

Effect of Staff Migration in Statistical Offices

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Abstract—In Hungary there is no such comprehensive tertiary education providing the complex knowledge necessary for the work in the statistical office, it is a crucial task to keep the best staff and prevent workforce migration. My study presents three pilot programmes and some main results of migration motivation research analyzing the reasons and types of fluctuation in the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO).

Different approaches of the investigation in the period between 2010 and 2014 are demonstrated in this paper: results of exit interviews with colleagues leaving the office; outcomes of a programme exploring the new entrant's expectations; and some results from the satisfaction survey of the whole staff focusing on factors of commitment aiming at the prevention of migration. The results indicate that the staff, also new entrants has definite ideas about a "good workplace" and the frustration of their job quality expectations plays the main role in leaving the office. The most important factors of the commitment for the workplace are the interesting, challenging everyday duties, financial and moral appreciation of performance and an adequate, broad chance of career.

Index Terms— Workforce migration, Good workplace, Challenging duties, Procrastination, Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO).

I. INTRODUCTION

The main effort of the human resources development policy of the HCSO is to establish and maintain the workforce able to adapt flexibly to the increasing external expectations towards the HCSO. One of the most important resources of the office is the available professional technical knowledge which undergoes continuous improvement so that it could meet the various challenges it faces. As at present there is no comprehensive tertiary (university) education of statistics in Hungary which could ensure the complex scope of knowledge necessary for the special works at the HCSO, the office needs significant training investments and has to ensure long-term possibilities for gaining work-experience. Just for this reason it is essential for the effective long-term human resources policy of the office to retain and motivate the staff and to promote the recovery of professional and material expenditure. In this respect it is a task of primary importance to get to know the motivation of withdrawals or resignation, to analyze the reasons and types of fluctuation, and based on the results, to elaborate measures which aim at the prevention of workforce migration. My study presents the experimental methods and some main results of this motivation research in the HCSO.

II. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

My research aims also at the prevention of fluctuation applying multiple approaches: by means of exit interviews it contacts directly the employees leaving the office on the one hand and, on the other hand, it analyses indirectly the results of internal programmes which explore the expectations and conditions of commitment of the staff. So the results may point out the possibilities of the prevention of fluctuation in advance. I have elaborated experimental methods for these approaches, and based on some realized programmes, I have also collected some initial experience.

In case of leaving employees, I analyze partly the personal data which may be hypothetically in the background of leaving the office, and partly conduct exit interviews with them in order to get more profound information on their reasons. The target population is formed basically by those leaving the office with mutual consent, dismissal or resignation. Those leaving the office due to old-age retirement or early retirement do not belong to the observed population.

For the young (under 35 years of age) employees of the office, we organized a programme consisting of a questionnaire survey and workshops in order to get information on the motivations of commitment to the office with the aim of preventing the problem of migration. The results namely point out how to make young workforce interested in the long run and how to retain them.

In the framework of exit motivation research, I can also mention the (voluntary) staff satisfaction survey conducted as an experiment a few years earlier. Its objective was to get to know the components of general feeling and satisfaction in the office as well as the expectations towards the work at the office and the problems. The results also throw light on those factors the lack of which may cause the migration of the workforce.

- *Exit Motivation Research by Contacting Outgoing Employees Directly*

In the first approach of the investigation only leaving staff was involved and only colleagues participated whose reason for leaving the office was not retirement. On the one hand, I analyzed information

on them derived from the personnel records with the retroactive effect as from several years, and, on the other hand, conducted deep interviews with the colleagues leaving the office in a given year.

III. RESULTS

A. Analysis From The Personnel Records

From the personnel records I selected specific information about the fluctuation of staff and tried to find tendencies explaining the background of migration. I analyzed the following: The way and reason of leaving the office: whether it is unilateral or by mutual consent, by dismissal or resignation? On the basis of the personnel database, I can obtain only formal answers, the deeper reasons can be shown only by the interviews.

Table 1. Evaluation of factors of workplace climate, in the staff satisfaction survey (rating scale: 1=low satisfaction, 5=high satisfaction).

Highest Satisfaction Factors	Average (1-5)	Lowest Satisfaction Factor	Average (1-5)
Size, Dimension of working room	4,24	Promotion and career possibilities	3,40
6ktr	4,30	Good Use of the competencies of the staff	3,35
Interesting Task	4,10	Flow of internal information necessary to implement work	3,30

From Table.1, it is clear that majority of young and middle-aged colleagues of my target group left the office with mutual consent. In every tenth case, the employer did not extend the fixed-term contract after its expiry, but employees with permanent contracts used the possibility of resignation with the same frequency as well.

Are there typical withdrawing age-groups among young and middle-aged colleagues? The data indicate that, while within the target population most (36%) of the leaving employees are 31–35 years old, their proportion in the total staff number of the office is only 15%. So, I can say that the intention to exit is more characteristic of this specific age-group than of the others (Refer Table. 2).

Table 2. Evaluation of conditions necessary to high level work, in the staff satisfaction survey (rating scale: 1=low satisfaction, 5=high satisfaction)

Most Realized, Typical at HCSO	Average (1-5)	Less Realized, Not Typical at HCSO	Average (1-5)
Impartiality	4,5	Professional and human relationships	3,2
Respect for the professional past and personalities/experts of the offices	4,2	Efficient training system	3,2
Professional statistical information	4,0	Internal Information flow	3,4
Conformity with international requirements	4,0	Minimizing the burden of data providers	3,1

One of the important issues of the motivation research is where the colleagues in the “hierarchy ladder” are when they leave. Still low down or at a higher level? Are there people in leading positions or having specialist’s title among outgoing employees? Does specialist’s promotion or career result in a greater

commitment of employees? While considering the total staff of the office, the proportion of employees in leading position and those having specialist’s titles is 10–10 per cent, out of the 123 young outgoing employees only 3 per cent were head of section and no one had specialist’s title, while among the 109 middle-aged ones 4 per cent were head of section and 4 per cent had specialist’s title. This low number indicates that the lack of promotion could also play a significant role in leaving the office!

What kind of knowledge do the outgoing employees have? Do college or rather university graduates leave the office; are they experts in humanities or rather in sciences; do they have one or more diplomas; how many foreign languages do they speak? According to the data, our target group can be considered slightly more qualified than the total staff of the office (Refer Table. 3), mainly due to the young generation’s higher qualification in general. More than two thirds of them obtained college or university degree, and at least every second young or middle-aged outgoing employee has mostly fair English and/or German knowledge certified by state examinations. Among them, qualifications in sciences as economist, mathematician, engineer, etc. were more characteristic than in humanities.

Table 3. Age distribution of the outgoing employees and the full staff (%)

Age-groups of Outgoing Employees	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Outgoing Employees, Total	Outgoing Target Group (20-50 years)	HCSO Full Staff, 2015
Age: 20-30 years	9	2	4	3	7	2	5	7	9
Age: 31-35 years	2	7	5	9	6	4	12	17	13
Age: 36-40 years	4	12	3	2	11	5	5	36	15
Age:41-45 years	4	10	9	7	10	7	4	17	12
Age: 46-50 years	0	9	17	12	15	18	5	13	11
Age: 51-5 years	4	18	14	17	16	11	6	XXXX	19
Age: 56-60 years	40	19	23	23	9	16	18	XXXX	18
Age: over 60 years	36	23	25	27	26	47	44	XXXX	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

What types of field of work or scope of duties do employees leave: most of all statistical fields (within this economic or social statistics) or rather sections fulfilling functional tasks? And are there divisions where fluctuation is significantly more frequent? In the last 5 years, nearly half (47%) of the withdrawing young and middle-aged employees worked in statistical–specialized fields and one tenth in functional divisions (this proportion corresponds to that of the total staff). At the same time, due to the establishment of regions instead of the county directorate system in 2004–2005 and then, the establishment of competence centres, the staff of regional directorates changed the most compared to their headcount number. At that time, 43 per cent of employees

at the directorates were transferred from the counties to the regional centres or were dismissed finally, mostly with mutual consent (Refer Table. 4).

Table 4. Middle-aged outgoing employees, 2005-2010 (persons)

Age-groups	Head of Section	Professional Title (Adviser)	Target Group, Total (Persons)
Age: under 25 years	0	0	1
Age: 26-30 years	0	0	38
Age: 31-35 years	4	0	84
Age: 36-40 years	4	1	39
Age: 41-45 years	0	0	39
Age: 46-50 years	0	2	31
Total	8	3	232

B. Survey Of Expectations Of Young New Entrants

Another source of information in the staff migration motivation research is an experimental programme for the new entrants under 30 years, launched in 2013 and the results can contribute to the understanding of the reasons why especially young colleagues leave the office. The goal of the programme was to get to know the opinion of newcomers about their work and workplace, their expectations on the future professional career opportunities and to explore the conditions of effective work in the office, with the help of collective thinking. The results of the programme aimed at serving towards the increase in the engagement of young colleagues and the prevention of migration. The programme consisted of 3 elements:

- A questionnaire survey,
- A workshop and finally
- A conversation with the president of the HCSO.

To summarize the main results of the 3 approaches relevant to our investigation on staff fluctuation, a picture of an office was drawn up, where young people would work with pleasure in the future, even for a long time. Young colleagues deemed comprehensively the followings important in terms of an attractive workplace:

- Always new, exciting tasks.
- Good relation between a head and his/her staff.
- Consistent, democratic management and information about the background of decisions.
- Effective organization of work avoiding parallelism and hectic work and ensuring enough time for high-quality work.
- Proper information flow necessary for performing work.
- Opportunities for horizontal communication among professional sections replacing bureaucratic–hierarchic administration.
- Real, flexible working hours adjusted to actual tasks.
- Effective training programmes.
- Moral–financial recognition that motivates above-average performance.
- Regular evaluation of work, stimulating promotions opportunities.
- Correct selection system both for the heads and the staff.
- Proper material–technical conditions for performing work.
- Clean, civilized circumstances.

- Extension of social-type allowances.
- Stable, predictable, quiet atmosphere with fewer organizations.

C. Staff Satisfaction Survey

A survey was conducted with the help of a questionnaire. I attribute great importance to the results in respect of outlining the reasons leading to leaving the office and predicting the motivations of migration. Altogether 335 respondents (about 25 percent of the staff) took the opportunity to respond to the questions. Out of 16 investigated workplace-climate factors, most of the respondents were satisfied with the material–technical conditions of the office, but deemed career opportunities and utilization of the abilities of the colleagues less adequate. In respect of work efficiency, they criticized the heaviness of information flow necessary for work and the organization of work.

IV. CONCLUSION

I had analyzed primary programmes and some main results of migration. These research results show reasons and types of fluctuation in the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO). Different approaches of the investigation had demonstrated in this paper such as results of exit interviews with colleagues leaving the office, outcomes of a programme exploring the new entrant’s expectations and some results from the satisfaction survey of the whole staff focusing on factors of commitment aiming at the prevention of migration. From the results I had concluded that it is an important and crucial and task to keep the best staff and prevent workforce migration in statistical offices.

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