Measuring skill needs through employers' surveys: problems and methods

Emilio Colombo

University Milano Bicocca and Gruppo Clas



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- It is difficult to measure skills directly. Skill needs are generally assessed indirectly



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 - Skills that are necessary for a given occupation change over time.



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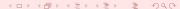
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 - 2 Indirect costs: not directly related to the survey (i.e. costs borne by entrepreneurs in answering the survey).



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 - Future vacancies: (generally within 1 year). Look at the future but introduces subjectivism (entrepreneurs' expectations). Examples "Excelsior" in Italy and "Panel enterprises forecasts" in France.

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- Coverage Good both at European and national level.

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Vacancies

Analysing vacancies

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 - Elaboration costs are high due to the high frequency of the data and to the short lag between data collection and data analysis.

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- Limitation they may not allow to have a clear assessment of structural problems.

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- Very useful when mixed with the flow approach
- Note that the change in the occupational structure responds to structural factors such as technological progress, trade (globalisation), work and firm organisation etc.,
 - Necessary to estimate these factors: sector of production, firms' organisation and innovations, relevance of foreign trade etc.

 The major example is the OES conducted in the US, semi-annual mail survey that measures occupational employment and wages in 200 000 nonfarm establishments.
3-year window for a total of 1 200 000. It collects information on occupation and on associated earnings.

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- Skill gaps are generally a stock problem

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- Degree of subjectivism: rather objective. If skill gaps are assessed then a certain degree of subjectivism is included.
- Coverage Low National level (UK and Germany). At European level there is the "Structure of earning survey (2002 and 2006)". It is focussed on earning but also has detailed information on earnings

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- Indirect costs. Heavy burden on employers. Mainly on small firms that do not have a personnel dept. Moreover in small firms classification distinction is often vague. In the US employers are "helped" by sector specific surveys that provide specific examples of each occupation.

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- Coverage National level, several countries (Germany, Italy, UK etc.). At European level this issue is well covered by European Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS).



Training

Analysing firms' training

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- *Limitations*: difficult to distinguish between the need for new skills and the simple updating of existing skills.