

The Effects of Migration on Romanian Employees: A Managerial Perspective

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ABSTRACT: It is a fact that the phenomenon of migration has generated major outcomes on the Romanian society, both from a social point of view, but also from an economic perspective. Following the country integration in the European Union a large number of Romanians have chosen to migrate, especially in countries in Western Europe, in search of a better life and higher incomes. This migration has led to a decrease in the workforce in Romania, but has also changed the manner in which Romanian employees are viewed by the companies in which they work and changed the manner in which they behave at their workplace. The present paper seeks to provide a better understanding of the particularities of Romanian employees at their workplace and of the effects that migration had on these particularities.

KEY WORDS: human resource management, migration, employee characteristics.

(JEL Classification: M12, M51, M54)

Driving Employees Toward Ensuring the Organization's Success

It could be considered common sense to state that companies whose employees are involved in their work, in actively participating towards achieving the company's long term goals and, also, increasing their work productivity, manage to become more efficient and increase their performance. But it is also fair to say

that the simple employment, preparation and reward of staff is no longer, in the context of the current economic context, sufficient to ensure the success of firms, thus it is necessary to design the strategic management of human resources according to the needs of employees, needs that are generated by their unique skills and expertise.¹ An organization's core competencies derive, first of all, from every employee's own competencies and abilities, for this reason it is imperative that managers focus their efforts onto integrating these competencies into the organization's strategy and long term objectives.² Also, it is extremely important for leaders to actively influence the behavior of employees, the main reasons behind this approach being the fact that people in the front line are more empowered and, also, because nowadays companies are no longer able to offer jobs for life and thus employees are more concerned with their individual goals that can be different from the organization's goals (*Leadership and Management in Organizations*, 2007). As a result a large number of companies are starting to perform attitude surveys on their employees with the set aim to identify the views of employees, to identify their competencies or to estimate their support for new ideas and projects.³

The extremely competitive business environment today forces companies to go to great lengths, not only to find valuable employees, but also to retain them. In order to achieve this, organizations need to implement a series of measures regarding working conditions, but also the benefits offered to employees, benefits such as flexible work hours or child day care. Also, appropriate reward systems need to be implemented in order to motivate personnel and encourage teamwork.⁴ Having valuable employees and constant investing in their training and development of key abilities and competencies generates a workforce capable of constant learning, which in terms allows the organization to expand its knowledge base and to increase its chances of gaining success. Thus, successful organizations will be those that are best prepared to attract, develop and retain individuals that possess the proper competencies and expertise to face the new challenges in the global business environment.⁵

The individual success of employees is significantly influenced by the manner in which the organizations are planning their own

strategic goals, being considered that these strategic goals offer both guidance and support for individuals. Thus, it is imperative that organizational planning should be made as clearly as possible in order to support employees in their specific activities.⁶ Nonetheless, organizations need to consider the fact that supporting individuals in order to gain superior performance needs to be a continuous process with support at every level from managers and with focus on individual abilities and competencies.⁷

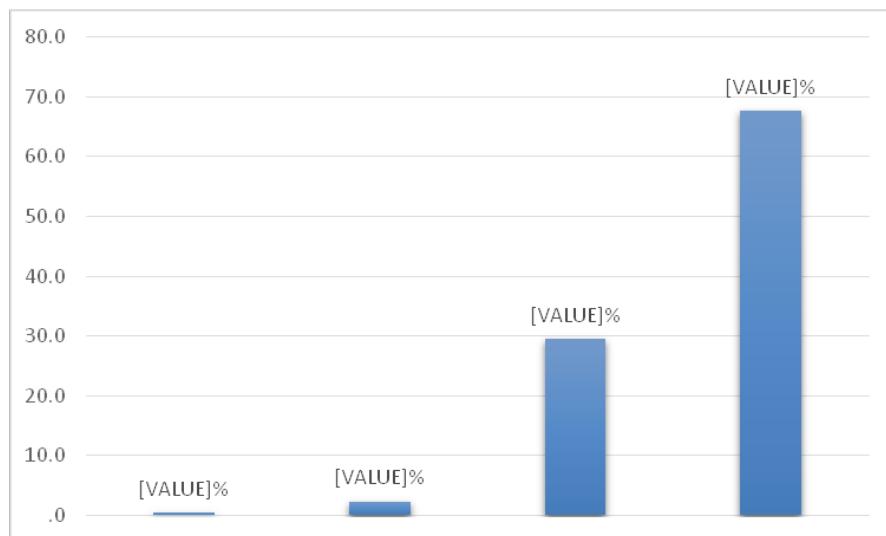
An Analysis of Romanian Employees From a Managerial Perspective

The findings and conclusions presented in this paper result from a study, which was conducted on Romanian companies with the intent of identifying the most effective ways of gaining sustainable competitive advantages. A major part of this study was an analysis of Romanian employees in terms of their determination and creativity.

The study used a Likert scale questionnaire with affirmations having the following answer possibilities: total disagreement, partial disagreement, indecisive, partial agreement and total agreement, the general aim of this questionnaire being the accurate identification of employee characteristics and behavior at their working place.

First of all it can be noticed that employees are constantly trying to improve themselves in order to become better than others. According to the responses gathered, we can notice that 67.7% of the employees that were questioned are in total agreement that their efforts should be aimed at increasing their work efficiency and thus gaining superior results. At the same time, 29.5% of respondents consider important to overcome others, but they feel that this is not the most crucial element of their carrier. Considering this, we can conclude that today's employees are highly concerned with overcoming themselves and others by becoming better at what they do and by obtaining better results. Following this, organizations need to take advantage of this and develop new ways in which employees can use their capabilities to generate the required benefits.

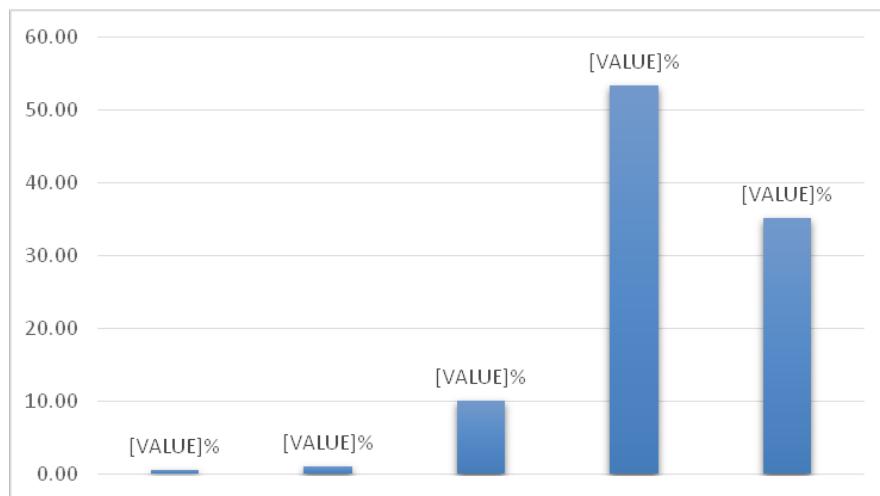
Figure 1
The determination of becoming better than others



Source: *self-representation*

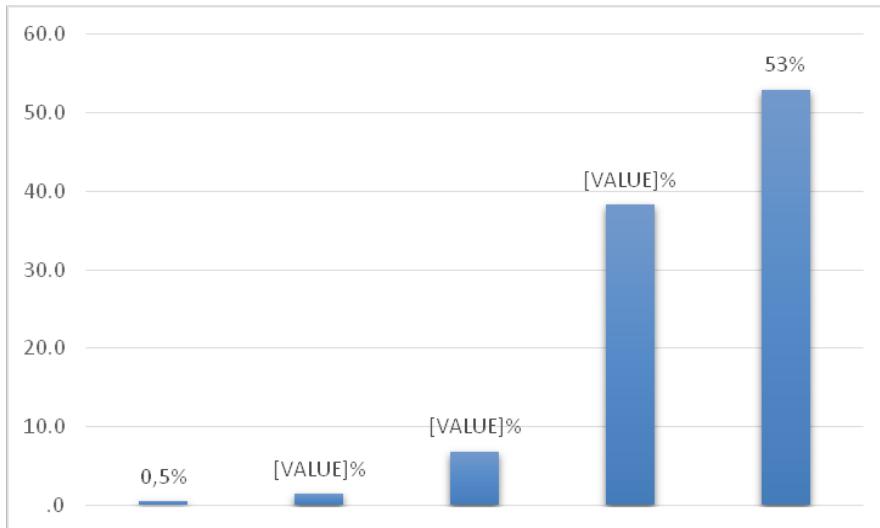
Another important aspect of the research was the employees' view of their working time in contrast to other colleagues. According to the responses that were gathered in the research the vast majority of the questioned employees (almost 90%) consider that they work longer than their colleagues, while over 10% consider that they work relatively the same or even less than their coworkers. This is especially important when it comes to the balance between the employees' personal and work time. If employees consider that their efforts are superior of those of their colleagues and the rewards they receive do not compensate for this, it is possible that they will lose their motivation and thus negatively influencing the organization.

Figure 2 How Romanian employees consider their work efforts to be in comparison to others



Source: *self-representation*

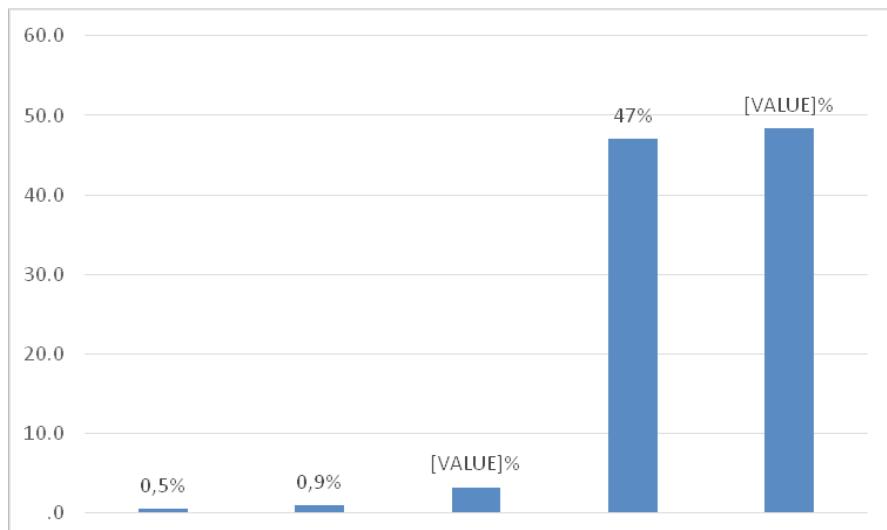
Figure 3 The willingness to start an activity, no matter its difficulty



Source: *self-representation*

When it comes to employee determination to start an activity, no matter its difficulty, the study revealed that, again, almost 90% of the respondents declared that they will perform their responsibilities no matter their difficulty. For organizations this is an important sign that their employees are motivated and will not let any impediments to stand in their way. But, at the same time, managers need to make significant efforts to encourage their personnel to maintain their motivation also into the future and to actively participate in meeting the organization's goals.

Figure 4
The willingness to achieve the set goal at any price

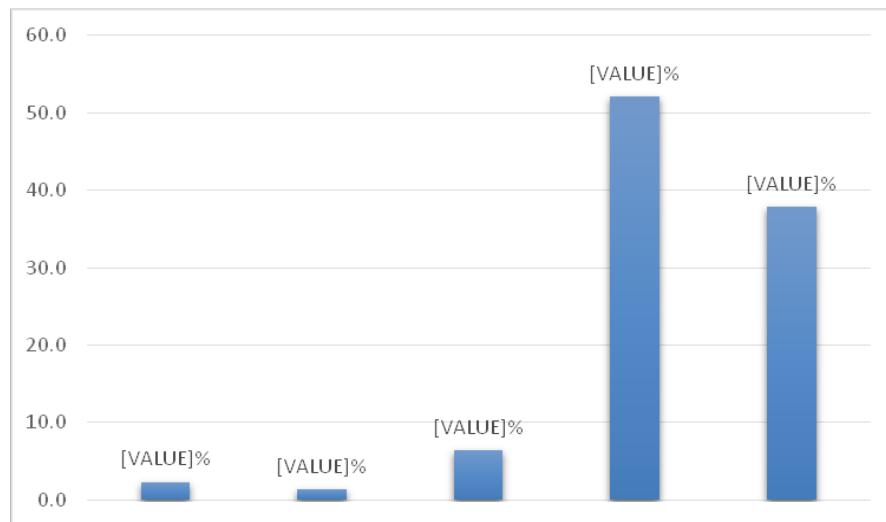


Source: *self-representation*

Continuing from the results above that have shown 90% of the respondents being willing to start an activity no matter its difficulty, it comes with no surprise that again a large percentage of the employees in this study have declared that they are focused on achieving the set goal no matter the price paid. While 47% of the participants have declared that they are partially in agreement with taking any action in achieving their goals with success, 48.4%

declared that they are in total agreement with taking any action and paying any price in order to see their goals being met with outmost success. For organizations these results are mixed. On one hand it is very useful to have such determined and perseverant employees, but on the other hand the question of the prices paid is raised. It is possible that in their actions to achieve the goal that they desire, employees could negatively affect others and thus lead to an overall negative performance of the organization.

Figure 5
The attitude towards prolonged work



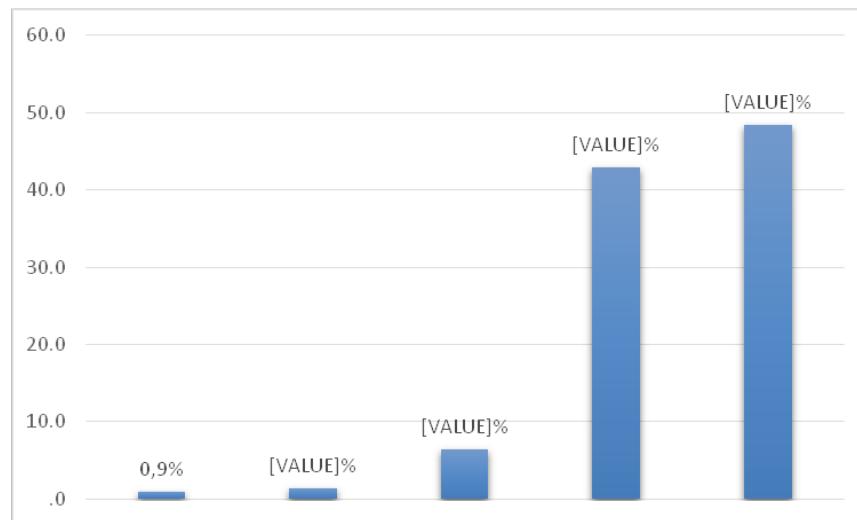
Source: *self-representation*

When it comes to their attitude towards prolonged working hours, the majority of the respondents (52,1%) declared that they are willing and, in fact, do spend long hours working, considering that by doing this they will gain superior results and their work productivity will increase. But, we must take into consideration that almost 38% of the respondents to this study declared that their working day is longer in comparison with their colleagues. In other words almost 38% of the questioned employees enjoy being occupied with work and consider it normal to spend long

hours working. Although, for organizations this type of behavior presents obvious advantages, for employees it can lead to a decrease in motivation on long term and it can affect their personal life with negative implications in their professional one.

Finally, the study also set to find out if the employees' attitude toward work in terms of their determination, perseverance, ambition and working time does lead to the desired satisfaction and to the successes that the employees wanted from their professional activity. As it can be seen above, more than 90% of the respondents declared that they often get successes as a result of their hard work and ambition, with almost 50% stating that almost every time the outcome of their activity is the outcome they wanted to obtain at the beginning. These results prove that the efforts that are put into by the employees questioned in this study eventually pay off and that they register the desired results and success. This is also extremely important for the organizations in which they work; organizations that consequently gain superior results from the work put in by their employees.

Figure 6
How often employees get successes as a direct result to their work



Source: *self-representation*

Migration and its Effects on Romanian Employees

Form the information published by the Romanian Statistics Institute, in its various reports, and by the European Unions' Eurostat, over 2,3 million Romanians have emigrated during the last 25 years, especially in countries like Spain, Italy, France or Germany. By making a simple calculation, in average almost 100.000 Romanian per year have chosen to leave their country in search of greater incomes and a better life.

According to the Romanian Statistics Institute Migration Reports, the Romanian migrant has an age between 15 and 24 years old and the number of women is 32% greater than that of men. As a result and direct consequence of the migration phenomenon the number of young individuals (age below 24 years) has constantly decreased in Romania leading to a shortage in the national working force and creating problems for the companies that operate in this country.

As we could see in the analysis performed above about the particularities of the Romanian employees, the latter are currently working long hours and go to great lengths to successfully meet their work responsibilities.

One of the main reasons behind this behavior is the shortage in working force and especially in highly educated working force in Romania. Good employees are becoming increasingly hard to find, as stated by the managers interviewed as part of the study presented in this paper, with valuable employees being more and more appreciated and their merits increasingly recognized by organizations and managers. But, at the same time, Romanian employees need to compensate the shortage in the working force in order to increase organizational effectiveness and to gain superior performance. This means that, as we could see above, the time allocated by employees to their work is becoming increasingly longer and their personal time increasingly shorter. On long term this can prove to be problematic for both employees and organizations, with the first losing their motivation and determination to work as they see their personal life being overcome by work and the later losing valuable employees and seeing their performance being negatively

influenced by this phenomenon. On the other hand, experienced employees are seen as being extremely valuable by organizations, due to their expertise and also to the difficulty in finding new employees that can generate the same result or better ones. A direct consequence of this fact is that these employees are earning more money from their work which, for now, positively motivates them to become even better and more efficient.

Another key aspect of migration is the so called *brain drain*, which represents the migration of well-trained individuals that are unable to find a job in their own country that can provide an income proportional to their training. Although some views consider positive the effects of brain drain for the country of origin, most of the consequences are negative. First of all this phenomenon creates a shortage of highly prepared individuals on the work market, which in terms leads to difficulties in finding highly productive employees. Secondly, on a macro economical level, the lack of efficient individuals has the possibility to lead to a decrease in government income, in economic growth, productivity and even a decrease in foreign investments. And last, a shortage on the national work market eventually leads to an increase in taxes for the remaining workers in order to maintain a certain balance of the national budget.

In conclusion, the phenomenon of migration during the last 25 years and especially in the time since the Romanian integration in the European Union that has allowed an easier mobility of the working force has generated major consequences on the Romanian work market. First of all, a large percentage of young Romanians have chosen to work outside the country generating a shortage of available working power back home, but on the other hand the remaining employees are forced to become increasingly efficient and more productive to compensate the lack of experienced personnel, but also gaining more result and successes from their work.

NOTES

¹ Kurt Verweire and Lutgart van den Berghe, *Integrated Performance Management: A Guide to Strategic Implementation*. London: Sage Publications, 2004.

² Dave Ulrich, *Human Resource Champions: The Next Agenda for Adding Value to HR Practices* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 10.

³ John Stredwick, *An Introduction to Human Resource Management*. Oxford: Elsevier, 2005.

⁴ Abbass F. Alkhafaji, *Strategic Management: Formulation, Implementation, and Control in a Dynamic Environment*. New York: The Haworth Press, 2003.

⁵ Michael A. Hitt, R. Duane Ireland, Robert E. Hoskisson, *Strategic Management: Competitiveness and Globalization, Concepts and Cases*. Independence, KY: Thomson-Cengage Learning, 2007.

⁶ Derek Torrington and Stephen Taylor, *Human Resource Management*. Essex: Prentice Hall, 2008.

⁷ John Martin, *Key Concepts in Human Resource Management*. London: Sage Publications, 2010.