



# Impact of Age Norms and Stereotypes on Managers' Hiring Decisions of Early Retirees

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# Background

- Importance of retaining and hiring older workers
- Research on the supply side –factors behind older workers' motivation to extend their working career
  - Kim and Feldman, 2000; Wang *et al.*, 2008
- Employment choices of older workers are determined by managers
  - Limited focus on this group



# Background

- Managers not keen on hiring (even highly employable) early retirees (Karpinska, Henkens and Schippers, 2011)
- Impact of attitudes on employment choices
  - Norms (Elster, 1989; Coleman, 1990)
  - Stereotypes (Chiu *et al.*, 2001)
- Limited evidence for the relation between attitudes and behavior



# Research Question

How do ageist stereotypes and age norms, next to attributes of the applicants, affect managers' propensity to hire early retirees?



# Framework

- Recruitment : demand meets supply
- Interrelation of three factors
  - Organizational forces
    - Shortages of the labor force
  - Attributes of managers
    - Age norms regarding employment transitions
    - Stereotypes regarding older workers productivity
  - Attributes of applicants
    - Human capital
    - Health
    - Flexibility
    - Social capital



# Methods

- A combination of a survey and vignette research
- Study 1:
  - Stereotypes
  - Age norms
  - Background information



# Methods (cont.)

- Study 2: Factorial design (vignette research)
  - Method allowing exploration of decision's context
  - A card with a short description of a situation or a person
  - Combination of randomly manipulated characteristics
  - Estimation of weight assigned to each characteristics
  - Possible drawback: hypothetical situation
- Conducted a month after Study 1: limiting carryover effect
- Well suited for estimating the effect of age norm and stereotypes on behavior
  - Measures of attitudes before (hypothetical) behavior



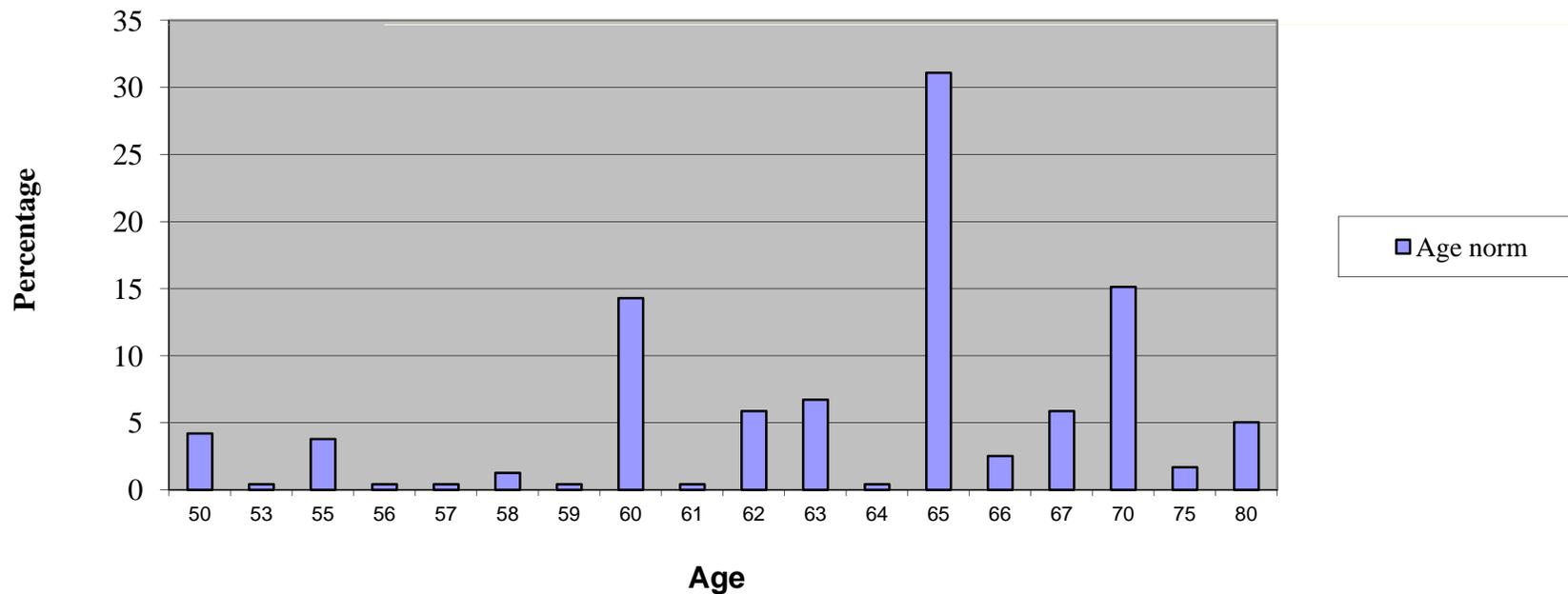
# Measurement Study 1 – Age norm

- Age norm
  - *At what age a person is too old to work 20 hours or more in your organization?*
  - Answers were coded 50-80 years
  - Mean age 64.3 (SD=6.04)



# Measurement Study 1 - Age norm

Distribution of age norm of managers in the LISS sample



# Measurement Study 1 - Stereotypes

- *To what extent does the following characteristic apply to workers aged 60 or older?*
- Factor analysis
  - Soft qualities
    - *social skills, commitment to organisation, management skills, reliability (organisational citizenship)*
    - Range 1-4; Cronbach's alpha=0.859
  - Hard qualities
    - *creativity, flexibility, willingness to learn, physical capacity, resistance to stress, new technology skills*
    - Range 1-4; Cronbach's alpha=0.839



# Measurement Study 2 - Vignettes

Item	Categories
	<b>Organisation</b>
Organizational condition	Structural labour force shortages Incidental labour force shortages No labour force shortages Need for downsizing
	<b>Applicants</b>
Age	58 years old 62 years old 65 years old
Gender	Male Female
Experience in similar position	Yes No
Availability	Full time only Part-time Fixed hours Flexible appointment
Last worked	A month ago Half a year ago One and a half year ago
Appearance	Energetic Not very energetic
Recommended by	A business partner A colleague No specific recommendation

The vignette universe of 3456 unique vignettes



# An example of a vignette

Below are various descriptions of early retirees who would like to work for your organisation. Please indicate, for each profile, what is the likelihood of you willing to hire this person for a position that you most often supervise

<b>Context</b>	
Organizational condition	Structural labour force shortages
<b>Applicant</b>	
Age	65 years old
Gender	Male
Experience in similar position	Yes
Availability	Fixed hours
Last worked	One and a half year ago
Appearance	Appears energetic
Recommendation by	A business partner

***What is the likelihood that you would be willing to hire this person for a position that you most often supervise?***

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Low likelihood			Neutral				High likelihood			

# Participants

- LISS panel survey
- Total sample 238 respondents
- Response rate
  - Study 1: 73.6%
  - Study 2: 82.3%
- Sample:
  - 182 males and 56 females
  - M age 45.3 (SD 9.45)
  - Active in
    - Public sector: 34.8%
    - Services : 38.8%
    - Industry : 26.4%
  - Different managerial positions



# Analysis

- Each respondent judged 5 vignettes
- Vignette sample size = 1190
- Observations are not independent
- Multilevel models
  - Level 1 – individual characteristics of early retirees
  - Level 2 – characteristics of managers



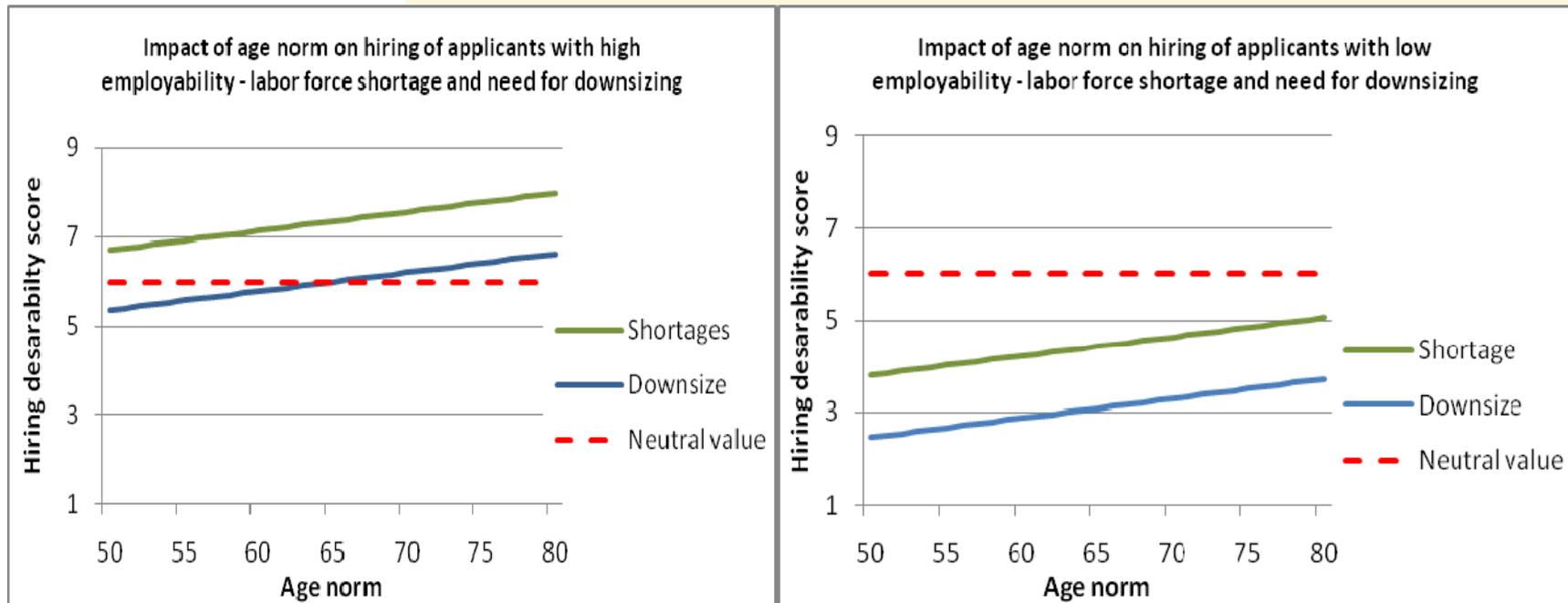
# Results

	Coef.	Z
<b><i>Managers' characteristics</i></b>		
Stereotypes		
Hard qualities	0.35	1.66
Soft qualities	-0.13	-0.75
Age norm	0.04*	2.42
<b><i>Organisational characteristics</i></b>		
Structural shortage (ref. Need for downsizing)	1.33***	9.48
Incidental shortage	1.20***	8.90
No shortage	0.38**	2.72
<b><i>Applicants' characteristics</i></b>		
Age of applicant (ref. 58 years old)		
65 years old	-0.32***	-2.71
62	-0.12	-1.05
Male (ref. female)	0.10	1.08
Experience in similar position (ref. no)	0.89***	9.06
Availability (ref. Flexible appointment)		
Full-time only	-0.09	-0.66
Part-time	-0.34*	-2.45
Fixed hours	-0.50***	-3.53
Last worked (ref. 1.5 years ago)		
One month ago	0.53***	4.47
Six months ago	0.24*	2.04
Appears energetic (ref. No)	1.16***	11.88
Recommendation (ref. No recommendation)		
A business partner	0.26*	2.28
A colleague	-0.04	-0.34
Constant	0.207	0.16

Controlled for:  
 Respondent's age  
 Respondent's gender  
 Position of employee  
 Sector of organization



# Illustration of the effect of norms



- High employability :
  - relevant experience
  - retired for a month
  - 58 years old
  - appeared energetic

- Low employability:
  - no relevant experience
  - retired for at least 1.5 years
  - 65 years old
  - did not appear energetic



# Discussion and conclusions

- Effect of age norms on behavior
  - Positive effect but overall hiring score low
  - Age deadline for working in organization is low
- No effect of stereotypes
  - Different situations (training, retention)?
  - Broader category of older workers?
- No link between the stereotypes and age norms
  - More insight into the factors that affect norms
- Importance of individual circumstances
- Implications
  - Need for awareness campaigns and training for managers
  - Implication for current employees



**Thank you for your attention**

