

# Domain: Human resource management and interventions

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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

HRM and interventions can be defined as the role of organisations and the employer (human resource management incl. recruitment and selection, enterprise policies, organisational health promotion, interventions, and attitudes towards older workers in the organisation, e.g. discrimination) with respect to work participation. While a large part of research has focused on retirement decisions dominated by economic and financial analysis (White 2012), this chapter focuses on what can be done at the workplace level to prevent early retirement. HRM and interventions covers initiatives and measures introduced by the employer (or HR-personnel) to strengthen the choice of work over early retirement ("stay" factors) or to counteract "push" factors.

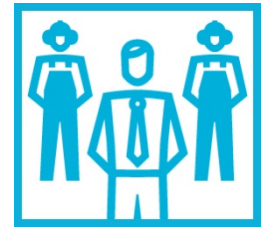
HRM and interventions are important to influence retirement behaviour, and a study from the UK (Weyman et al. 2012: 2) found that "People are more disposed to reacting to options they are presented with, e.g. by employers or by Government, in terms of pensions choices over their date/manner of retirement, i.e. most are passive rather than active decision-makers." Although they also found differences between different groups of employees, this makes a strong argument for the value of HRM and interventions to influence the choice of early retirement or not.

The role of the organisation and HR policies in encouraging or discouraging older worker employment has until recently been a relatively neglected part of research on older workers in most countries notwithstanding that the demand side is critical to governments' aspirations to extend people's working lives (Vickerstaff, Baldock et al. 2004, Vickerstaff and Cox 2005).

A European report from a few years ago sums up employment initiatives in the EU15 at the workplace level, i.e. initiated by employers/HR (Taylor 2006). Here a continuum of good practices in the employment of older workers is identified, ranging from limited and narrowly focused measures to more comprehensive management practices, and developed a typology of organizational orientations towards older workers (Walker 1997). The main conclusion was that, instead of the reactive stance adopted by many employers, an integrated age management strategy would be more effective. The primary ingredients of such a strategy are an emphasis on prevention; a focus on the entirety of working life, not solely on older workers; a holistic approach; and in the short term, special provision for older workers, particularly older women, who missed out on specific skills training or whose health has suffered as a result of their employment (Taylor 2006)

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<sup>1</sup> The authors of this report are Anne Inga Hilsen and Tove Midstundstad of Fafo Institute for Labour and Social Research in Norway. They were national representatives in the working group „Understanding employment participation of older workers“ appointed by the Joint Programming Initiative „More Years, Better Lives – The Potential and Challenges of Demographic Change“.



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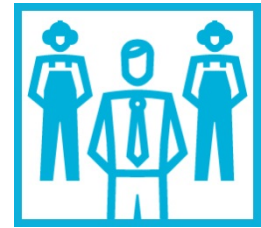
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This strategy, or approach to interventions, is based on the assumption that employers need older workers. Increased labour force participation and prolonging working lives is a goal with high priority on the political agenda in most of the world's industrialised nations (OECD 2006, Commission 2012). Economy and a felt need for the labour represented by older workers are decisive factors for employers to share this goal.

Prevention by definition starts early, and thus does not only encompass older workers. A holistic approach will also have to start early, while special provision for older workers may be necessary later in their career. Enterprises often use any combinations of measures and initiatives, more or less as part of a strategic plan (Steinum 2008). Demands from older workers, or from unions on behalf of older workers, may also influence the types of measures selected, e.g. focusing on reduced working hours and economic incentives to retain those eligible for early retirement (Midtsundstad and Bogen 2011, Midtsundstad and Bogen 2014).

One can categorise measures or programmes aimed at reducing early retirement and increasing employment of older workers in different ways (Illmarinen 1999; Henkens et al. 2009; Midtsundstad 2005; 2011). Midtsundstad (2005a, 2011) distinguishes between strategies for prevention, retention and integration. *Prevention* encompasses long-term efforts to ensure that employees do not end up in a vulnerable position in relation to the labour market. These initiatives are meant to prevent health problems or the loss of working capacity, competence and/or motivation, and are often aimed at all the company's employees and are not restricted to a particular group of employees, for example those over 50. *Retention* targets individuals who are already in a vulnerable position. They may have been threatened with exclusion, or have access to an early retirement scheme they wish to use. Retention initiatives will not have the same scope and long-term impact as prevention initiatives. Instead, they will be for defined target groups and particular situations. For example, initiatives for the retention of older workers in Norway are often focused on employees around the age of 62 years who can retire on the AFP scheme. *Integration* includes policy and policy initiatives targeting individuals outside the company, e.g. recruiting people who have typically had difficulty finding jobs and/or permanent employment. As part of an old-age policy, different personnel policy interventions may be used to recruit or re-employ older workers. Furthermore, Midtsundstad (2007) have distinguished between measures that are directed at the workplace in order to reduce work demands, e.g. reduction of workload, reduction of hours worked, change of work task, reorganisations, new technology and techniques etc., and measures that are directed at the individual employee in order to strength their health and working capacity, their competence or motivation, like different health promotion programs, like lifelong learning etc. In addition one have measures which aim is to make older workers shift priority from leisure time to work, or making it easier to combine work and family life.

In addition Salomon and Hilsen (2011) have suggested that the different measures mentioned gain relevance during different stages of the working career, and propose a *three phase working careers model*. Phase 1 starts from the first day on job and continues as long as a person is active in working life. From day one, job content and job demands, work environment and competence management will influence the future career of the employee. The employees are exposed to the universal HR policy and competence management of the enterprise. In the second phase as employees get older,



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the general HR policy of the enterprise is still crucial for motivation and work performance. Still, at a certain stage some employees experience a need for more specific support, to be able to perform their work at a satisfactory level. At the age of 50 + an increasing number of employees are facing some kind of health problems (Ilmarinen 1999). Interventions in phase 2 therefore focus on directed support to specific groups. The third phase starts when employees come close to the date of deciding whether to use existing early retirement schemes, or continue working. At this stage the aim of HR policies to prolong working careers is to make the job so attractive that it can compete with a pension. At this stage supporting measures will be in use, but the main focus will change from the support perspective to the use of extra economic and social incentives to keep people working.

Research on HRM and interventions concentrates on a range of issues, and cover (at least) the following two main issues:

A focus on attitudes towards older workers in the organisation. Attitudes of employers, colleagues and older workers themselves influence actions and have consequences for perceived work ability and retirement behaviour. Anti-discrimination in recruitment/selection and promotion is a consequence of negative attitudes towards older workers and negative stereotypes (ageism). It is also an issue by itself and covered by research.

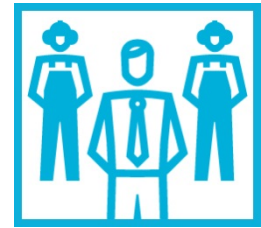
A focus on different measures and initiatives (mentioned above) that may prevent early retirement and promote longer working careers. The literature in this field underline the importance of a holistic approach that covers the whole range of different measures, and the entirety of working life, not solely older workers. The argument is that what happens at the end of the career often is informed by what has happened earlier. A holistic approach, on the other hand, means that one also considers the importance of motivation and workplace health promotion measures, like protection, adaptation of the workplace, work tasks or working hours, and other health promotion interventions.

## Methodology

There are extensive quantitative, as well as some qualitative, studies in this field, but just a few that relate HRM and work place interventions to actual retirement outcomes and older workers labour market participation. Mostly HRM and different types of interventions are related to wellbeing at work, health, work ability and attitudes to retirement and expected (self-reported) retirement behaviour, although register based studies find effects on retirement behaviour as well.

There are also many case studies and “best practice” studies in EU (e.g. Taylor 2006), but again, the results are rarely connected to retirement “outcomes”.

In contrast to the many alleged advantages brought about by phased retirement, measures promoting a smooth transition between full employment and full retirement are rare in most countries. Thus, research on the labour supply effects of these measures for retaining older workers is limited (Hutchens and Grace-Martin 2006, Taylor 2006, Graf, Hofäcker et al. 2011; Hermansen 2014a).



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A few studies do however analyse the correlation between HRM/interventions and actual retirement behaviour (Boockmann, Fries et al. 2012, Midtsundstad, Hermansen et al. 2012, Midtsundstad, Nielsen et al. 2012, Midtsundstad and Nielsen 2013, Hermansen 2014, Hermansen 2014, Midtsundstad and Nielsen 2014). There are also some newly published studies on different retaining measures that analyses the relationship between single measures such as working time flexibility, work time reductions, extra days off, bonuses etc. on expected retirement age (Charles and DeCicca 2007, Becken 2011, Graf, Hofer et al. 2011, Huber, Lechner et al. 2013, Hermansen 2014, Hermansen 2014).

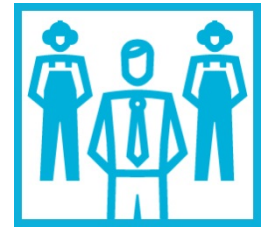
## The findings

The domain is well analysed in the Nordic countries, with particular focus on Norwegian studies. Studies on distribution of age management strategies and programs are covered from Norway, UK, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany as well as comparative EU-studies (Henkens 2005; Van Dalen et al. 2009, 2010 Midtsundstad 2005, 2007, 2011, 2014; Midtsundstad & Bogen 2011, Larsen 2006; Larsen et al. 2005; Jensen & Møgberg 2012; Jensen & Goul-Andersen 2013; Ellerbæk et al. 2012). However these studies do not directly connect distribution (who has access to what kind of measures) to effects on retirement pattern/behaviour (except for Norwegian studies). There are also many case studies and “best practice” studies in EU, but again, the results are rarely connected to retirement “outcomes”.

The existing research that cover the effect of HRM and interventions is mainly based on large register based/survey data sets, although there are also qualitative studies.

Main findings:

- Drivers motivating HRM and interventions can be short term need for labour, availability of labour, training costs, economic situation of the enterprises, company size and attitude of managers towards older workers.
- Managers’ attitudes towards older workers have an impact on work participation of older workers in two different ways: Unappreciated workers tend to leave earlier and managers who believe older workers to be less competent or willing than younger workers may give less opportunity, less challenges and thus indirectly discriminate older workers, which also supports a wish for early retirement.
- HRM and different types of interventions are related to wellbeing at work, health, work ability and attitudes to retirement and expected (self- reported) retirement behaviour.
- Most Norwegian studies find little or none effect of such measures, but a very few studies (Norwegian) are able to identify a link between extra days off and postponed early retirement and between preventive measures at the work place and reduced disability rates among employees 50-61 years.



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## A focus on attitudes towards older workers in the organisation

Attitudes of employers, colleagues and older workers themselves influence actions and have consequences for perceived work ability and retirement behaviour. Anti-discrimination in recruitment/selection and promotion is a consequence of negative attitudes towards older workers and negative stereotypes (ageism). It is also an issue by itself and covered by research.

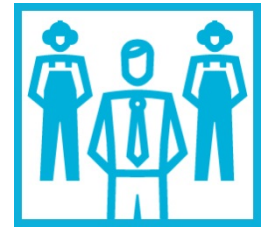
Managers' attitudes have an impact in two different ways: Unappreciated workers tend to leave earlier (UK) and managers who believe older workers to be less competent or willing than younger workers may give less opportunity, less challenges and thus indirectly discriminate older workers (Solem 2010). Anti-discrimination in recruitment/selection and promotion is a consequence of negative attitudes towards older workers and negative stereotypes (ageism). It is also an issue by itself and covered by research.

Solem (2009, 2010) find that managers show a less positive attitude towards «older» or «senior» applicants to jobs, than to «young» and «experienced» applicants, and they hesitate to call in for interview applicants in their late fifties. This is based on analyses of the Norwegian Senior Policy Barometer, which have collected data yearly from national representative samples, starting in 2003. One sample consists of 750 managers and the other includes 1000 employed persons. Managers in the public sector are more positive towards older workers than managers in the private sector. Age discrimination is one type of negative behaviour towards older workers. The prevalence is hard to establish. Age discrimination has been illegal in Norway since 2004, but many workers are of the opinion that it takes place. About 4–5 percent indicates that they have been exposed to age discrimination in working life themselves.

Other studies failed to find age barriers in recruitment, although few managers planned to actively recruit older workers. Also no overt negative attitudes towards seniors were expressed, and older managers seemed to be more positive towards older workers (Furunes & Mykletun 2005). On the other hand through analysing managers' use of metaphorical images, another study based on the same data revealed negative stereotyping of a senior hospitality workforce (Furunes & Mykletun 2007). In-depth analyses indicate that age discrimination exists towards seniors; managers seem to be biased. Some have positive experiences with a senior workforce, but when it comes to recruiting new employees, younger people are the first choice.

Managers' attitudes towards older workers may depend on many factors. A study of data from 1138 managers who were asked to rate their perceptions of 30 capabilities related to human development and working life (Furunes & Mykletun 2011), found that managers perceive ageing as contributing to increased managerial and interpersonal skills, creative problem solving capacities, and work moral. On the negative side, age contributes to impaired learning capacities and basic functions. The researchers suggest that it is likely that managers working with older workers will develop conceptualisations of this part of the workforce that are closer to the characteristics demonstrated by research on actual behaviour, hence prevailing stereotypes of these workers may not be so general and persistent as argued by existing research.

A study among managers of 2000 Danish workplaces showed that more than half of the managers believe that younger employees are more competent in ICT and more ready to changes, but in



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general the managers don't consider younger employees to be more productive, better at self-governance, more engaged or have less sickness absence than elderly employees. The majority of managers think that elderly employees have failed to preserve and develop their competences (Lederne 2012). Similar beliefs and attitudes pointing at age discrimination have been reported by many others (Thorsen et al. 2012; DR Nyheder 2014; Midtsundstad 2005, 2014; Henkens 2000, 2005; Henkens & van Dalen 2011).

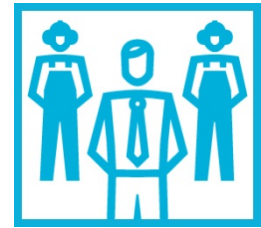
Furthermore, a study by Van Dalen et al (2010b) comparing stereotypes among employers and employees indicated that the patterns found among the answers given by employers and employees are remarkably similar. Both employers and employees share most of the prevailing stereotype views, though employers rate the productivity of older workers generally lower than employees.

Conen et al. (2009) has examined employers' perceptions of changes in the labour cost-productivity gap due to the ageing of the workforce, the effects of tenure wages and employment protection on the perceived gap, and whether a perceived labour cost-productivity gap affects employers' recruitment and retention behaviour towards older workers. The authors analyse surveys administered to employers in Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden and found that approximately half of employers associate the ageing of the personnel with a growing gap between labour costs and productivity. Both the presence of tenure wages and employment protection rules increased the probability of employers perceiving a widening labour cost-productivity gap due to the ageing of their workforce. A counterfactual shows that even when employment protection and tenure wage systems are abolished, 40 percent of employers expect a net cost increase. They also find that the expected labour cost-productivity gap negatively affects both recruitment and retention of older workers.

The attitude towards older workers from managers and in the organization, as well as older workers' motivation and work satisfaction are factors determining whether older workers want to extend their working life (Nilsson, 2011). Men who feel unappreciated and women who feel superfluous at work have been shown to prefer early retirement (Soidre, 2005). Midtsundstad (2005c) found in a study of retirement behaviour in the governmental sector that older employees that experienced age discrimination also had a significant higher probability of retiring early than those without such experiences. In an analysis of local governmental employees' retirement behaviour based on survey data, Midtsundstad & Nielsen (2013) also found that feeling appreciated and having good relations with middle managers increased the probability of postponed retirement.

## **A focus on different measures and initiatives that may prevent early retirement and promote longer working careers**

The literature in this field underline the importance of a holistic approach that covers the whole range of different measures, and the entirety of working life, not solely older workers (Hilsen & Salomon 2010; Salomon & Hilsen 2011). The argument is that what happens at the end of the career often is informed by what has happened earlier. A holistic approach, on the other hand, means that one also considers the importance of motivation and workplace health promotion



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measures, like protection, adaptation of the workplace, work tasks or working hours, and other health promotion interventions.

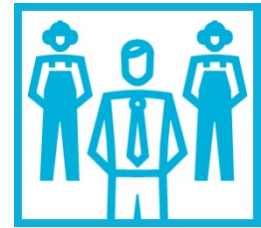
There exists extensive literature on HRM and interventions to prolong working life for older workers (Taylor 2006; Phillipson & Smith 2005). Surveys and case studies have extensively studied the types of interventions and the experiences of the older workers. Mostly HRM and different types of interventions are related to wellbeing at work, health, work ability and attitudes to retirement and expected (self-reported) retirement behaviour. The measurable “effect” is mostly defined as the older workers’ wish for late exit.

As Norway has a strong policy focus on retaining older workers and economic means to support such measures, there are several studies that focus on the possible effects of different retaining measures, such as work time reductions, extra days off, bonuses etc. on expected retirement age (Becken 2012; Bogen & Hilsen 2013; Econ Pöyry 2010, 2009; Hilsen 2012; Hilsen & Salomon 2010; Hilsen et al. 2009; Midtsundstad and Bogen (2011), Midtsundstad and Bogen (2014), Bogen and Midtsundstad (2007), Reichborn-Kjennerud et al. 2011). However, they mostly fail to find any decisive results of such interventions, although all such interventions seem to be highly appreciated by the older workers receiving them. Most of these studies are case studies; hence conclusions are based on the opinions of a limited number of older employees and retirees, managers and trade union representatives in a selected number of industries.

A few studies do however analyse how HRM/interventions actual affect retirement behaviour (Charles and DeCicca 2007, Becken 2011, Graf, Hofer et al. 2011, Midtsundstad al. 2012a, Midtsundstad et al. 2012b, Huber et al. 2013, Midtsundstad et al. 2013, Midtsundstad & Nielsen 2013; Hermansen 2014a, Hermansen 2014b). The Norwegian studies are based on combined survey data and register data (2001-2007/2010) using a difference-in-differences approach (Midtsundstad et al. 2012a, Midtsundstad et al. 2012b, Midtsundstad et al. 2013, Hermansen 2014a, Hermansen 2014b). However, most of these analyses do not find any effect on retirement behaviour, except Hermansen (2014a) who found that older workers that was offered extra days off had a reduced the probability of drawing an AFP-pension early (at age 62-63). Furthermore, Midtsundstad et al. (2013) found that work-related measures to prevent injury and exhaustion reduced disability rates among workers beyond 50 years.

With the exception of a few high profile exemplars British research has demonstrated that a large proportion of private employers in UK have thought little about the implications of an ageing population and cannot be said to have embraced the need for age management strategies (Metcalf & Meadows 2006; McNair & Flynn 2005). The key areas for HR policy which are beginning to be researched are: recruitment and selection; performance management, training and development, career management, health, safety and wellbeing, job design and ergonomics, working time and flexibility and retirement transitions (Naegele and Bauknecht, 2013: 32).

Restructuring and organisational change may also make older workers particularly vulnerable. A Norwegian case study (Hilsen & Salomon 2010) found that older workers with the option of early retirement saw this as “a time to choose”, making their decision based on their experiences in the workplace. In Sweden factors associated with early exit include negative experiences of



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organisational changes at work for men (Ahlberg et al. 2001). This has also been found for women (Nylén and Torgén, 2002). However, Midtsundstad (2002, 2005c) and Midtsundstad & Nielsen (2013) found no correlation between organisational change and the probability of early retirement in their analyses.

## Types of employment participation in the literature

The types of employment participation mainly covered by the existing research is work longer i.e. to a higher age or more hours at a certain age; not leaving early due to early age pension; and not leaving early due to disability pension, or through other possible exit routs (unemployment benefits, sickness absents schemes, rehabilitation programs etc.). The focus on the probability to stay in work and not leave early depends on the availability of an early retirement scheme (and other pathways), their net benefit levels (replacement rates), age limits, as well as principle for accrual and withdrawal. If not entitled to such benefits the alternative will be to stay with whatever health problems they may have, or leave early on disability pensions.

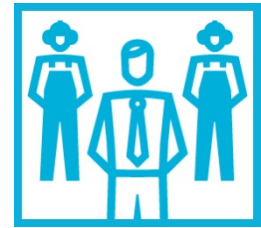
Some research seems to indicate that return to work after unemployment/involuntary early retirement are increasingly more difficult with age. It is however difficult to assess how widespread this is, within and across countries, as many older workers might not choose to register as unemployed. In Norway about one out of four retirees from private sector (in 2000/2001) and governmental sector (2002-2003) claimed that they would have continued working if possible (Midtsundstad 2002, Midtsundstad 2005a), indicating that their withdrawal from working life was involuntary. Some studies also finds that unemployment and disability insurance are close substitutes (Bratsberg, Fevang et al. 2010). Economies with low unemployment also often have high disability rates, like the northern European countries (OECD 2008; ECD 2009).

## The analysis of research

Although there are extensive quantitative, as well as qualitative, studies in this field, the availability of studies is not evenly distributed across Europe or across all types of enterprises in work life. Some countries as Belgium, Germany, Austria and Poland have very little research on effects of HRM and interventions on retirement behaviour. The reasons for this can both be lack of research and lack of such measures.

Bredgaard (2006) notes that in Belgium “there is less activity in personnel management towards older workers, and a stronger early retirement culture, which is underpinned by legislation”. Schalk and Desmette (2014) warn that HR practices aimed at older workers can have negative effects and that “perceiving affirmative action associated with age can elicit negative attitudes towards those who benefit”. Such attitudes can strongly influence the motivation of employers towards introducing such measures. Whether for the same reason or not, a Polish study among 500 employees 50+ showed that only 10% of the examined companies declared that they implemented a special practice for older workers (Bugajska & Hildt-Ciupińska 2012).





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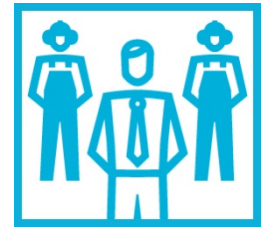
Across most of Europe there is little research on small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). Analyses from Norway, Denmark, the UK and the Netherlands based on survey data finds that interventions and initiatives to prevent early retirement are less likely to be available to employees in private sector SMEs (Metcalf & Meadows 2006; Van Dalen et al. 2009; Maltby 2009; Midtsundstad 2005; 2011; 2014; Jensen & Møgberg 2012). Although the *availability* of HRM and interventions are higher in large (and public) enterprises, this does not guarantee good local practice. Loretto & White (2006a, 2006b) found differences between espoused age-management strategies and actual day-to-day practice. While large companies tended to have the “paperwork” of HRM, practice did not necessarily follow (Ibid, p. 326). SMEs may be weak on formal policies and descriptions of strategies for older workers, actual practice may be better. More research is needed to explore this further. Also more research is needed to identify the effect of the different types of interventions.

## Consideration of the cross-national diversity

HRM and interventions are highly dependent on national context and to which degree employers feel the need for the labour represented by older workers. The economy seems also to be important for the extent of interventions aimed at retaining older workers. For these reasons such interventions seems to be most extensively used in the Nordic welfare states as well as in some bigger corporations across Europe (Taylor 2006).

The economic crises influenced the situation for older workers and during down-sizing HRM measures and interventions aimed at retaining older workers tend to be reduced or eliminated. In a Norwegian case study (Bogen & Hilsen 2013; Midtsundstad & Bogen 2014) introduced measures aimed at retaining older workers were retracted following economic problems. This seemed to be accepted by both employers and employees, and as necessitated by the economic situation.

As one of the countries with the most extensive interventions, the case of Norway may illustrate the situation, although Norway has managed comparably well under the financial crisis, and have seen only modest increases in unemployment. Two Norwegian reports (Solem 2010, 2012) analysed the possible effects of the financial crisis on managers’ attitudes to older workers. The results indicate that the recession affects both opinions (the cognitive element of attitudes), preferences (the affective element), and behaviour or behavioural dispositions (the behavioural element). Effects are observed both among leaders and employed persons, and both among older and younger workers. Three observations of leaders’ attitudes six months apart; early September 2008 (just before the financial crisis ‘exploded’ in mass-media), late February 2009 and early September 2009, show some strong short-term reactions. The behavioural disposition toward accepting that older workers are fired before younger workers in the case of downsizing gain considerably less opposition among leaders in the private sector in February 2009 than in September 2008 and is back to the previous level in September 2009. Firing older workers first is in most cases against the seniority principle, which has legal status in Norwegian working life.



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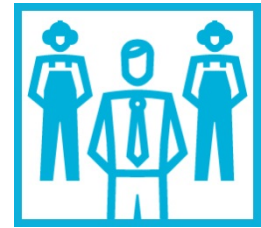
The same study also found that the older workers' enthusiasm for their work seemed unaffected by economic cycles. Their plans for retirement and interest in working also seem to be unaffected up to 2009 when the steady increase from 2003 in the interest for late retirement seemed to stop.

We see this stop among men aged 55–61 years, but not among women. At the same time, data from Statistics Norway and Norwegian Welfare and Labour Administration (NAV) show that the employment rate among men aged 55–64 years peaked in 2008 and was falling in 2009 (Haga 2014). Thus, we find no indication that older workers cling to their jobs due to the financial crisis, a pattern which have been found in the U.S. (Munnell et al. 2009, Helman et al. 2009). In the U.S., this is probably due to the fact that pension funds often are invested in the stock market, and accordingly funds are lost in bankruptcies and falling rates of exchange. In Norway, pension funds are among the safest investments and risks for the individual pensioner are very low (Solem 2010, 2012). On the other side, the share of Norwegian companies claiming to have an active ageing policy and measures to retain older workers have steadily increased from the introduction of the IW agreement in 2001 up until today (Midtsundstad 2007, Midtsundstad 2014).

Van Dalen and Henkens (2010) analyzed the choices faced by European employers when threatened with the prospect of the mass lay-off of their employees as a result of the Great Recession. By means of a representative survey among employers in Italy, Germany, Denmark, Poland, the Netherlands and Sweden in 2009, they showed that employers mainly prefer to tackle such threats by offering short-time work, and by early retirement packages to older workers, in conjunction with buy-outs. The latter preference was particularly visible in countries where employers perceive the level of employment protection to be high. The only notable exception they found was Denmark, where employers preferred to reduce working hours. In general, a sense of generational fairness seemed to influence downsizing preferences, with those employers who favor younger workers particularly likely to use early retirement and buy-outs when downsizing, followed by working time reductions. Wage reductions and administrative dismissal were less favored by European employers. In particular, CEOs and owners was more inclined than lower-level managers to cut wages.

## Research Conclusions

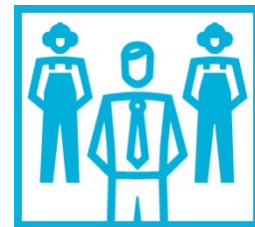
- More studies of the effect of programmes and interventions are needed, to study the relationship between type of HRM and interventions and retirement behaviour.
- There is a lack of knowledge on HRM and interventions in SMEs.
- Welfare state provisions differ from country to country. Also sector specific conditions influence the effect of HRM and interventions on work participation. Sectors with high degree of strenuous work or emotional work etc. all have their own challenges and any measures must be targeted at those challenges to have any effect. For studies to be comparable across borders and welfare state regimes, such specific conditions must be made clear.



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- Comparative “best/good practice” studies can serve as inspiration to others, but can rarely contribute to scientific knowledge on employment participation of older workers. Still such knowledge is necessary to understand the effects and correlations identified in large-scale quantitative studies.
- In contrast to the many alleged advantages brought about by phased retirement, measures promoting a smooth transition between full employment and full retirement are rare in most countries, and where it exists, research is lacking. One Norwegian study found that such measures have no effect on early retirement.
- large scale longitudinal studies, as well as survey/register based studies, are needed to connect employee’s attitudes towards early retirement and age management strategies to actual retirement behaviour. That is, we need to know more about the relationship between intentions and retirement behaviour. Studies show that HRM and interventions of different kind influence retirement intentions (when older workers say they want to retire), but less is known about the actual effect on their eventual retirement behaviour. Some research exists in Norway, both longitudinal studies and survey/register based studies, but little elsewhere. More research is needed.



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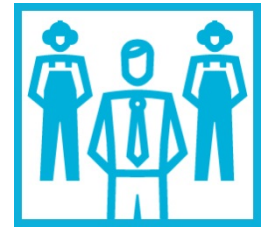
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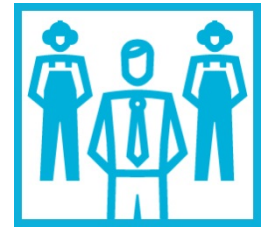
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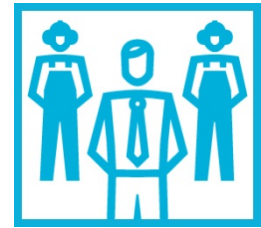
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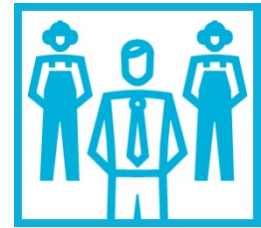
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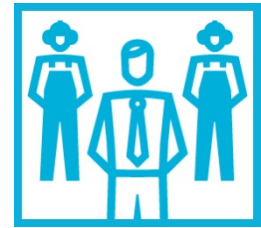
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