289	4,190	0,041
Note: minimum scale value=1 maximum scale value=5						

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected and constructed as presented in Armstrong-Stassen (2008).

Analysing these results, we can observe that there are several statistically significant gender differences in the perception of the existence and use of these practices. In fact, with the exception of the practice *offering unpaid leave*, men have higher perceptions than women in all other practices with statistically significant differences. These data can be explained by the importance given by women to this type of leaves, since they normally have the role of caregivers and, therefore, it is perceptible that it is a practice that is particularly valued (and / or visible) by them.

Regarding the importance of HR strategies (see table 8) in the decision of workers aged 50 years old or older to remain active in the workforce, only one strategy

showed statistically significant differences, namely *flexible work options*, being females the gender with higher scores.

Table 8. Importance of HR strategies in influencing the decision of mature workers to remain in the workforce ($n=434$) – by sex

	Female		Male		F	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Flexible work options	3,45	1,384	3,00	1,377	11,281	0,001
Job design	3,73	1,117	3,63	1,078	0,998	0,318
Mature employee training	3,51	1,184	3,44	1,165	0,415	0,520
Manager training	3,46	1,323	3,25	1,202	2,765	0,097
Performance evaluation	3,66	1,065	3,48	1,085	3,126	0,078
Compensation	3,83	1,296	3,96	1,320	0,988	0,321
Recognition and respect	4,38	1,099	4,32	1,132	0,282	0,595

Note: minimum scale value=1 maximum scale value=5

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected and constructed as presented in Armstrong-Stassen (2008).

By doing the same analysis of HRM practices by sector, there are statistically very significant ($p=0,000$) differences, as can be seen in table 9.

Table 9. Extent to which mature employees perceived their organization to be engaging in the HR practices ($n=434$) – by sector

	Public ($n=296$)		Private and public- private ($n=138$)		F	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>Flexible work options</i>						
Providing flexible work schedules (days/hours worked).	2,24	1,275	2,25	1,221	0,17	0,895
Providing a reduced work week (part-time).	1,65	1,063	2,17	1,332	18,922	0,000
Offering job sharing (two people sharing a full-time position).	1,95	1,182	1,94	1,093	0,004	0,951
Offering unpaid leave (education, elder or parental care).	2,80	1,287	1,80	0,943	66,578	0,000
Providing options to work from home.	1,56	1,007	1,45	0,921	1,219	0,270
<i>Job design</i>						
Providing challenging and meaningful assignments.	2,72	1,172	2,64	1,196	0,492	0,483
Creating new roles for mature employees.	1,90	1,086	2,21	1,143	7,654	0,006
Redesigning jobs to be more appealing to mature employees.	1,66	0,933	2,06	1,157	14,723	0,000

(continued)

Table 9 (continued)

	Public (n=296)		Private and public-private (n=138)		F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Ensuring mature employees have input in determining their workload.	1,91	1,123	2,38	1,309	14,932	0,000
Providing opportunities to transfer to a less stressful/strenuous job.	1,80	1,054	2,30	1,168	19,735	0,000
<i>Mature employee training</i>						
Targeting mature employees for training to update their job skills.	2,15	1,097	2,33	1,160	2,466	0,117
Targeting mature employees for training to acquire new skills.	2,05	1,093	2,27	1,187	3,525	0,061
Providing access to new technology that will assist mature employees in performing their job.	2,42	1,185	2,56	1,121	1,277	0,259
Providing the same opportunities as younger employees to be promoted or transferred.	2,90	1,296	2,86	1,137	0,098	0,755
<i>Manager training</i>						
Providing age awareness training programs for managers (how to manage mature employees and how to avoid bias in appraising the performance of these employees).	1,71	0,989	1,84	0,938	1,622	0,204
Educating managers about effective ways to utilize mature employees.	1,59	0,897	1,88	0,970	8,842	0,003
<i>Performance evaluation</i>						
Ensuring mature employees have input in setting performance standards.	2,17	1,194	2,62	1,197	13,406	0,000
Conducting fair performance appraisals (free from age bias).	2,74	1,279	2,89	1,236	1,288	0,257
Providing mature employees with useful feedback about their job performance.	2,11	1,132	2,86	1,218	38,331	0,000
Providing feedback to mature employees in a supportive manner.	2,05	1,129	2,88	1,264	46,628	0,000

(continued)

Table 9 (continued)

	Public (n=296)		Private and public-private (n=138)		F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>Compensation</i>						
Offering incentives for continued employment.	1,46	0,909	2,07	1,128	35,296	0,000
Increasing financial compensation.	1,29	0,789	1,70	0,899	23,113	0,000
Improving benefits by providing more vacation time and additional time off.	1,58	1,035	1,83	1,057	5,369	0,021
<i>Recognition and respect</i>						
Recognizing the accomplishments of mature employees.	2,06	1,126	2,76	1,265	33,921	0,000
Recognizing the experience, knowledge, skill and expertise of mature employees.	2,23	1,114	2,97	1,220	39,575	0,000
Recognizing the role that mature employees can play (e.g. serving as mentors).	2,25	1,169	3,20	1,278	58,433	0,000
Ensuring that mature employees are treated with respect by others in the organization.	2,44	1,247	3,19	1,162	35,440	0,000
Showing appreciation for a job well done.	2,84	1,249	3,46	1,215	24,044	0,000
Note: minimum scale value=1 maximum scale value=5						

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected and constructed as presented in Armstrong-Stassen (2008).

Data suggest that these practices are mostly implemented in the private and public-private sectors. However, it should be noted that among the practices that showed significant statistical differences, only one (*offering unpaid leave*) was higher in the public sector. Also, it should be noted that in the *compensation* and *recognition and respect* strategies, all practices showed significant differences between sectors, with the private and public-private sector having higher scores, and in *recognition and respect* strategies, all differences were $p=0,000$, that is, very significant. Once again, differences in *performance evaluation* are reported to have values of $p=0,000$.

Regarding the importance of each strategy in influencing the decision to remain active, the comparison between sectors suggests a difference in the *mature employee training*, *compensation* and *recognition and respect*, which are higher in the private and public-private sector (See table 10). These data indicate that workers have the notion that in order to remain active, *compensation* and *recognition and respect* are important, but they also recognize that it is essential to have the necessary skills, so *mature employee training* is essential.

Table 10. Importance of HR strategies in influencing the decision of mature workers to remain in the workforce ($n=434$) – by sector

	Public		Private and public-private		F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Flexible work options	3,35	1,394	3,09	1,393	3,204	0,074
Job design	3,64	1,162	3,79	0,955	1,702	0,193
Mature employee training	3,39	1,228	3,67	1,033	5,473	0,020
Manager training	3,40	1,379	3,33	1,033	0,275	0,600
Performance evaluation	3,59	1,146	3,59	0,910	0,000	0,994
Compensation	3,71	1,357	4,27	1,098	18,128	0,000
Recognition and respect	4,25	1,167	4,57	0,951	8,049	0,005

Note: minimum scale value=1 maximum scale value=5

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected and constructed as presented in Armstrong-Stassen (2008).

Regarding the results of the perceptions of age appropriate HRM practices by size of the company, analyse table 11, where it is observed that there are statistically significant differences with respect to the practices adopted. In fact, these differences are found in all practices of *mature employee training*, *performance evaluation* and *recognition and respect*. In this sense, it is important to highlight the study by Pinto (2015) in which the author concluded that the size of the company, in a way, inhibits or facilitates these practices. In her study, the author verified that, although present in all organizations, these practices were more constant and formalized in large enterprises than in small and medium enterprises. Notwithstanding the perception of the implementation of the practices, the author points out that only two of the large enterprises in her study had formal age management programs. This firm size effect may be related to differences in centralization, standardization and specialization between large and small enterprises (Kok, Uhlaner y Thurik, 2003). According to Kok, Uhlaner and Thurik (2003) the number of employees is probably a contingency variable. In fact, the authors state even though large firms may benefit from a formalization of their HRM practices, small firms benefit from relatively informal practices. In this sense, it is important to highlight that small firms have different sizes throughout the world, meaning, in Europe they employ less than 250 employees, in the United States those firms can employ up to 500 employees and in Australia a small firm employs up to 20 employees (Mayson y Barrett, 2006). Nonetheless, Mayson and Barret (2006) also point out the ad hoc and informal characteristic of these firm's practices, that tend to be idiosyncratic and firm specific.

Table 11. Extent to which mature employees perceived their organization to be engaging in the human resource practices ($n=434$) – by enterprise size

	Micro-enterprises or start-up's ($n=42$)		Small enterprises ($n=57$)		Medium enterprises ($n=126$)		Large enterprises ($n=209$)		F	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>Flexible work options</i>										
Providing flexible work schedules (days/hours worked).	1,86	1,201	2,42	1,267	2,34	1,247	2,21	1,261	2,019	0,111
Providing a reduced work week (part-time).	1,79	1,279	2,04	1,281	1,87	1,246	1,72	1,083	1,203	0,308
Offering job sharing (two people sharing a full-time position).	2,05	1,125	2,09	1,090	2,00	1,246	1,86	1,117	0,907	0,438
Offering unpaid leave (education, elder or parental care).	1,45	0,772	2,11	1,129	2,71	1,290	2,67	1,268	14,806	0,000
Providing options to work from home.	1,31	0,869	1,56	0,982	1,63	1,078	1,49	0,936	1,308	0,271
<i>Job design</i>										
Providing challenging and meaningful assignments.	2,40	1,251	2,68	1,198	2,94	1,161	2,61	1,152	3,159	0,025
Creating new roles for mature employees.	1,98	1,158	2,23	1,165	2,10	1,232	1,87	0,999	2,119	0,097
Redesigning jobs to be more appealing to mature employees.	1,90	1,100	1,89	1,097	1,99	1,183	1,61	0,849	4,303	0,005
Ensuring mature employees have input in determining their workload.	2,24	1,340	2,39	1,292	2,21	1,281	1,85	1,063	4,690	0,003
Providing opportunities to transfer to a less stressful/strenuous job.	2,05	1,125	2,21	1,221	2,06	1,218	1,80	0,997	2,808	0,039

(continued)

Table 11 (continued)

	Micro-enterprises or start-up's (n=42)		Small enterprises (n=57)		Medium enterprises (n=126)		Large enterprises (n=209)		F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>Mature employee training</i>										
Targeting mature employees for training to update their job skills.	1,79	1,180	2,44	1,134	2,39	1,180	2,11	1,034	4,538	0,004
Targeting mature employees for training to acquire new skills.	1,83	1,124	2,21	1,098	2,33	1,207	2,02	1,067	3,085	0,027
Providing access to new technology that will assist mature employees in performing their job.	2,14	1,095	2,60	1,116	2,80	1,166	2,29	1,146	6,600	0,000
Providing the same opportunities as younger employees to be promoted or transferred.	2,43	1,346	3,05	1,076	3,14	1,157	2,77	1,288	4,724	0,003
<i>Manager training</i>										
Providing age awareness training programs for managers (how to manage mature employees and how to avoid bias in appraising the performance of these employees).	1,52	0,804	1,95	0,990	1,84	1,046	1,69	0,947	2,152	0,093
Educating managers about effective ways to utilize mature employees.	1,64	0,821	1,79	0,921	1,80	1,066	1,59	0,856	1,616	0,185
<i>Performance evaluation</i>										
Ensuring mature employees have input in setting performance standards.	2,50	1,293	2,53	1,241	2,52	1,238	2,10	1,141	4,340	0,005
Conducting fair performance appraisals (free from age bias).	2,45	1,383	3,09	1,327	3,06	1,185	2,61	1,232	5,547	0,001

(continued)

Table 11 (continued)

	Micro-enterprises or start-up's (n=42)		Small enterprises (n=57)		Medium enterprises (n=126)		Large enterprises (n=209)		F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Providing mature employees with useful feedback about their job performance.	2,67	1,223	2,61	1,278	2,49	1,257	2,13	1,121	4,901	0,002
Providing feedback to mature employees in a supportive manner.	2,88	1,292	2,61	1,250	2,43	1,280	2,05	1,126	8,056	0,000
<i>Compensation</i>										
Offering incentives for continued employment.	1,90	1,185	1,95	1,042	1,67	1,049	1,51	0,941	3,846	0,010
Increasing financial compensation.	1,50	0,773	1,54	0,781	1,51	1,018	1,33	0,753	1,866	0,135
Improving benefits by providing more vacation time and additional time off.	1,45	0,861	1,82	1,120	1,77	1,111	1,60	1,015	1,732	0,160
<i>Recognition and respect</i>										
Recognizing the accomplishments of mature employees.	2,60	1,398	2,68	1,212	2,40	1,234	2,03	1,115	6,597	0,000
Recognizing the experience, knowledge, skill and expertise of mature employees.	2,88	1,383	2,77	1,165	2,64	1,169	2,19	1,126	7,985	0,000
Recognizing the role that mature employees can play (e.g. serving as mentors).	3,26	1,483	2,75	1,272	2,73	1,236	2,24	1,185	10,356	0,000
Ensuring that mature employees are treated with respect by others in the organization.	3,26	1,231	2,98	1,126	2,80	1,259	2,40	1,256	8,143	0,000
Showing appreciation for a job well done.	3,60	1,251	3,28	1,292	3,11	1,126	2,81	1,308	5,892	0,001
Note: minimum scale value=1 maximum scale value=5										

(continued)

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected and constructed as presented in Armstrong-Stassen (2008).

Table 12. Importance of HR strategies in influencing the decision of mature workers to remain in the workforce ($n=434$) – by enterprise size

	Micro-enterprises or start-up's		Small enterprises		Medium enterprises		Large enterprises		F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Flexible work options	2,69	1,522	3,37	1,318	3,30	1,421	3,34	1,360	2,729	0,044
Job design	3,57	1,107	3,79	1,031	3,65	1,076	3,71	1,138	0,388	0,762
Mature employee training	3,52	1,273	3,56	1,035	3,51	1,101	3,44	1,239	0,233	0,873
Manager training	2,69	1,070	3,58	1,051	3,39	1,180	3,44	1,390	4,837	0,003
Performance evaluation	3,33	1,074	3,84	0,797	3,61	0,980	3,56	1,184	1,942	0,122
Compensation	3,93	1,276	4,23	1,086	3,87	1,380	3,79	1,313	1,712	0,164
Recognition and respect	4,31	1,316	4,54	0,803	4,31	1,084	4,33	1,157	0,663	0,575
Note: minimum scale value=1 maximum scale value=5										

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected and constructed as presented in Armstrong-Stassen (2008).

Concerning the importance of each HR strategy in the decision to remain active, only two strategies showed to be statistically different between firm size (Table 12), namely *Flexible work options* and *Manager training*, both being higher in small enterprises.

Regarding the reasons why organizations are not committed to age-appropriate HR practices, consider the table below.

Table 13. Reasons why organizations are not engaging in the HR practices

	%	Rank
Not a priority for the organization	56,7%	1
Simply have not considered it	41,0%	2
Productivity concerns	39,9%	3
Financial expense – too costly to implement	34,6%	4
Legal issues, e.g. pension regulations	30,4%	5
Incompatibility with corporate culture	23,3%	6
Lack of employee interest – little demand	20,0%	7
Logistical issues – too difficult to implement	16,8%	8
Fairness issues – concern about reaction of younger employees	13,8%	9
Note: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents were instructed to check all that apply.		

Source: Own elaboration based on the data collected and constructed as presented in Armstrong-Stassen (2008).

Findings show the majority (56,7%) of the workers assume that engaging in the HR practices is *not a priority for the organization*. This result is in line with that obtained by Armstrong-Stassen (2008), where more than three quarters of the author's sample selected this option and Pinto's study (2015) that also has the same

conclusion. It should be noted, however, that some workers ($n=14$) selected the *other* option, indicating the following reasons: “a lot of supply” (usually young, volunteers, unemployed) ($n=3$), “misconception of what is change management”, “public tender”, “high probability of absence due to health reasons”, “lack of management” in terms of HR, seniors prefer the transition to retirement, there is no willingness “to serve the public interest” “new programs”, “politics”, “living wages”, “knowledge transfer” and “the number of older employees who retired, led to many of the management positions being filled by younger workers, that did not have the change to mature and learn with what the elders have to teach, which generates disregard for their knowledge and experience. The situation led the younger to close themselves in their own knowledge/ not to open up much to other perspectives. The lack of maturity lead them to wanting to prove to themselves and others that what they say is correct and that they have competence, however lacking the security of learning”.

In order to analyse hypothesis 2 (age-appropriate HR strategies favour the intention to remain active), we attempted to understand the variation of the intention to remain active that is explained by the HRM strategies (See table 14).

Table 14. Linear regression – HR strategies and intention to remain

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	0,496^a	0,246	0,234		1,01861	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Mean Strategy Recognition and respect, Mean Strategy Flexible work options, Mean Strategy Manager training, Mean Strategy Compensation, Mean Strategy Mature employee training, Mean Strategy Job design, Mean Strategy Performance evaluation						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	144,248	7	20,607	19,861	0,000^b
	Residual	442,001	426	1,038		
	Total	586,249	433			
a. Dependent Variable: Mean Intention to remain active						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Mean Strategy Recognition and respect, Mean Strategy Flexible work options, Mean Strategy Manager training, Mean Strategy Compensation, Mean Strategy Mature employee training, Mean Strategy Job design, Mean Strategy Performance evaluation						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
1		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
	(Constant)	1,422	0,160		8,903	0,000
	Mean Strategy Flexible work options	0,086	0,086	0,056	0,997	0,319
	Mean Strategy Job design	0,109	0,098	0,086	1,119	0,264
	Mean Strategy Mature employee training	-0,065	0,075	-0,055	-0,862	0,389

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1					
Mean Strategy Manager training	0,028	0,073	0,022	0,388	0,698
Mean Strategy Performance evaluation	0,200	0,088	0,181	2,277	0,023
Mean Strategy Compensation	0,089	0,082	0,061	1,079	0,281
Mean Strategy Recognition and respect	0,236	0,076	0,223	3,126	0,002

a. Dependent Variable: Mean Intention to remain active

Source: own elaboration based on the data collected.

Findings reveal a moderate correlation ($R=0,496$) between the variables, indicating that 23,4% of the variation in the intention to remain active is explained by the HR strategies, validating the proposed model in analysis ($p=0,000$). It should also be noted that only three variables were found to be significant in explaining the variance of the intention to remain active, namely, the *constant* (meaning, if everything is 0 it produces an increase of 1,422), *performance evaluation* ($p=0,023$) and *recognition and respect* ($p=0,002$). It should be noted, however, that all variations with significance produce positive results. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, although not statistically significant, each unit increased in the *mature employee training* strategy, affects the intention to remain active negatively ($B=-0,055$). In turn, all other variations produce positive results.

The significance of our findings can be explained by the literature in a perspective in which age-appropriate HRM practices are perceived in a prism of employee appreciation by the organizations (Rhoades y Eisenberger, 2002). In this sense, they influence the worker's intention to remain active in the workplace, specially the practices related to *performance evaluation* and *recognition and respect*.

4. Conclusion

The aging of the workforce is a current reality. In fact, the future will depend on the maintenance of the work capacity of older workers and their retention in the labour market (Walker, 2005). In addition to the need to maintain this active labour force, there is also a need to limit social security and public pensions costs, since it is now known that these costs will be unsustainable (Barroca, Meireles y Neto, 2014; Walker, 2005).

According to Claes and Heymans (2008), retention should be part of a long-term, preventive, HR policy, because retention practices for older workers have the potential to increase or reduce motivation for retirement, so they must be appropriate for these workers. Walker (2005) stresses that organizations will have to exert efforts to employ a larger proportion of workers aged 50 years old or older. In this sense, it becomes crucial to understand how employers can successfully adjust to the changes that aging produces (Walker, 2005) and business requires to maintain and gain competitiveness.

Age-appropriate HR practices contribute to the recruitment and retention of key talent (Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006). Employers and governments that respond in advance, and with a strategic focus, to these issues will gain a key competitive advantage (DeLong, 2004; Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006).

This paper aimed to contribute to the identification and promotion of organizational practices related to the age, employability and intention to remain active of older workers. In this sense, we conducted an exploratory study in order to find out if (H1) Portuguese enterprises use appropriate HRM practices for older workers, and if and which (H2) age-appropriate HR strategies favour the intention of these workers to remain active. Concerning hypothesis 1, the results of our study suggest that Portuguese companies are little committed to the adoption of age-appropriate HRM practices. However, HRM strategies that focus on the worker's age influence the employee's decision to remain active in the labour market, assuming *recognition and respect*, *compensation* and *job design*, a major importance. In this context, we verified that there are differences in the perception of these practices when considered some demographic characteristics: *sex*, males perceive higher scores in the age-appropriate HRM practices; *sector*, the private and public-private sectors have a larger perception of the existence of these practices; and regarding *enterprise size*, the workers of the small enterprises showed a higher perception of the existence of these practices. Given that large enterprises are mainly the ones that implement more HRM practices, our findings indicate that small and medium-sized enterprises may also make use of these practices, perhaps informally, and that these are efficient or at least perceived by workers.

In this study, we also validated the proposed model that suggests that HRM strategies appropriate to the older workers' age influences their intention to remain active. In this sense, concerning hypothesis 2, we conclude that a higher perception of age-appropriate HRM strategies favour (increase) the workers' intention to continue working, especially the practices related *recognition and respect* and *performance evaluation*. This suggests that the more practices related to these strategies that are implemented in enterprises, the greater the intention to remain working by the older workforce.

These conclusions are important because they allow not only to acknowledge which HRM practices affect the decision of these workers to remain in the labour market, but also to understand the degree to which they affect the specificities of the labour market and the workforce, thus allowing a better adaptation of age management practices to these workers. For example, with women increasingly occupying the labour market, it is important to understand what motivates them not only to be part of the workforce, but also to stay in it (Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006). Age management is advocated in this research as the best way to strategically cope with the changes resulting from the aging population and consequent changes in the labour market.

As far as the employer is concerned, at the individual level, there have been a few changes. First of all, it should be noted that while national policies are important, they are not sufficient in themselves for age management and adaptation to the aging workforce (Walker, 2005). Here, HRM practices play a key role in attracting and retaining these workers. In fact, employing older workers for training, making changes to employee recruitment announcements, or resorting to age awareness programs are examples (Walker, 2005). Moreover, by improving their practices, companies

benefit from the diversity of ages of their employees, better adjusting to the needs of certain client groups (Fabisiak y Prokurat, 2012). According to the results of the research developed by Fabisiak and Prokurat (2012), the successful age management policy at corporate or state level provides equal training opportunities and skills development for all age groups, increasing productivity, improving the quality of work and creating companies that are more adaptable to change. However, these good practices are being implemented only by the few and slowly (Armstrong-Stassen y Ursel, 2009; Hedge, Borman y Lammlein, 2006; Walker, 2005), largely due to misconceptions about the demographic situation in general (e.g. abundance of young people in unemployment, so the possibility of labour shortage or focus on the senior worker is not considered), and the older worker (stereotypes associated with this worker, for example low performance) in particular.

It is also important to mention the limitations of this study. In fact, both the non-probabilistic sampling technique and the specificity of the sample do not allow for data generalization. In addition, our sample lacks equilibrium between activity sectors, therefore not allowing for distinctions between subjects in that matter.

Nevertheless, it would be interesting in the future to analyse whether the practices and strategies that influence the intention to remain in the labour market change according to the worker's profession or enterprise sector. In addition, it would be interesting to carry out longitudinal studies that include the study of HRM practices, in particular, those of development, in order to verify if the training provided during the professional career is adequate to the required skills. Also, considering that small enterprise workers showed a bigger perception of the existence of age-appropriate HRM practices, it would be interesting to study whether informal practices in small enterprises achieve the same results as those that are formalized in large enterprises. To this extent, it is important no stress that our findings are more in line with the results of Pinto's (2015) study than the ones from Armstrong-Stassen's (2008) study, which might suggest a national variables effect. Due to this, we believe it would be interesting to do more studies in Portugal but also in other countries in order to adapt the HR strategies not only to demographic variables, but also to national ones.

Finally, with the present research, and its findings, we assume that older workers can successfully pursue both personal and professional goals (Ciutiene y Railaite, 2015, Claes y Heymans 2008, Walker 2005). To enable this, organizations need to adjust their HR policies, and in this context, age management has taken a central position because of the benefits that it entails (Streb, Voelpel y Leibold, 2008; Walker, 2005). It should then become part of the organization's strategy, noting, however, that each enterprise is unique, so it is necessary to evaluate the actual situation, following a detailed evaluation plan, in order to choose the best workforce age management strategy (Ciutiene y Railaite, 2015).

5. References

- Armstrong-Stassen, M. (2008). "Human resource practices for mature workers – and why aren't employers using them?". *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 46 (3): 334-352. doi:10.1177/1038411108091755.
- Armstrong-Stassen, M. y Lee, S. H. (2009). "The effect of relational age on older Canadian employees' perceptions of human resource practices and sense of worth to their

- organization". *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20 (8): 1753-1769. doi:10.1080/09585190903087156.
- Armstrong-Stassen, M. y Schlosser, F. (2011). "Perceived organizational membership and the retention of older workers". *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 32 (2): 319-344. doi:10.1002/job.647.
- Armstrong-Stassen, M. y Ursel, N. (2009). "Perceived organizational support, career satisfaction, and the retention of older workers". *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 82 (1): 201-220. doi:10.1348/096317908X288838.
- Barroca, A. Meireles, G. y Neto, C. (2014). Estudo sobre boas práticas. Para o aumento da força de trabalho disponível em Portugal através da manutenção e reinserção de seniores no mercado de trabalho (en línea) <http://www.poatfse.qren.pt/upload/docs/Diversos/ESTUDOS/Estudos%202014/Estudo%20Seniores%20Activos.pdf> [consulta 21 de marzo de 2017].
- Beatty, P. T. y Visser, R. M. S. (Eds.). (2005). *Thriving on an aging workforce: strategies for organizational and systemic change*. Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.
- Ciutiene, R. y Railaite, R. (2014). "Challenges of managing an ageing workforce". *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 156 (4): 69-73. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.11.121.
- Ciutiene, R. y Railaite, R. (2015). "Age management as a means of reducing the challenges of workforce aging". *Engineering Economics*, 26 (4): 391-397. doi:10.5755/j01.ee.26.4.7081.
- Claes, R. y Heymans, M. (2008). "HR professionals' views on work motivation and retention of older workers: a focus group study". *Career Development International*, 13 (2): 95-111. doi:10.1108/13620430810860521.
- Coutinho, C. P. (2015). *Metodologia de investigação em ciências sociais e humanas: teoria e prática* (2ª ed.). Coimbra, Portugal: Edições Almedina.
- DeLong, D. W. (2004). *Lost knowledge: confronting the threat of an aging workforce*. New York, NY: Oxford university press.
- European Commission (2015). *The 2015 ageing report: economic and budgetary projections for the 28 EU Member States (2013-2060)* (en línea). http://europa.eu/epc/pdf/ageing_report_2015_en.pdf [consulta 17 de enero de 2017].
- Eurostat (2015) *Eurostat regional yearbook 2015* (en línea). <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/7018888/KS-HA-15-001-EN-N.pdf/6f0d4095-5e7a-4aab-af28-d255e2bcb395> [consulta 17 de enero de 2017].
- Fabisiak, J. y Prokurat, S. (2012). "Age management as a tool for the demographic decline in the 21st century: an overview of its characteristics". *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation*, 8 (4): 83-96. doi:10.7341/2012846.
- Flynn, M. (2010). "Who would delay retirement? Typologies of older workers". *Personnel Review*, 39 (3): 308-324. doi:10.1108/00483481011030511.
- Hedge, J. W. Borman, W. C. y Lammlein, S. E. (2006). *The aging workforce: realities, myths, and implications for organizations*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Kok, J. M. P., Uhlaner, L. M. y Thurik, A. R. (2003). "Human resource management with small firms; facts and explanations". ERIM Report Series Reference No. ERS-2003-015-STR (en línea). <https://ssrn.com/abstract=411655> [consulta 20 de marzo de 2017].
- Kooij, D., Lange, A., Jansen, P. y Dijkers, J. (2008). "Older workers' motivation to continue to work: five meanings of age: a conceptual review". *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 23 (4): 364-394. doi:10.1108/02683940810869015.

- Mayson, S. y Barrett, R. (2006). "The science and practice of HRM in small firms". *Human Resource Management Review*, 16: 447-455. doi:10.1016/j.hrmr.2006.08.002.
- National Statistics Institute (2014, 28 de marzo). *Projeções de população residente 2012-2060. Destaque: informação à comunicação social* (en línea). https://www.ine.pt/ngt_server/attachfileu.jsp?look_parentBoui=21559368_4&att_display=n&att_download=y [consulta 15 de septiembre de 2017].
- Pestana, M. H. y Gageiro, J. M. (2008). *Análise de dados para ciências sociais: a complementaridade do SPSS* (5.ª Ed). Lisboa, Portugal: Edições Silabo.
- Pinto, A. (2015). *Envelhecimento, trabalho e práticas de gestão de recursos humanos* (Tese de doutoramento, ISCTE, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal). <https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/handle/10071/11038>.
- Pinto, A., Ramos, S. y Nunes, S. (2015). "Managing an ageing workforce: what is the value of human resource management practices for different age groups of workers?" *Tékhne – review of applied management studies*, 12: 58-68. doi:10.1016/j.tekhne.2015.01.007.
- Pordata (2016) População (en línea). http://www.pordata.pt/Tema/Portugal/Pop_ula%C3%A7%C3%A3o-1 [consulta 15 de septiembre de 2017].
- Quivy, R. y Campenhoudt, L. (2013) *Manual de investigação em ciências sociais* (6ª ed.). Lisboa, Portugal: Gradiva.
- Rhoades, L. y Eisenberger, R. (2002). "Perceived organizational support: a review of the literature". *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87 (4): 698-714. doi:10.1037//0021-9010.87.4.698.
- Shacklock, K. y Brunetto, Y. (2011). "A model of older workers' intentions to continue working". *Personnel Review*, 40 (2): 252-274. doi:10.1108/00483481111106110.
- Streb, K. C., Voelpel, C. S. y Leibold, M. (2008). "Managing the aging workforce: status quo and implications for the advancement of theory and practice". *European Management Journal*, 26 (1): 1-10. doi:10.1016/j.emj.2007.08.004.
- Walker, A. (2005). "The emergence of age management in Europe". *International Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 10 (1): 685-697 (en línea). <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.513.3794&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. [consulta 30 de septiembre de 2017].
- Winkelmann-Gleed, A. (2011). "Demographic change and implications for workforce ageing in Europe: raising awareness and improving practice". *Contemporary readings in law and social justice*, 3 (1): 62-81.