The pro-active shift in age management
Evidence from Dutch companies 2009-2017

INTRODUCTION

As labour markets get older and the supply of the labour force diminishes, companies must adjust their policies to the new reality.

In this study, we are ‘mapping’ the entire national economy in terms of age management.

We analyse changes in the approach to older workers in Dutch companies using representative employer surveys conducted in 2009 and 2017.

MAIN FINDINGS

Four clusters of firms that focus on:

- Accommodation and improving work-ability [Active]
- Stimulate early exit [Exit]
- Use both approaches [All]
- Or have no age management at all [None]

Table 1. Cluster profiles (Latent Class Analysis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster indicators</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Exit</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ergonomic measures</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for older</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible hours</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time retirement</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gradual retirement</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early retirement</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 2, 3 & 4. Change in predicted probability of class membership (2017-2009, in percentage points, at the pooled-mean values of predictors)

CONCLUSIONS

- In this study, we found four approaches to age management in Dutch companies (Active, Exit, All, None) [Table 1]
- Between 2009 and 2017 the popularity of active policy largely increased, while exit-oriented policies and passive strategies reduced [Figure 1]
- The largest pro-active shift occurred in small organisations, firms with a high share of older employees, and knowledge-intensive companies [Figures 2, 3 & 4]
- The 2009-2017 change can be seen as an effect of (1) policy reforms in the Netherlands; (2) employees working longer; (3) employers’ increased awareness of the effects of age management.

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