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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Prototypes construction from partial rankings to characterize the attractiveness of companies in Belgium

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Abstract. What are the most relevant factors to be considered by employees when searching for an employer? The answer to this question poses valuable knowledge from the Business Intelligence viewpoint since it allows companies to retain personnel and attract competent employees. It leads to an increase in sales of their products or services, therefore remaining competitive across similar companies in the market. In this paper we assess the attractiveness of companies in Belgium by using a new two-stage methodology based on Artificial Intelligence techniques. The proposed method allows constructing high-quality prototypes from partial rankings indicating experts' preferences. Being more explicit, in the first step we propose a fuzzy clustering algorithm for partial rankings called *fuzzy c-aggregation*. This algorithm is based on the well-known fuzzy c-means procedure and uses the Hausdorff distance as dissimilarity functional and a counting strategy for updating the center of each cluster. However, we cannot ensure the optimality of such prototypes, and therefore more accurate prototypes must be derived. That is why the second step is focused on solving the extended Kemeny ranking problem for each discovered cluster taking into account the estimated membership matrix. To accomplish that, we adopt an optimization method based on Swarm Intelligence that exploits a colony of artificial ants. Several simulations show the effectiveness of the proposal for the real-world problem under investigation.

Keywords: Partial rankings, fuzzy clustering, fuzzy aggregation, prototypes construction.

1. Introduction

Job satisfaction results from employees' positive and negative feelings regarding their environment at work and involves not only employees but also the employer. There is no conclusive way to measure or ascertain job satisfaction. In point of fact, job satisfaction is related to several aspects, depending on what each individual considers as important [1,2]. As an example, the financial soundness factor frequently reflects the employee's overall satisfaction, although it is supported by a positive working environment, high morale and resources available to the employees in order to perform the tasks that have been delegated onto them. Hence, employees' job satisfaction goes beyond solely considering financial-type factors, mainly in those countries with high average incomes.

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