

***Challenges and Changes for over-50 Workers in the Digital Era.
Welfare, Well-being, and
Occupational Health and Safety for a Better Employability.
The Case of Belluno's Eyewear District***

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1. Technological innovation 4.0 and changes in work

- The digital transformation is seen as a disruptive change that involves various economic and social aspects: from the productive and organizational processes of companies, to the life of citizens and to their habits, to lifestyles and consumption
- Much has been said about the risks to employment and employability of workers, and various estimates have been proposed on the risk of job loss and man-machine replacement (WEF 2016).
- However, it still seems difficult to understand what the effects of the technological changes underway will be, even if a man / machine replacement is expected, which will mainly concern low-skilled and routine jobs.

1. Technological innovation 4.0 and changes in work

In recent years, the workforce in Italy, as in the rest of the world, has faced a series of great challenges: from globalization to the economic crisis that began in 2008.

Today we are witnessing two trends two trends unprecedented in their size

aging of the population and of the workforce

- In Italy, in 2018, **over-50 Workers** were 8 million 546 thousand (Istat)
- Twice the number of employed people between 25 and 34 years old (around 4 million)
- **The Generations of Today's Workplace**
- The landscape in today's workplace includes four different generations, each with a distinct set of defining experiences and attributes — both strengths and limitations — that characterize its overall leadership and cultural impact.

digitalization and automation of work using intelligent technologies

- Countries with a high rate of older workers employed in manual, repetitive and non-specialist activities will find themselves having the most automatable jobs
- In these countries, the issue of skills and employability of older workers should become central in the debate on transformations taking place.

The combination of these two events raises a crucial question

What effect will the progressive digitization of businesses and work automation have on older workers?

In an economy where the demand for particular types of work is decreasing, older workers, although qualified according to old jobs, could risk being excluded from the labor market of the future.

Results from previous studies

The Twin Threats of Aging and Automation (2018)

- focuses on 15 major markets to examine and quantify the risks of rapid societal aging and of older workers' susceptibility to automation
- Countries with higher rates of aging also face a higher risk of older-worker job automation..
- Italy's older workers on average do work that is 58 percent automatable and this population are set to increase 1.17 times.

European Employment and Social Developments in Europe (ESDE) Report

- 45% of jobs in Italy can be automated
 - BUT
- It does not mean necessarily a reduction of jobs

OECD Employment Outlook 2019

- Other aspects to consider:
- Quality and protection of work
- inequalities between workers,
- Skills and how they are transferred

4. Research objectives and methodology

- How Italian companies intend to cope with these transformations?
- Is the aging of the workforce having effects on the organization of companies?
- Which are the possible ways of managing human resources?
- What models companies are developing?
- Can corporate welfare and health and safety initiatives intervene to support better employability of mature workers?
- What solutions to support the retention / reintegration of mature workers into the world of work and for their professional development?



Case of Belluno's Eyewear District

Desk study (literature review and data analysis)
Interviews based on semi-structured interview guide

TERRITORY

Three areas of the Province of Belluno: Cadore (50% of companies), Agordino (Luxottica headquarters) and areas of Longarone, Alpago, Feltrino, Belluno, and part of the province of Treviso
Territory characterized by strong depopulation and a high rate of population aging (average age 47 years, 27.1% of the population over 65 years, old age index 222.3%)



MAIN FEATURES

The Belluno eyewear district covers about 80% of Italy's production with 258 companies, and a total turnover of 1.5 billion.

Polarization between

- the large international leaders of the industry - five large companies and international groups (Luxottica, Safilo, De Rigo, Marcolin and Marchon) in which 95% of production is concentrated
- and the small-medium companies of the local territory and a series of small and medium-sized, small-scale, family-run businesses, subcontractors or with own brands, highly specialized in the production of the product, of component parts, or of some specific processing.

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR MARKET

10,500 employees (Infocamere 2016)

70% c.a employed in companies with less than 10 employees,

Employed > 50 years = 26% (up compared to 2012)

5. *Employability of mature workers and technological changes*

In this paper the employability of mature workers in relation to technological innovation is read and interpreted through age management dimensions

The logical set-up of this work is based on the dimensions of Walker's age management adapted and reformulated as endogenous factors

The following tables present for each factor considered (Recruitment, Training and skills, Health & safety, Corporate welfare and Job market exit) the main characteristics observed in the Belluno's Eyewear District, the effect determined by the combination of introduction of innovation 4.0 and the aging of workforce and the solutions adopted



2. Endogenous factors: recruitment, training and skills, career, health and safety, welfare, leaving work

Endogenous factors	Main characteristics	Result / Effect	Solutions
Recruitment	Design and fashion gets importance	The way of working is changing: as a result, workers are needed to change	Choices are based on the required profiles and the mature workers' experience gains value.
 remains important		
	skills high level	Digitalization as part of the production phase/process: this requires flexibility in both companies and workers	Lower elasticity and adaptability of "non-digital natives" VS experience's value of the mature workers, especially at the highest levels of apical and responsibility
	Investments in materials research and development		
	New organizational and productive models	High skills in the area of both digital process governance and product components selection are needed	Entering young people as an added value: they are more creative (design and brand fashion matters)
	Internalization of production phases by large companies		

2. Endogenous factors: recruitment, training and skills, career, health and safety, welfare, leaving work

Endogenous factors	Main characteristics	Result / Effect	Solutions
Training and skills	<p>Lack of high technical skills and professionals</p> <p>Industry 4.0 requires a different mix between technical high skills and experience</p> <p>The professionalism changes rapidly</p> <p>Skills shortage before and after the product manufacturing</p>	<p>Need of specialized technical professionals for supporting innovation/research/innovation/marketing</p> <p>Over 50: experience is precious but tech and digital gap are a warning.</p> <p>Youth: warning on gap of experience and relationship management</p>	<p>1) Intergenerational collaboration Enhancing the exchange and complementarity between digital natives and over 50. Warning: over 50 workers resist to change</p> <p>2) Training aimed at development of both technological skills and transversal skills. DON'T: training on use of new machinery; DO: training on strengthening the connective potential that robotics brings.</p> <p>3) Training initiatives for high-tech skills workers: - ITS creation, - Eyewear school creation -FSE courses for young people, unemployed and over 35</p> <p>Cresco Project company and inter-company courses on development of interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial skills (trainees: over 30% over the age of 45, only 23% young).</p> <p>4) 3 years public-private agreement on training technicians and new profiles (ANFAO)</p> <p>5) New Polytechnic Academy focused on the eyewear sector</p>

2 Endogenous factors: recruitment, training and skills, career, health and safety, welfare, leaving work

Endogenous factors	Main characteristics	Risultat/Effetct	Solutions
Health & safety	Older workers more exposed to risk (lower ability to manage new techs)	The risks change -> need of CPD for those dealing with health and safety of workers	<p>To do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - renew the regulatory framework on security and health; training on risks related to age and new jobs - create good working conditions and environments for the protection of health and safety, promoting training and empowerment - develop a new socio-organizational culture - prepare new mechanisms/tools to have an up-to-date picture of the employees' data - propose a new management culture: the manager can't be only the one of big companies but also the ones arising from each specific business situation.
	New techs promote the employability of handicapped people	Warning: smart working/teleworking isolate from the working environment	

2. Endogenous factors: recruitment, training and skills, career, health and safety, welfare, leaving work

Endogenous factors	Main characteristics	Result / Effect	Solutions
Corporate welfare	<p>Needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •maternity / paternity leave •childhood/education •health •economic difficulty •social exclusion / investment on people •Support the old age / non-self-sufficiency 	<p>Individuals <-> labour market <-> family life: relationship evolution</p> <p>Welfare always changing -> need of continuous experiments and innovation to address the people's needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part Time / smart working: increasing numbers • solutions for: parents with children aged < 13 up or with elderly people; exemptions for shift work • flexibility in working hours for staff/clercks • bank of hours (up to 64 hours of spare time instead of extra salary) • bank oh hours for each-other support • Company <i>concierge</i> for workers • Mature workers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ accompanying towards the retirement/generational agreement ✓ full and free health check-up ✓ 750 € company loyalty bonus (30 years of seniority, at least) • Agreement with Belluno and Treviso gyms <p>From company to territorial welfare (services open to all citizens)</p>

2. Endogenous factors: recruitment, training and skills, career, health and safety, welfare, leaving work

Endogenous factors	Main characteristics	Result / Effect	Solutions
Job market exit	<p>Fornero Reform (law 28 June 2012 n.92)</p> <p>Jobs Act measures (2014-2015)</p>	<p>Turnover stop + precarious work increase</p> <p>Deep divide: permanent vs temporary jobs</p> <p>SMEs: bigger problems!</p>	<p>Accompanying towards retirement/ generational pact supports both the entry of young people and workers who – going to retire in 3 years -wish to lower the working hours. (eg Luxottica 2015-2018 supplementary agreement)</p> <p>Inducements to retire in advance</p> <p>Joint venture (Marcolin and Luis Vuitton -2018) aimed at hiring</p> <p>Professional requalification programs promoted by the Region</p> <p>Skill- needs planning (NOT based on the current way of working)</p>

The aging of the workforce in the digitalization era must be considered as an opportunity and an increase in value for both workers and companies

Values attributed to the mature worker:

- wealth of skills and experience at the workplace,
- different culture of work
- historical memory of the company

Raising the quality of work appears to be linked to the prolongation of work, participation in social and cultural life, maintenance of health through prevention and transfer of know-how to younger people.

Companies are required to accurately analyze their resources in order to plan interventions to:

- integrate the skills of mature workers with those of the new generations
- enhance strengths of workers in connection with their age and seniority
- improve communication between different generations , in a perspective of intergenerational collaboration and mutual development

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