Ageing in organizations
A view of HR professionals on the positioning of mature managers and adoption of age management practices

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to show which factors influence the perception of human resources professionals about managers over 50 years old and which factors guide the age management practices adopted in the surveyed companies.

Design/methodology/approach – To this end, a survey was conducted with 140 companies accessed from a database of a human resources association. Through the answers obtained through the online questionnaire, an exploratory factor analysis was made with the aid of Software R.

Findings – Thus, it was possible to identify four factors that explain the work posture of professionals 50 years of age and older (company expectations, performance, morality and knowledge and professionalism) and three factors that guide the adoption of age management practices in organizations (recruitment & selection and integration, retention and continuity in the company, adaptation to the needs).

Originality/value – The results suggest that, even considering the high performance of older managers, perceived by HR professionals, the adoption of age management practices is still insufficient, making it difficult for these professionals to enter and remain in organizations. Moreover, it can be inferred that such posture indicates biases of discrimination and age stereotypes.

Keywords Discrimination, Mature professionals, Age management, Aging

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Population aging has gained prominence in the social and academic agendas, mainly due to the presence of older workers in the labor market (Chiu, Chan, Snape, & Redman, 2001; Nelson, 2005; Stypinska, & Turek, 2017; Vasconcelos, 2012; Wood, 2008). Age diversity has become a key component of diversity management in organizations (Gordon, 2018; Riach, 2009).

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However, the current management logic adopted by companies excludes older workers from the labor market (Ainsworth, & Hardy, 2009). The inequality faced by older workers (Riach, & Kelly, 2015) often occurs because they represent a cost to the organization (Roscigno, Mong, Byron, & Tester, 2007). Age prejudice affects both personal and professional life (Roscigno et al., 2007).

In the case of Brazil, studying these processes is even more pressing, since the population is rapidly aging (IBGE, 2016). The workforce in Brazilian companies is predominantly young (Vasconcelos, 2012). Nevertheless, data from the Institute of Economic Research (Ipea, 2010) indicate that by 2040, the workforce in Brazil will be mostly composed of those aged over 45 years. Although there are more men than women in Brazil, women live longer (Camarano, 2006) and outlive men by seven years (Salgado, 2002). According to the latest IBGE demographic census (2011), the elderly in Brazil represent approximately 10.8 per cent of the total population. However, Brazilian companies are not prepared to eliminate age barriers and age management practices are practically non-existent (Cepellos, & Tonelli, 2017). Although population ageing suggests changes in the composition of the workforce (Cepellos, 2018), positive and negative age stereotypes can affect older people. Whether in the perception of oneself or in the perception of younger people, these stereotypes reinforce prejudices in the coexistence of different generations in the workspaces (Loth, & Silveira, 2013).

Despite evidence of age bias (Duncan, & Loretto, 2004; Loretto, & White, 2006; Riach, 2009), studies on discrimination against older professionals are still recent and insufficient to promote significant changes in organizations. Given it is a recent phenomenon hardly researched in the country, there is a need to deepen the study on this subject (Cepellos, 2018). The rapid aging of the Brazilian population reinforces the need for greater knowledge on the age management practices conducted in companies, since they have not been sufficiently explored in the national literature (Locatelli, & Fontoura, 2013).

Discrimination against older workers is observed in the strategies used in personnel selection process. The establishment of age limits represents one of these elements of exclusion (Peres, 2003). The retention or reintegration of the elderly in the labor market could represent a competitive differential and even promote the image of the company in the market (Uyehara, 2003). It also represents an alternative for communities focused on sustainable development and that value local culture (Foguel, & Normanha, 2006; Normanha, 2004).

In Brazil, behavior and retirement of older consumers (Locatelli, & Fontoura, 2013); motivational factors to work (Trigueiro, Bitante, Kubo, & Oliva, 2016); work ethics (Nascimento, Costa, Salvá, Moura, & Simão, 2016), and career of older professionals (Ziger, Filippim, & Beltrame, 2017) have been widely explored by academics studying ageing in companies. Despite the emphasis on the importance of older workers on the productivity of companies in the future, there is a research gap on how the Human Resources (HR) area deals with and views mature managers (Cepellos, 2013; Cepellos, & Tonelli, 2017; Peres, 2003).

This article aims at contributing to this research gap, presenting results of research conducted with 140 Brazilian companies. We discuss the factors that influence the perception of HR managers regarding professionals aged over 50 years and the factors that guide age management practices adopted in the companies researched. The following sections present the conceptual discussion of this study, the methodological procedures for data collection and analysis, and the conclusions. The results indicate that HR professionals have a positive perception of the performance and knowledge of older managers. However, there is no evidence of companies adopting age management practices in recruitment and selection, integration, and retention of these managers.

Ageism

A review of age discrimination at the workplace has become necessary because of population aging. Several countries are beginning to emphasize the social and economic benefits of retaining older workers (Davey, 2018). However, ageism continues to permeate labor relations. The term "ageism" was first used by Butler (1969). The suffix "-ism" carries several connotations: stereotypes, prejudices, and discriminatory organizational practices against this age group (Fineman, 2011). As with sexism and racism, ageism permeates the construction of identity, family relations, labor relations, and the very organization of society. It should receive more attention because with the improvement in the quality of life, people will grow old (Posthuma, & Guerrero, 2013).

In extreme circumstances, age-related harassment has also been observed. So is verbal offenses in front of other workers or consumers, age-related jokes, discrediting comments and behaviors, sexual offenses, and even physical aggression (Blackstone, 2013). Dismissals that penalize older workers are generally associated with negative age stereotypes. Older workers are considered more expensive and less productive (Lazazzara, Karpinska, Henkens, & Netherlands, 2011); consequently, their relocation becomes more difficult (Posthuma, & Campion, 2009).

Another important aspect is that although ageing occurs differently from individual to individual, it is usually addressed in a uniform manner and without recognition of cultural and temporal changes (Loth, & Silveira, 2013). As a result, older workers become more vulnerable during selection and dismissal processes (Roscigno, 2010).

In Brazil, the low level of education of the older population is an obstacle to their integration into the labor market (Gomes, & Pamplona, 2015). However, discrimination and prejudice prevail despite the presence of skilled workers in the labor market (Cepellos, & Tonelli, 2017; Dennis, & Thomas, 2007; Wilks, & de Oliveira, 2015). The presence of older professionals in the work environment is not yet considered in contemporary management practices. Most organizations still use strategies of management, recruitment, engagement, training, and retention designed for the young workforce (Dychtwald, & Baxter, 2007). This is the main motivation for conducting this study. Age discrimination leads to bias in the assessment of the work of older workers and discriminatory management practices. These two aspects will be presented in the following sections.

Positioning of older professionals in the workplace

Given the current demographic scenario, longevity is now a relevant factor for a country's workforce (Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch, 2011). The scarcity of qualified employees and increase in the legal retirement age has pressured companies to retain older and more experienced employees (Dychtwald, Erickson, & Morison, 2004). Since the 2000s, there has been a growth in the number of mature workers (Dychtwald, & Baxter, 2007).

After the age of 50, it becomes increasingly difficult for people to move from inactivity/ unemployment to paid work (Smeaton, & McKay, 2003). In the UK, for example, despite the political emphasis on the importance of older workers in the labor market, the issue of employers' attitudes, policies, and practices influencing the recruitment and retention of older workers is hardly discussed (Loretto, & White, 2006).

Although older professionals are more committed and loyal at work than younger professionals (Dennis, & Thomas, 2007; Wilks, & de Oliveira, 2015), they still suffer a lot of prejudice (Fineman, 2011). Age diversity policies seem to be related to a climate of age discrimination in companies. The latter negatively affects the overall performance of the company and reflects on the mediation of affective commitment and age performance (Kunze et al., 2011).
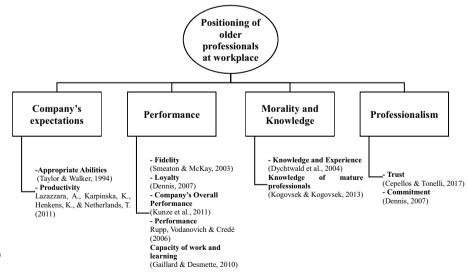
From these studies, we prepared Figure 1 that summarizes the concepts related to the positioning of professionals aged 50 and over.

Age management practices

Prejudice against older workers crosses several dimensions in the organizational environment. Discrimination can occur in recruitment and selection, promotion, training, and benefits—the so-called soft discrimination; or it can take the form of hard discrimination, characterized by bullying and exclusion from social activities (Davey, 2018). Errors of older professionals are treated with more severity than the errors of younger professionals, who are more stimulated to seek resources for problem solving (Rupp, Vodanovich, & Credé, 2006). Moreover, managers with age biases tend to endorse the recommendation to dismiss older professionals. Such biases can be minimized by raising the awareness of the consequences of stereotyping and the importance of older workers (Davey, 2018).

In the case of Brazil, it is necessary to develop public policies for the retention and reintegration of older professionals, including training, part-time work, and tax incentives for companies that integrate these professionals (Gomes, & Pamplona, 2015). Moreover, these professionals, due to their age, can connect with older consumers who are currently an expanding group in either number or purchasing power. Recruitment can be age-neutral with interviews focusing on skills and HR managers and leaders, especially, need to be free of negative age stereotypes (Boehm, Schröder, & Kunze, 2013). Specific practices could also benefit the company. Table I shows the examples of inclusive HR policies for older professionals and benefits for employers:

It is not that there is a lack of models for better HR practices, since several studies have presented them. Although the recruitment processes are traditionally directed toward younger professionals (Lievens, Van Hoye, & Zacher, 2012), there is an effort to

Figure 1.
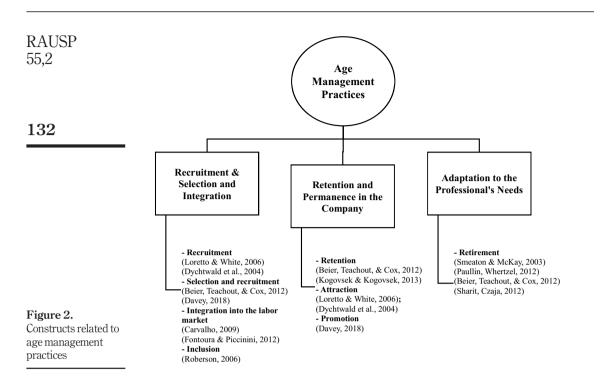Constructs related to the positioning of professionals aged 50 and over

HR practices	Advantages for companies	Examples of good practices for integrating mature professionals
Recruitment	Greater chances of recruiting employees with unique skills and problem-solving expertise Links with potential older consumers Positive image of the company in terms of diversity	Description of work without age bias The individuals responsible for the process are not contaminated by negative stereotypes Recruitment tools for older professionals Re-recruitment of retired professionals
Training	More qualified professionals Training as a form of motivation	Job rotation Adaptation of instructional models Age-specific training
Career management	Improves performance and adjusts to work needs Prevention of health problems Employee motivation	Workshops for career development Alternative career models Mentoring
Flexible working	More motivated employees Higher performance Better use of resources Reduction in health-related absences	Part-time work Sabbatical periods Work at home Flexible work
Support for Health and Well-Being	Prevents early retirement Prevents differences in the performance of younger and older employees Maintains productivity Reduces absenteeism	Ensure safe working conditions Individual settings for the workload Culture oriented to healthy organizational environment Stimulate psychological health
Performance evaluation	Fair evaluation methods for all ages Positive internal and external image	Redefinition of "good performance" Performance pay
Transition to retirement	Gradual retirement plans Knowledge transfer Contact with retirees for special projects, according to their skills	Preparation for retirement Rehiring of retirees Mentoring

Source: Adapted from Boehm et al. (2013, pp. 226-227)

Table I.
Practices for age management and integration of older professionals

adapt these processes to older professionals or even to promote measures for retaining older professionals, such as training, wellness policies, flexible work schedules, redesign of work, and the promotion of an organizational culture with a positive view of these professionals (Beier, Teachout, & Cox, 2012; Paullin, & Whetzel, 2012; Sharit, & Czaja, 2012). What is pertinent is that these practices are not present in Brazilian companies. Although HR managers do have positive perceptions of older professionals, most Brazilian companies do not have practices to break the age barriers (Cepellos, & Tonelli, 2017). Hence, this study aims at deepening the knowledge on the conduct of age management practices in Brazilian companies. Figure 2 summarizes the concepts used in this study.

The questionnaire used in this study was based on the constructs presented in Figures 1 and 2. The questionnaire was sent to HR professionals of companies included in the HR association database through SurveyMonkey, an online questionnaire tool.

Methodological procedures
A quantitative and descriptive study was conducted in order to answer the following research questions:

Figure 2.
Constructs related to
age management
practices

RQ1. What factors influence the perceptions of HR professionals regarding the positioning of managers aged 50 and over in the workplace and what factors guide the practices of age management in the companies of the respondents?

From a database of more than 1,000 companies, 140 HR professionals responded to the questionnaire.

Although the socio-demographic context of this study indicates a predominance of older women in the Brazilian population, we did not make any gender distinction when selecting the participants. This study focuses on the perceptions of the positioning of mature professionals, regardless of gender, and the adoption of age management practices in general. In this sense, when we refer to mature managers, we talk of both female and male professionals.

Validation of the collection instrument

Validation of scales is a set of qualitative and quantitative procedures that help define what will be measured by researchers. Generally, these procedures are applicable to variables that are important to measure, but are not directly observed (Zambaldi, 2018). Three steps were taken for better developing the measures:

- Specifying the constructs – the constructs were defined from the theoretical review and searches in scientific databases using keywords, such as "Spell".
- Generating the statements that make up the construct – after the literature review, one of the researchers met experts on the subject who helped to group the statements into sets of indicators that measure the same phenomenon and suggested reformulations when necessary.

- Purification – pre-tests on the subject were performed with respondents, practitioners, and specialists and after that the questionnaire was reformulated.
- Quantitative tools – after administering the questionnaire, Pearson's correlation test, factor analysis, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Churchill, 1979; Zambaldi, Costa, & Ponchio, 2014) were performed.

The collection instrument was validated in four stages that were adapted from Churchill (1979) and Zambaldi, Costa, and Ponchio (2014). The first step was inspired by a collection instrument used in a master's dissertation on ageing in organizations (Cepellos, 2013). This instrument was revised and reformulated as described below.

A construct can be considered a theoretical concept used to define relationships (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2009). Two constructs from the theoretical review were measured:

(1) the positioning of older professionals in the workplace; and

(2) the practices of age management.

The positioning of older professionals in the workplace refers to the perception of the attitudes or skills of the older professional that are considered appropriate for the formal labor market. Age management practices are policies for the development and implementation of specific and relevant HR practices for older workers.

After the literature review, one of the researchers met experts on the subject. In the context of aging of the workforce, the statements that composed the questionnaire were presented. From the information gathered in this second phase, the statements measuring the same phenomenon were grouped into a set of indicators, after excluding or reformulating controversial statements. The statements about benefits and barriers of hiring older professionals, for example, which were included in the age management practices construct, were taken from the questionnaire, as well as the statements related to health conditions and health-related costs. In the experts' perception, although these discussions were important for the issue of aging in organizations, they did not measure the age management practices. Other statements related to morality and professionalism were reformulated according to the specialists' perceptions. According to them, some statements were not adequate in the context of the Brazilian labor market, requiring a credible adjustment to the positioning of older professionals.

The third step was purification with pre-tests. It was conducted with five specialists to validate the collection instrument – two specialists worked in the HR area and three researched the theme of aging. The collection instrument was re-edited and re-administered until the researchers believed that, from a theoretical point of view, the questionnaire was highly representative of the phenomenon to be measured.

In the fourth step, we used quantitative tools such as Pearson's correlation where we observed correlations of 0.55 to 0.72 among the variables measuring the same construct. This means that they tend to measure the same phenomenon. Standardized Cronbach's alpha based on correlations 0.84 and 0.83 [std.alph] was conducted to test the consistency of the set of internal items of constructs 1 and 2 respectively. Moreover, factor analysis was used to identify the existence of a latent construct that could explain the variation of the items (Zambaldi et al., 2014).

After the necessary adjustments, the data were collected in February–March 2018. We used a questionnaire organized in three parts, comprising 44 statements. All the data were treated with complete confidentiality. To answer the statements on age management

perceptions and practices, we used a 6-point Likert scale (1 for "I completely disagree" and 6 for "I totally agree"), with positive statements regarding professionals aged 50 and over.

The number of categories on a scale varies depending on the purpose the researchers intend to use it for (Hill, 2015). Usually, authors who agree with Likert's view use scales of five or seven points (Wyatt, & Meyers, 1987). However, we chose a scale of 6 points, considering four main reasons. The first refers to the form of application of the questionnaire – online modality – that depends on the use of devices, such as computers, smartphones or tablets; the second refers to the familiarity of the respondents with the technologies through which the questionnaire was applied; the third refers to the response time intended for the questionnaire, and the fourth was that a previous version of this questionnaire, used in a dissertation on aging in organizations, used this format (Cepellos, 2013).

Thus, the "ability of the respondents to discriminate between the categories" (Komorita, & Graham, 1965, p. 987) in addition to the use of technologies and the time taken to finish the questionnaire were considered in the construction of the instrument. Our sample consisted of 140 professionals, of whom more than 60 per cent were aged 46 or older, holding high management positions. We assumed that these subjects would have little time to dedicate to the questionnaire and little contact with technological research tools, so we calculated an average response time of equal to or less than thirteen minutes and decided to use a scale of six points. The questions related to the perceptions of HR professionals about managers aged 50 and over and age management practices were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (Hair et al., 2009).

Descriptive analysis of respondents and companies

Most of the companies researched are national (72 per cent), with private capital (78 per cent) and with national capital origin (64 per cent). Several sectors were considered in the research, with a predominance of the services (36 per cent) and health (11 per cent) segments and other segments accounting for 33 per cent of the sample (agribusiness, automotive, pulp, paper and packaging, consumer and retail products, energy and public utility services, engineering and construction, technology and information, communication, telecommunications and entertainment, financial, steel and metallurgy, mining, oil and gas, chemical and petrochemical). About 20 per cent of the companies stated that they operate in various, unidentified sectors. Most of the companies have an annual gross revenue of more than 99m *reais* (49 per cent). Of the respondents, most were aged 46 or older (63 per cent) and hold management positions, including managers, directors, and vice-presidents (68 per cent).

Exploratory factor analysis

The statistical analyses were performed using R software. The following is a step-by-step description of this research. Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to measure interdependence (Aranha, & Zambaldi, 2008; Hair et al., 2009). It defines a group of factors that are highly interrelated and are, therefore, representatives of existing dimensions in the data. Thus, the use of EFA allows condensing or summarizing information on the positioning of professionals aged 50 and over in the workplace and the age management practices in organizations according to the perception of HR managers. This enabled us to know the dimensions that can interfere with the HR managers' perception.

Using R software (Team, 2013), we first performed a descriptive data analysis that revealed the minimum, first quartile, median, mean, third quartile, and the maximum for each variable observed. Since the scale is of 6 points, the mean was close to 3 in most of the

observed variables, we understand that the respondents tend to agree with the scale presented.

The second step was to observe the standard deviation for each of the observed variables. This enabled us to observe the distribution of the score assigned by the respondent in relation to the mean. All observed variables have a score higher than 1, which indicates that the respondents used the entire scale. The third step was to request a matrix of correlations of the data set and then perform Bartlett's sphericity tests and Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) to evaluate the adequacy of the sample to the performance of an EFA.

These tests indicate the adequacy of the sample to the performance of EFA. The Bartlett's test reveals a *p*-value equal to 0 and the KMO Test reveals an overall MSA equal to 0.93. These results indicate that EFA is the appropriate statistical technique for the observed sample (Cerny, & Kaiser, 1977; Hair et al., 2009).

After observing the adequacy of the sample, we proceeded with the principal components analysis (PCA) for the models 1 and 2. PCA allows the "reorganization of a set of variables into a new set, more easily interpreted, and with the same amount of information as the original" (Aranha, & Zambaldi, 2008, p. 69). PCA reveals that four factors best explain the perception of HR managers about the positioning of professionals aged 50 and over in the workplace. After PCA, four components were selected to explain the phenomenon. Then, we adjusted the model with four factors and varimax rotation. The varimax rotation model adjustment is an orthogonal rotation method that minimizes the number of variables with high loads on a factor, providing a better interpretation of the factors.

Four factors were selected for the "positioning of older professionals in the workplace" construct according to the screen plot graph and PCA.

The first factor is *company's expectations*, and it shows the capacity of the manager aged 50 and over to maintain a good relationship with the company, meeting their expectations, either in terms of agility, flexibility, productivity, willingness to receive training, among others. From the analysis, we can state that older professionals have a greater capacity to solve problems and keeping up with the pace of activities in the workplace because these constructs have a higher arithmetic mean. However, even though they are less creative than younger professionals and do not adapt well to new technologies, professionals aged 50 and over are moderately willing to receive training, face challenges, besides being agile, flexible, and productive. According to the EFA data, this factor most explains the perceptions of HR managers about the positioning of professionals aged 50 and over in the workplace. This factor explains 30 per cent (proportion explained) of managers' perceptions. Table II shows the perceptions that contemplate the first factor and their respective averages (the closer to 6, the better is the perception of the managers).

The second factor is *performance*, and it shows that the professional aged 50 and over have a higher performance regarding commitment, loyalty, cooperation, risk management, policies, emotional balance, and learning. These constructs have a high arithmetic mean, which indicates a higher performance of older professionals when compared to younger professionals. According to the EFA data, this factor explains 28 per cent of managers' perceptions. Table III shows the perceptions that contemplate the second factor and their respective averages (the closer to 6, the better is the perception of the managers).

The third factor is *morality and knowledge*, and it shows the perception of managers that professionals aged 50 and over are more ethical, relate more easily with other people, and have more useful knowledge for the daily conduct of the company. Moreover, these professionals are more concerned about sustainability, diversity, and proactivity.

Variables	HR managers' perceptions of the work positioning of professionals aged 50 and over in the workplace	Average
X6	They are more agile	3.443
X9	They are more flexible	3.464
X11	They are more productive	3.843
X19	They are more willing to receive the training provided by the company than younger employees	3.443
X20	They adapt well to new technologies in the company	2.986
X21	They perceive more benefits from participating in learning activities than younger employees	3.721
X22	They prefer more challenging work activities than younger employees	3.179
X23	They are less creative than younger employees	3.036
X24	They have greater problem-solving capacity than younger employees	4.186
X25	They keep up with the pace of work activities as well as younger employees	4.257

Table II.
Company's
expectations factor

Variables	HR managers' perceptions of the work positioning of professionals aged 50 and over in the workplace	Average
X7	They are more committed at work	4.829
X8	They are more loyal to the company	5.057
X10	They are more cooperative	4.257
X14	They are more concerned with risk management	4.443
X15	They comply more rigorously with the company's rules and policies	4.671
X26	They have greater emotional balance than younger employees	4.836
X27	They can learn new skills as easily as other employees	4.286

Table III.
Performance factor

According to the EFA data, this factor explains 25 per cent of the managers' perceptions. Table IV shows the perceptions that contemplate the third factor and their respective means.

The fourth factor is *professionalism*, and it shows the managers' perception that the professionals aged 50 and over have a more professional attitude than the younger ones, tending to be more punctual, reliable, providing higher quality work, and missing work less. According to the EFA data, this factor explains 17 per cent of the managers' perceptions. Table V shows the perceptions that contemplate the fourth factor and their respective means.

The same process was carried out to identify the factors that guide the second construct, age management practices in organizations. In the descriptive analysis of the data, we

Variables	HR managers' perceptions of the work positioning of professionals aged 50 and over in the workplace	Average
X4	They are more proactive	3.7
X12	They have more useful knowledge for the daily conduct of the company	4.579
X13	They relate more easily with other people	4.036
X16	They are more ethical	4.15
X17	They have greater respect for diversity	3.321
X18	They are more concerned with sustainability	3.6

Table IV.
Morality and
knowledge factor

observe a mean value close to 2, which indicates, on a scale of 0 to 6 points, our respondents tend to disagree with the scale presented. The standard deviation values were distributed throughout the scale.

Bartlett's sphericity tests and the KMO indicate a good adequacy of the sample to the performance of EFA. Since the *p*-value is less than 0 and the KMO, the overall MSA is equal to 0.82. The analysis of the main components reveals that three factors guide age management in organizations according to the perception of HR managers. Thus, we adjusted the model with three factors and varimax rotation.

The first factor is *recruitment and selection and integration*. It shows that companies do not adopt recruitment and selection practices for professionals aged 50 and over. Companies do not establish specific campaigns to select these professionals, there is no proactive posture in hiring these professionals or there are no specific activities to integrate professionals of different generations. According to the EFA data, this factor most explains the age management practices because it explains 39 per cent (proportion explained) of the practices. Table VI shows the practices that contemplate the first factor and their respective averages (the closer to 6, the greater the adoption of practices).

The second factor is *retention and permanence in the company*. It shows that companies do not develop differentiated career models for older people nor do they promote specific activities for the knowledge management of professionals aged 50 and over. Moreover, companies do not have programs to prepare for retirement nor do they offer differentiated career plans to older people. According to the EFA data, this factor explains 38 per cent of the practices. Table VII shows the practices that contemplate the second factor and their respective averages.

The third factor *adaptation to the professional's needs* shows that after retirement, professionals aged 50 and over can provide services in a flexible manner. However, there are no ergonomic design measures adapted to the characteristics of the workforce. According to

Variables	HR managers' perceptions of the work positioning of professionals aged 50 and over in the workplace	Average
X1	They are more punctual	4.793
X2	They are more reliable	4.25
X3	Their work is of higher quality	4.157
X5	They miss work less frequently	4.693

Table V. Professionalism factor

Variables	Age management practices	Average
X1	The company develops specific campaigns for the selection of older candidates	2
X2	The company has a proactive posture toward hiring professionals who have retired or are close to retirement age	2.393
X3	The company prefers to choose an older professional for a position under equal conditions	2.543
X4	The company has specific activities for the integration of professionals from different generations	2.2

Table VI. Recruitment and selection and integration factor

the EFA data, this factor explains 24 per cent of the practices. Table VIII shows the practices that contemplate the third factor and their respective averages.

From the data analysis, we can state that the perceptions of HR managers of the positioning of professionals aged 50 and over in the workplace are, in general, positive. They are especially related to meeting the company's expectations and performance, morality and knowledge, and professionalism. Despite the positive perceptions about these professionals, companies do not adopt age management practices, especially in recruitment and selection and integration. This is also true for retention and permanence in the company and adaptation to professional needs.

Conclusions

This study analyzes the adoption of age management practices by organizations. The relevance of this issue lies in the current changes in the Brazilian demographics. Increasing longevity reinforces the need to think about older workers in the composition of the workforce of the future.

The results show that even though professionals aged 50 and over are considered as having a higher performance and degree of professionalism, the adoption of age management practices by companies is still incipient, with greater attention given to factors related to retention and permanence in the company. This suggests that organizations are not yet prepared to deal with the new reality of an ageing workforce. They devote little attention to age management practices, both in the selection and retention of workforce.

This negligence of the managerial team also suggests that discrimination and stereotypes still limit the performance of these professionals in the Brazilian organizations and make it difficult for them to enter the labor market. Moreover, most organizations persist in management practices designed for a young labor force.

While the perception of managers is apparently positive in this study, institutional ageism is still present, since the practices of age management are minimally applied. The

Variables	Age management practices	Average
X5	The company develops differentiated career models for older people or those close to retirement age (for example, providing them with a managerial position working on projects and consulting activities)	1.943
X6	The company promotes activities for older people aimed specifically at knowledge management (e.g. mentoring, tutoring, etc.)	2.164
X7	The company has a retirement preparation program for older professionals	1.829
X8	The company offers differentiated career plans for older professionals	1.671

Table VII. Retention and permanence in the company factor

Variables	Age management practices	Average
X9	The company adopts ergonomic design measures adapted to the characteristics of the workforce	2.35
X10	After retirement, older professionals can provide service to the company in a flexible way	3.164

Table VIII. Adaptation to the needs of the professional factor

absence of differentiated policies for older professionals is paradoxical, since these professionals are considered more committed, reliable, productive, and punctual than the young employees. Furthermore, practically speaking, despite the fast ageing of the Brazilian population, the companies are not prepared for the necessary retention and valuation of older professionals.

One of the limitations of this study is the impossibility of generalizing the results, even though they are indicative of how the older workforce is treated in Brazilian companies. Further research could be conducted in different regions of Brazil and with a focus on gender differences. Moreover, further studies on age management practices and stereotypes related to the performance of older professionals can contribute scientifically and practically. The aim is to provide good solutions to the ageing of the labor force in the near future, with benefits for companies and workers.

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