

Preference for Young Workers in Mid-career Recruiting in Japan: Analysis of Online Job Adverts for Sales Jobs

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Abstract

This study proposes a theoretical model of company search for an employee of preferred age or experience and examines an original dataset of job adverts for sales jobs for explicit and implied age preference on applicants. Job ads were collected over 2 years, from July 2018 to June 2020, from a Japanese online job ad site aimed at mid-career jobseekers. Japanese law prohibits age discrimination in recruitment, it however allows for several exemptions when explicit age limits on applicants can be set. One of the exemptions is hiring of young workers with the prospect of long-term employment without requiring a job-related experience. Companies face a choice of setting an age limit, requiring job experience or neither, while they are free to imply their preference in other ways in the body of the job ad. Results of the empirical analysis are generally in line with the proposed theoretical model – companies with access to a bigger pool of jobseekers, companies who see fewer quits and those that can afford more costly search strategies tend to target their search. Implied age preference is often used as a substitute for an explicit age limit. Local labor market conditions the company faces are also analyzed as a possible avenue allowing companies to set limits on prospective applicants.