

Is more engaging safety training always better in reducing accidents Evidence of self-selection from Chilean panel data

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Abstract

Introduction: The recent events in Chile involving 33 miners who were trapped and rescued in the San José mine led the government to strongly promote occupational safety and health (OSH) training. However, there is an ongoing debate regarding which type of training is the most effective in reducing accidents. **Method:** The “engagement hypothesis” claims that traditional classrooms are rather ineffective and that only a strong student involvement may generate meaningful results, but the empirical evidence is inconclusive. To contribute to this debate, we claim that the selection of the training method may be contingent on the firm's OSH capabilities and commitment. Firms with fewer (greater) capabilities may optimally self-select less (more) engaging training methods. **Results:** Accordingly, based on panel data from 2003 to 2009 for a representative sample of 2,787 Chilean firms, the engagement hypothesis initially appears to be supported; however, after correcting for self-selection bias, it loses most of its significance. **Impact on industry:** Chilean policymakers are strongly advised to expand OSH training..