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Should I Stay Or Should I Go? How Mobility Explains Individual Scientific Performance
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Abstract

Management scholars have developed several theories on the use of hiring from other firms as a mean for acquiring knowledge or learning and on the boundary conditions under which spillovers exist and generate effects for the firm's performance. While the relationship between inter-organizational mobility and organizational performance has been extensively studied, significantly less work has been done on the implications of such relationship at the level of the single moving individual. In addition to this theoretical gap, this research area presents also an interesting empirical gap related the simultaneous nature of the individual mobility-performance relationship. In this paper we analyze the relationship between mobility and individual performance using an instrumental variable approach and dynamic panel data modelling. The key finding of this paper is that individuals who move across institutions increase their individual performance. By using the context of academic researchers and scientific productivity, we tried to relax some of the assumptions deriving from specific contextual factors in knowledge-intensive. In particular we make predictions in a context in which knowledge assets represented by the individual human capital are less embedded in the organizational routines, thus, facilitating a stronger ownership and use by each individual of her own human capital.