THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED EMPLOYEES IN MARKETING-ADVERTISING AND IT&C SECTORS, IN ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to identify and comparatively analyze the main features of the working conditions of highly qualified employees in two economic sectors specific for the knowledge-based society, IT&C and marketing-advertising, in the opinions of some non-management employees and of some managers in these areas, in Romania. The empirical research was based on in-depth interviews conducted face to face with employees and managers in these domains. We conducted 15-16 interviews with employees and 3 interviews with managers for each of the two sectors, so a total of 37 interviews, during February to July 2012.The results of our survey showed that in both sectors, professionals' complaints regarding their working conditions vary by the nature of the activity, but also by the capital source and the size of the company.

Key words: working conditions, knowledge-intensive organizations, highly qualified employees, marketing-advertising, IT&C.

JEL codes: J28, J24.

Introduction

In the sectors of knowledge-intensive business services (KIBS), competition is fierce, leading to uncertainty and hence to the need for managers of practicing measures that will have as the final goal the employees' loyalty. In this type of organizations, known as knowledge-intensive organizations, in which the employees with their competences represent the essential capital of the organization, is necessary for management to focus on providing working conditions that lead to professional satisfaction of these "golden-collars" employees. KIBS organizations are built on intangible assets, on the knowledge and experience of organization personnel, which makes the recruiting and retaining of the most qualified and suitable employees, the training and developing their skills, to be the core concerns of these organizations management. And to retain these employees, financial motivation is not enough, the management has to insist also on aspects such as work-life balance, professional development, giving autonomy etc., which would highlight and motivate them.

In this context, the present paper aims to identify and comparatively analyze the main features of the working conditions of highly qualified employees in two economic sectors specific for the knowledge-based society, IT&C and marketing-advertising, in the opinions of some non-management employees and of some managers in these areas, in Romania.

Literature review

Going towards a knowledge-based economy does not necessitate engaging in new types of competitive advantage from companies, but it represents a fundamental change in the nature of organizations and the way in which they formulate strategies. From the point of view of company competition, the Knowledge Intensive Business Services (KIBS) sector is right at the centre of this

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change, helping clients in the process of knowledge achievement, development, capitalization and management. KIBS offers knowledge information and "products" or uses knowledge in order to support clients in creating and processing their own knowledge. KIBS performances affect the performances of client organizations, and thus the KIBS dynamism has effects over the entire economy.

KIBS can be separated in two large categories, such as: traditional professional services such as advertising, marketing, architecture services; and new technologies-based KIBS, consisting of software design, engineering services and IT-related activities (Eurofound, 2006: 2). European countries have various contributions regarding the employment of work force in KIBS sector; hence, the United Kingdom is the biggest employer in all KIBS sub-sectors, followed by Germany and France (Eurofound, 2005: 4). Many people try to build challenging careers, instead of a life-time "stable" job, which encourages hiring inside the KIBS fields. Although inside KIBS, work can be stressful sometimes, due to high competition in the field, working for clients who have more or less reasonable demands etc., it still offers high levels of learning at the workplace and diversity in working experience (Eurofound, 2005: 7), on account of the various projects tackled.

Intensive-knowledge work requires creative resolution of issues and abstract thinking. In order to succeed, one requires a complex methodology of processing and refining already existent knowledge; it is not a mechanical data processing, although this could be involved. Intensive-knowledge companies usually include technical, computer-related, research-development, training, educational, financial, advertising and environment services. Inside these companies, the working process is based on the commitment and personal reputation of employees, which requires learning, communication and abstract thinking from the team involved in the project. Horizontal hierarchies and flexible networks improve innovation and creativity, which are essential in offering better services and being more competitive on the market (Haataja, 2005: 2,3).

A "knowledge worker" is innovative, creative, understanding and adoptive of organizational culture, has teamwork capacity and is willing to share knowledge, is always willing to learn and adopt new methodologies, can easily adapt to uncertain situations, has self-discipline, clearly understands the issue in which he is involved and adapts both professional and personal development to company vision. A suitable manager for this kind of employee is not the traditional manager (action-oriented, spending time supervising, delegating, controlling and ensuring that procedure is respected), but rather the "intelligent manager", organizational learning-oriented, the one acting as a teacher rather than as a superviser for his employees. The role of the latter is to maintain motivation among employees, to ensure teamwork, create, share and use knowledge in daily activities, and recruit "brilliant" employees eager to work with knowledge etc. (Sornlertlamvanich, 2009: 6, 14, 15).

The past 40 years'changes have transformed European economy, developed intensive-knowledge industries, with high added-value, raised investment in intangible assets (technology, human capital) rather than traditional ones such as cars and buildings, increased the number of highly qualified employees. In the 1970s the majority of work force had no qualification, with only 1 of 10 employees being qualified, whereas nowadays the majority is qualified – between a third and a fifth of employees are highly qualified. Despite such changes, little improved in work quality for knowledge-based positions. The 80s witnessed a decline in work quality, followed by an improvement in the 90s (Brinkley et al., 2009: 5, 10, 11).

A 2009 United Kingdom research showed that 56% of human resource managers of employees with non-manual occupations consider stress as the primary cause of long-term absence, while the percentage for employees with manual occupations was of 49%. HR managers also consider that overload was the main reason of increasing stress levels (55%), compared to other stress-generator factors, such as overtime hours (13%), lack of certainty about workplace (13%) and lack of autonomy (9%). This suggests that despite evidence, HR managers are not aware of the

effects that long working hours, workplace uncertainty and lack of autonomy have over employees (Brinkley et al., 2009: 15).

Another research, conducted in 2008 in Slovakia and Hungary in business services sector companies indicates that, in terms of dissemination of new management practices leading to improved quality of employees work, there are differences between the two countries: some new practices are more prevalent in Slovak KIBS sector firms, others in the Hungarian firms.

Table no.1.

Diffusion of new managerial practices

	Hungary	**Slovakia**
Project-based work	35%	69%
Flat or lean organization	11%	13%
Inter-professional (inter-disciplinary) working groups	13%	36%
Collecting suggestions from employees	50%	41%
Team work	42%	90%
Job rotation	10%	29%

Source: Mako et al., 2011: 53.

Research methodology

Empirical research was based on applying a technique belonging to *qualitative research: in-depth, face-to-face interviews* conducted with employees without any managerial positions, but also with some having managerial positions from the intensive-knowledge services as advertising-marketing and IT&C sectors from Romania.

The aim of the research is to comparatively study the working conditions of Romanian highly qualified employees from two intensive-knowledge services sectors, specific to knowledge society: advertising-marketing and IT&C. The study will be focused on the way they are perceived by employees as well as their managers. We have collected data regarding: employee health problems caused by workplace, working time (including atypical work – in the evenings, nights, weekends, shifts), work intensity and complexity, professional development possibilities, workplace autonomy and the possibility to influence one's own work, decision-making and leadership in the organization and the team, motivation means, work-personal life balance, measures proposed by employees and introduced by managers in order to improve working conditions.

The research sample was made up of 16 highly-qualified employees without management attributions from the advertising-marketing sector and 15 from the IT&C sector, as well as 3 managers from the advertising-marketing sector and 3 from then IT&C sector. For the advertising-marketing sector, as far as the type of agency is concerned, the source of capital and its size (given by the number of employees working there), of the 16 respondents without managements attributions, 11 work in small agencies (with even less than 20 employees) with Romanian capital, 3 in Romanian medium agencies (with 50-100 employees), and 2 in multinational ones (with over 250 employees). Based on the specialization of the agency, 5 of the respondents work in full-service agencies, 3 in below-the-line advertising agencies, 2 in branding agencies, 2 in Internet advertising agencies, 2 in advertising production agencies and 2 in online marketing agencies. The age of those involved in the survey ranges between 23 and 35 years old; regarding their recent education: 10 of them hold a Master's degree, and 6 hold a bachelor's degree. For the managers from the same sector, of the three respondents, 2 work in Romanian branches of multinational companies (the Romanian branch of the first has 200 employees and of the second only 25 employees), and the third in a small Romanian company with 5 employees. Based on agency specialization, the first organization is a group made up of several agencies specialized in integrated communication, part of one of the largest groups on communication in the world; the second is an online advertising

sales network, a branch of a multinational group, present in 10 countries; the third is an agency specialized in online marketing consultancy. The first respondent is a Business Unit Director (General Manager) of one of the agencies of the Romanian group, an agency having 23 employees, the second is Manager Search Department (Department Manager), with 8 employees subordinated and the third is an agency manager with a 5-employee team subordinated. For the IT&C sector, based on the source of capital and size (given by the number of employees), of the 15 employees without management attributions, 10 of them work in large, multinational companies (some having even thousands of employees), and 5 in medium companies (of which 3 multinational ones and 2 Romanian ones). Based on the specialization of the company, most of the interviewees (12) work in IT companies (software, PC games, development, networking etc.) and 3 in telecommunications. All of them are between 23 and 38 years old. Regarding their education, 4 of them have a Master's degree and 11 have a bachelor's degree. For the managers of this sector, based on the source of capital and size, of the 3 respondents, 2 work in Romanian branches of multinational companies (the Romanian branch of the first has 800 employees, while of the second has 150 employees), and the third works in a small Romanian company with 10 employees. Based on the specialization of the company, all three activate in the IT field (the first two deal with software and the third deals with computer networks for legal entities). The first respondent is a Project Manager of the development and testing department ("for a client in Bluetooth technology area"), with 8 employees subordinated to him. The second is a Business Manager South East Europe & Hungary (in the Sales & Software department), with 19 employees subordinated to him (6 in Romania and 13 in the region). The third respondent is the company's general manager, with a team of 10 employees subordinated to him.

As far as the respondents are concerned, we chose different organizations of belonging, both from the point of view of the capital source, but also from the point of view of the company size and specialization, in order to be able to form a more complete picture of the respective economic sector. The interviews with the advertising-marketing employees were conducted between February-March 2012, and those working in the IT&C sector between March-April 2012, and those with the managers of the two sectors were conducted in July 2012; each interview lasted between 60-90 minutes. The conclusions drawn from this empirical research shall be supported by quotations of the interviewees (the advertising-marketing employees shall be called A.E., those of the IT&C – IT.E., advertising managers will be called A.M. and those of IT&C will be IT.M.). We shown in the table below the questions addressed to managers.

Table no.2.

Questions addressed to managers in the two sectors

1	Your employees have complained of health problems they think are due to workplace (stomachaches, headaches, insomnia, palpitations, depression, chronic fatigue, dizziness, chest pain etc.).? If so, what health problems and which were the causes, in your view?
2	Do your subordinates attend trainings / professional development courses paid by the company, and how often?
3	Do you ask your subordinates to work at home in their spare time, or to work evenings / nights / weekends / over 8 hours a day? How often and why?
4	Do you ask your subordinates view on their complaints about working conditions, in what form and which are these complaints? If you do not ask their opinion, which do you suspect that their complaints are?
5	What measures you have taken in recent years to improve the lives quality of your employees (on their health / working time and work-life balance / work speed and the fulfillment of duties / their autonomy and communication with them)? If you could not take any action, why?
6	How decisions are taken in the company (by the company's management decision, by instructions

	sent from the parent company or by consulting employees? In the latter case, how consultation is made?). What are the relationships between superiors and subordinates (collaboration as equals, strictly respect hierarchy) and how employees are supervised (directly or indirectly)?
7	What is the organizational culture of your company made (there are certain values, rules, regulations, written or unwritten, specific symbols, myths, stories about founders, anniversary celebrations of the company or employees, Christmas, awards to employees etc.)? How would you describe the manager-employee communication (the way of decisions transmission top-down / bottom-up reports, formal / informal)?
8	How would you characterize the climate in your company (with an emphasis on competition, promotion of exceptional individuals or on human relationships, friendship, teamwork; on achieving the objectives of the firm or employee satisfaction; on the subordination, compliance or autonomy, freedom of employees; on the conformism, discipline or initiative, creativity, risk etc.)?
9	What means of motivation and creating attachment (loyalty) of employees towards the company do you use in your company (eg salary increases, promotions, increased responsibility and autonomy, opportunities for professional development, creating a prestigious image of the firm, artifacts - uniforms, pens etc.)? How the integration of new employees are made?

Research results

Health problems caused by the workplace

From the point of view of health problems caused by the workplace, over half of those employees without management attributions from both sectors (9 of 16 of the advertising – marketing sector and 7 out of 15 of the IT&C sector) claim they did not encounter such problems. The rest claim to have experienced a series of problems that are common to both sectors – headaches, insomnia, vertigo, weakness, anxiety, lack of focus, eyesight troubles and back pain because of working in front of a computer several hours a day, cronical fatigue, muscular cramps:

- "eyesight troubles (I had to have glasses), insomnia, anxiety, lack of focus" (A.E.16, 27 years old, senior copywriter);

- "I experienced insomnia in my first year and I started an imunity treatment, based on the doctor's recommendation" (A.E.3, 23 years old, senior account executive);

- "sore eyes, anxiety, depression, lack of focus, carpal tunnel syndrome on my right hand (the one I use to hold the mouse)" (IT.E.2, 32 years old, software engineer);

- "I had stomach aches of a nervous nature, insomnia, anxiety and depression. These problems were gone in a few weeks after I left the job. I never missed work, but after I saw a doctor I was told that work was the very cause of my problems" (IT.E.14, 38 years old, network engineer).

Not all interviewed managers are aware of their employees' health problems. Just 1 in 3 advertising-marketing managers and 2 in 3 IT managers admit the existence of employee health problems, especially fatigue, sore eyes and back pains:

- "Generally I am the one complaining of various health problems, but as far as the rest of the employees are concerned I think I heard them mentioning sore eyes and fatigue. According to the employee who raised the issue, the cause of sore eyes is the large amount of time spent in front of the computer, while the cause of fatigue lies in the over-time hours we all work whenever we have a launching or an important event " (A.M.1).

- " the employees have complained of back pains, stomach aches, anxiety, sore eyes and stress owing to deadlines and having to work with clients; the causes lie in having to work with people, the rejection of already completed projects, market pressures" (IT. M.3);

- 'Fatigue is the only health issue mentioned" (IT.M.2).

The other managers claim that their employees "have never complained" of such things ("We have never heard of such complaints from employees" – A.M. 3).

Working time (including the atypical one – evenings, nights, week-ends, shifts)
From the point of view of the working time, there are differences regarding the two economic sectors. In the advertising-marketing sector, regarding the average working hours a day and a week, as well as working nights, week-ends or over 8 hours a day, there are only 2 exceptions (employees of small agencies with Romanian capital) who work constantly 8 hours a day, meaning 40 hours per week, without the need to stay overtime, in the evenings or at week-ends ("the work norm is 8 hours per day, with an hour of lunch break and this rule is strictly respected – A.E.10, 30 years old, Art director), the rest of 14 respondents saying that they always work over 8 hours a day, an average of 9-11 hours a day, getting to 45-55 hours a week, even 55-60 hours per week in the case of the 2 working for multinational agencies; plus, in some week-ends they either work from home, or they go one week-end a month at the office:
    - "An average a day of 10 hours, and a week 55-60. We work in the evenings and on week-ends when there's a lot to do and there usually is. We do not work less or exactly 8 hours a day as a general rule" (employee of a multinational, A.E.4, 24 years old, copywriter);
    - "The average a day was 10 hours and a week 50 hours. There were days when I was working 12-14 hours and days when I left after 6 hours. No one would keep track of how many hours we would spend at the office. The important thing was to respect deadlines and keep clients satisfied. Like in any other agency, there were week-ends when I worked from a few hours to 12 hours. There were many such week-ends, but there were maximum 10 week-ends (in my 3 years working for the agency) when I've worked between 12-14 hours" (A.E.9, 23 years old, account executive).
    In the IT&C sector there are more respondents, like over half of them (8), who stated that they work a constant number of 8 hours a day, meaning 40 hours a week, without having to stay over work, in the evenings or at week-ends. The remaining 7 state that they either work more than 8 hours a day, an average of 9-10 hours a day, leading to 45-50 hours a day, or they have an atypical schedule, having to work shifts or week-ends:
    - "I spend an average of 9 hours a day at work, 45 hours a week. I work 2 weeks the night shift every month and I work one week-end a month either the night shift or the day shift" (IT.E.4, 23 years old, programmer);
    - "I used to work an average of 8 hours a day, as they were in shifts, and at least one day of the week-end started at 7 and ended at 22. Every 2 months I used to work 7 nights in a row" (IT.E.14, 38 years old, network engineer).
    Employee answers are in agreement with those of the sector managers; in the advertising sector, 2 of 3 managers (those working in multinational companies) admit to having asked employees to stay after work in order for the organization to have better results, especially when there is a launching or a big event coming: "inside a advertising agency there are not so busy days and days when you need an extra man at work…time spent over the schedule is necessary in order to finish one's work and although people are not forced to stay more, they do it in order to ensure an efficient launching. It's a stronger bond than the one implied by the contract" (A.M.1). The second respondent claimed to be asking employees to stay more at work, in case there is an emergency, but in the week-ends they can work from home in case of such situation: "In case of emergencies, yes. In general, they work from home if there is an urgent issue to attend to" (A.M.2). The manager of the Romanian company states that schedule is flexibile "it is more important to finish all tasks in due time" (A.M. 3).
    In the IT sector, just one of the managers (the one of the multinational company) explicitly asks employees to stay over work, in order to complete tasks according to deadlines (" Yes, we ask this in order to complete targets and deadlines" – IT.M.1); in the other two cases, the middle-level multinational and the small Romanian company, employees do not work over time, although

sometimes teleworking is involved, or working from home, when damages occur, as "some equipments need continuous monitoring".

The work complexity and intensity

From the point of view of work intensity and work rhythm (different tasks to complete at the same time, fast work mode, short deadlines, insufficient time to complete tasks), the difficulties that employees mention, difficulties that sometimes prevent them from completing tasks in due time and generate expressed discontent, are the same in both economic sectors, with a small difference in the decreasing order of their mentioning frequency:

- many different tasks to complete at the same time – more projects (3-4 at the same time, even 5-7) that overlap and need prioritizing, hence the acknowledged difficulty of respondents to prioritize them, which makes them stay over time or work from home in the evenings or at week-ends;

- too short, unrealistic deadlines for the tasks ;

- too rapid change of tasks – new tasks come immediately after completing old ones ("when one is asked for urgent feedback").

The opinions of some employees are relevant for the above:

- "yes, no one deals with just one project. Usually, you have 3-4 projects to work through. Priorities change all the time when you are asked for urgent feedback, and yes, deadlines are usually problematic, as they are very short. I stick to deadlines because I stay over work, work from home etc." (P.E4, 24 years old, copywriter in a multinational company);

- "there is no deadline for tasks normally, but when it is, it is very short. It's a very fast work mode – you finish a task, you are given another one" (IT.E.1, 24 years old, junior programmer);

- "my work involved different tasks at the same time, very fast work mode and short deadlines. I don't have enough time to finish what I have to do" (IT.E.2, 32 years old, software engineer).

Regarding the degree of cognitive charge (solving unpredicted issues, learning new things, innovation and creativity levels), the majority of employees without management attribution of the advertising-marketing sector (13 out of 16), admit that over half of their daily activity implies creativity, ranging between 50%-90%, constantly learning new things, usually, "on the run" (no distinction is made based on the number of employees or the type of investment of the firm). In the IT&C sector, relatively less employees, two thirds, (10 out of 15), state that over half of their daily activities are creative, ranging from 50%-80%:

- "my work was 90% creative (developing concepts and writing advertising texts for all types and all environments) and 10% translation work and other administrative tasks"(A.E.14, 23 years old, junior copywriter in a multinational company);

- "every task requires you to learn new things, nothing is repetitive or routine, but creative and you have to adapt to new things - 40% routine, 60% creativity"(IT.E.1, 24 years old, junior programmer);

- "a software project implies most of the times many unpredictable issues and learning new things at the same time as developing appliances. 80% creativity, 20% routine" (IT.E.5, 31 years old, system engineer).

The employee professional development

From the point of view of the professional development courses offered by companies and facilitating opportunities for people to participate in these courses, of the 16 hired in the advertising-marketing sector, only a quarter (4) of them had been sent to training courses outside the company, paid by the company (either for personal development – communication, teamwork, or for professional development – connected with the workplace); plus, they receive electronic

books to help them achieve new pieces of knowledge. A third of the respondents participated in *in-house* courses, delivered by their more experienced colleagues:

- "I have participated in a short in-house course on perfect briefing and work-flow inside an agency" (A.E.2, 25 years old, copywriter);

-"training is exclusively in-house, conducted by other, more experienced employees" (A.E.12, 23 years old, web copywriter).

The remaining half of the interviewees of this sector (7) have not participated in such training courses, as the company either relies on their personal knowledge and their capacity to assimilate through individual means, or allows them to participate in such courses and conferences provided they pay for them themselves.

In the IT&C sector, unlike the advertising-marketing one, a greater share of the respondents, meaning two-thirds, went to training courses paid by the company, and admitted that their company has a policy to encourage employee training:

- "It was initially a training paid by the company I work for and I have the possibility to ask for other training courses that will also be paid by the company" (IT.E.6, 25 years old, programmer);

- "I attended a training course paid for by my employer. The employer encourages professional development by offering us the chance to get a certificate in the technology we use for our work" (IT.E.11, 26 years old, programmer).

In the case of a third of the respondents, the employer does not encourage, nor support employee professional development through trainings (sometimes he prevents formal training), or he offers access to complementary resources (books, CDs available at the company's headquarters): "I have never participated in trainings paid by the company. When I attended my Master courses, I was not paid for those hours and I had to work overtime for them" (IT.E, 24 years old, junior programmer).

From the point of view of the interviewed managers working in the advertising-marketing sector, regarding their employees' participating in training courses paid by the company, in the case of the second agency (a multinational, media one), it has been explicitly stated that such trainings are not organized, whereas in the case of the first (the large multinational group), employees "participate in national trainings, in-house ones and international ones. Employees participate in minimum 3 trainings a year. All of them are professional development ones and agency work-related". Even in the case of the Romanian online-marketing agency, the company offers in-house "development trainings every week".

The situation improves in the IT sector, where all three managers explicitly stated that employees participate in such courses, with differences in frequency only, based on their field of activity, where technology evolved rapidly:

- "Yes. Once a year" (IT.E.1);

- "Yes. It is a training programme that employees can join. However, they have go to at least one training a year. Employees of the SEE Software team have participated to an average of 2-3 trainings a year in 2011" (IT.E.2);

- "Yes, they attend such trainings, both together and in person, once very six months" (IT.E.3).

The autonomy degree at workplace

From the point of view of workplace autonomy (expressed through one's possibility to choose or modify working speed, task order, working methods), and participating in decision-making regarding one's own work, there are several visible characteristics of activity in the advertising-marketing sector, mentioned one way or another by all the employees participating in the survey:

- there is a high degree of autonomy – they choose task order and working methods, but not rhythm and speed since they have deadlines imposed by clients and projects need to be deliverd in due time and be high quality ones ("As long as projects are OK and delivered in time, rhythm, task order and methods are of your own choice" – A.E.1, 23 years old, copywriter);

- they participate in decision-making in all the projects they are involved in, as long as their suggestions are supported by logical arguments ("We all contribute as far as decision-making is concerned. Nothing is imposed and we are free to choose projects and tasks" – A.E.11, 34 years old, social media coordinator);

Very few (two) explicitly stated that they do not enjoy such a possibility and their autonomy degree is very low ("We had no control over the flow of projects or deadlines. The team had no autonomy and had to totally agree with the Creative Director" – A.E. 14, 23 years old, junior copywriter).

In the case of the IT sector, workplace autonomy degrees are relatively low; we have identified several features of the IT sector activity, all of them mentioned one way or another by more than half of the respondents:

- there is a certain employee autonomy – they can change working rhythm or task order, but rarely working methods ("Speed/work rhythm/task order can be changed. There is difficulty in doing the same with methods" – IT.E.8, 30 years old, programmer);

- there is high team autonomy inside the organization ("Team micro-management is mostly autonomous, but the overall path is not ours to decide" – IT.E.8, 30 years old, programmer);

There are cases when it is impossible to influence work modes: "I cannot change working rhythm, nor task order or working methods. My tempo is *the faster, the better*, but I would like to have more time available to be sure of my work. I have no say in the decision-making on my work; my boss is a dictator, never asking for anyone's opinion" – IT.E.1, 24 years old, junior programmer.

Decision-making and management style

With regard to management styles in the advertising-marketing agencies, based on the answers of a majority of interviewed employees, we could draw a picture common to all companies of the advertising sector:

- decision-making on strategy is done by the mother company, in the case of multinational agen cies; decisions regarding administrative and financial issues are taken by top management, while project –related decisions are taken by team members ("Decisions on administrative issues are taken on a management level. For projects, we consult inside the team" – A.E.3, 23 years old, senior account executive);

- there is equal cooperation between managers and subordinates in many cases ("The relationships between managers and subordinates are of harmonious cooperation from equal positions" – A.E.10,30 years old, art director), with three exceptions, in which relations between managers and subordinates are rigid and strictly hierarchical ("decision-making is done by the board, without consulting with employees. Managers always treat their employees with an air of superiority" – A.E.14, 23 years old, junior copywriter in a multinational agency); there is also one case mentioned in which equality relationships function only among those of the same age in the company, "the company pillars", whilst juniors do not enjoy the same rights as senior employees;

- there is no internal order regulation, and if there is such a thing, it is only perfunctorily, without being actually implemented ("yes, there is an internal regulation, but just for public knowledge" – P.E 1, 23 years old, copywriter);

- employee control is rarely verbal, or directly, but mostly based on results and reports ("control is strictly based on results or the manner of task completion" – A.E.10, 30 years old, Art Director).   - the final decision is taken by the general manager, after consulting with the heads of departments.

In the IT sector, unlike the advertising one, control is more direct, and regulation is highly important:

- important decisions regarding strategy are taken by the mother-company, as most interviewees work in multinational companies;

- there is equal cooperation between managers and subordinates in most cases ("Relations with direct managers are pretty relaxed; further, we stick to hierarchy" – IT.E.3, 34 years old, programmer), with two exceptions, in which relations between direct managers and subordinates are rigid and strictly hierarchical ("Respecting hierarchy is law"-IT.E.5, 31 years old, system engineer);

- regulations of internal order are present in all cases;

- employee control is both directly, through supervision ("Control is performed directly, the manager is always with us or around us" – IT.E.1, 24 years old, junior programmer) in half of the cases, but also based on results for the other half ("Employee control was performed through the ticketing system and everyone was responsible for his/her decisions" – IT.E.14, 28 years old, network engineer);

- the final decision inside the teams is taken by the team leaders, mostly after consulting with team members ("team decisions are taken by the team leader who consults with us in advance" – IT.E.12, 23 years old, programmer), or directly ("team decisions are taken by the team leader" – IT.E.11, 26 years old, programmer).

In both sectors, employee answers were confirmed by those of the managers. Thus, in the advertising sector, in both multinational companies, "radical" decisions are taken by the mother-company and branch leadership, and those referring to projects – are taken by project teams. However, in the case of the small Romanian company, all employees are involved in decision-making of any type: "when there's a decision to be taken inside the company, all employees are consulted, to the extent that the respective decision affects their work flow in the company; later on, after receiving all feedback, I take the final decision"(A.M.3). With regard to the relationship between managers and employees, this is one of cooperation and even friendship ("Relationships between managers and subordinates are very friendly; any of the employees can anytime go into his manager's office and discuss his/her issues" –M.P.1). As far as employee control is concerned, "this is done directly, by discussing with them" (M.P.2).

In the IT sector, from the point of view of the managers, in all three organizations, decision-making is performed by company leadership, with a slight difference – in the small Romanian company the final decision is taken by the manager, but only after having monthly meetings with the employees:

- "Decisions are 90% taken by company leadership and employees have to obey" (IT.E.1);

- "In-house decisions are taken without priorly consulting with employees" (IT.E.2);

- "Decisions are taken by one decision-maker: the company manager. We have monthly reunions in which all employees participate and based on these the final decision is taken by the company manager" (IT.E.3)

With regard to the relationship between managers and employees these are of cooperation and fellow-like ("relations between managers and subordinates are of cooperation from equal stands" – IT.E.1). As far as employee control is concerned, this is done formally in all three companies, employees being checked through result reports of their work, which "employees fill in at the end of each week. In these reports they have to state their expectations throughout the past week and obstacles they faced" (IT.E.3).

The employees' motivation

By analysing the answers of all interviewed employees, we can group motivation means in the advertising-marketing agencies in the following categories:

- psycho-social means, which are generally used by small Romanian agencies – official thanking, encouragements ("Well done!"), sending employees to trainings paid by the firm, individual training plan for a certain employee after evaluation, symbolic rewards, feedback, a day off, plus a gift or a cake for one's birthday, promotions, offering extended responsibilities or extended autonomy, flexibility, rewards for seniority;

- financial means, generally used by big, multinational agencies – bonuses for successful projects, "each employee's revenue is made up of the monthly payment, plus bonuses for group performances, plus bonuses for individual performances" (A.E.2, 25 years old, copywriter), medical insurance, holiday bonus, bonuses for working week-ends.

A single case of explicit discontent has been mentioned by an employee of a multinational agency: "I have never felt any kind of positive attempt from the management to motivate me. There was only negative motivation: threats and yelling" (A.E.14, 23 years old, junior copywriter in a multinational company).

As far as the other economic sector is concerned, employee answers revealed that some IT companies offer employees both types of motivation means, but most of them focus on psycho-social, non-material stimuli:

- financial means – payment benefits, bonuses, raises for ourtstanding results;

- psycho-social ones – promotions, offering extended responsibilities or extended autonomy, sending them to trainings paid by the company, symbolic gifts such as pens, backpacks, scarfs, T-shirts inscribed with the company's name in order to strengthen their organizational identity ("Motivational means are meant to create employee attachment to the company through payment benefits; promotions; increasing responsibilities and autonomy. Creating the image of a prestigious company whose employees should be proud to be working for; using artefacts such as uniforms, pens, badges inscribed with the company's name that all employees wear and use"- IT.E.12, 23 years old, programmer; "Motivational means were related to personal development advantages" – IT.E.14, 38 years old, network engineer).

There is just one case when the interviewed employee referred to the absence of any kind of motivational means.

Managers' answers confirm those of the employees, but also offer an overall perspective according to which motivational means depend on company income, which also depends on company size and capital source. In the advertising-marketing sector, in the large multinational company, motivational means are established through clear policies coming from the mother-company (promotions, benefits, bonuses), and the local management can add autonomy and professional development; in the small multinational company there are no such motivational means, while the Romanian company uses extensively psycho-social means, that do not require big investments (increasing autonomy and responsibilities, after work relaxation activities, professional development). In the IT sector, according to managers, these motivational means differ based on company income: promotions, training, strong organizational culture in order to strengthen organizational identity in the big multinational company; bonuses, trainings and autonomy in the small multinational company; benefits for successful projects and rewards consisting of electronic equipment offer to the employees of the small Romanian company.

The work-life balance

From the point of view of the private life-work balance, and with regard to the need to allocate some of one's spare time in order to finish some work tasks, two thirds of the interviewees working in the advertising-marketing sector stated that they work in their spare time, after work (in the evenings or at week-ends) in order to complete their tasks:

- "I had experienced having too much to work, working outside schedule hours, giving up on personal life some years ago. Then, after nervous breakdowns and serious health problems, I

realised that my life was worth more than anything" (A.E.11, 34 years old, social media coordinator);

- "Since there was too much work and no fixed schedule (only the hour of arrival to the office was a fixed one and had to be strictly obeyed) I made no clear distinction between personal time and work time" (A.E.14, 23 years old, junior copywriter in a multinational company).

However, in the IT sector, most interviewed employees claim that they do not work in their spare time, after work (in the evenings or at week-ends) in order to complete their tasks, as they have a fixed schedule (9 hours in general, with 1 hours lunch break), long enough to be able to complete all their tasks, so that their personal life is not affected:

- "I never work in my spare time. I can adapt my working schedule within some limits. I was never unable to fulfil my family engagements because of my workplace" – IT.E.11, 26 years old, programmer;

- "I never work in my spare time, but if I feel the need to gain further knowledge I sometimes read extra in the evenings" – IT.E.7, 28 years old, programmer.

Measures proposed by employees and measures taken by managers in order to improve working conditions

Here are, in a decreasing order based on the frequency of their mentioning, the measures that interviewed employees of the advertising-marketing sector would introduce in order to improve working conditions, provided they had managerial attributions (we shall list only the first five of them):

- decreasing overload and crowdedness by turning down some projects or putting in charge more teams that will work for the campaigns that will be presented for pitches, or selecting clients, turning down short deadline projects, hiring new people;

- positively motivating employees by encouraging them, creating opportunities for having fun at work, creating a more open, friendly environment, ("creating fun opportunities, by equipping the place – a fusball table, a boardgame, some dvd-s, wii, activities that we could organize, in a natural manner, for a more pleasant and even more productive atmosphere" – A.E.4, 24 years old, copywriter in a multinational company);

- informing employees with regard to monthly objectives ("so that they have a reference point"), clearly explaining employees the expectations that managers have from them, work flows and individual tasks;

- encouraging socializing between employees, who do not know each other and who always talk about work projects even when they meet outside work ("they should emphasize socialization. In our company everyone has headphones on their ears all the time and you can only hear the sound of keyboards and even when going out on company team-building, we're still discussing our work projects, mainly because we don't know each other that well. I think more effort should be put into finding activities that imply socialization" – A.E.8, 23 years old, online marketing specialist);

- investing in the employees' intellectual development, offering professional development opportunities, in agreement with their personal targets ("I would make sure that everyone has access to information and that their development is in agreement with their career plans" – A.E.12, 23 years old, web copywriter).

Here are the work conditions improving methods that IT employees suggest, in a decreasing order of the frequency of them being mentioned (still the first five):

- eliminating extra hours, "as they are unpaid anyway", bonuses for employees showing outstanding results (IT.E.12, 23 years old, programmer), fair payment ("at least at market level") of those who "really" work (IT.E.14, 38 years old, network engineer);

- dividing work equally throughout the year, in order to avoid crowded times (IT.E.1, 24 years old, junior programmer);

-encouraging employee communication (IT.E.5, 31 years old, system engineer), including the team going out together more often;

-investing in the employees' professional training and organizing exchanges with co-workers from abroad (IT.E.1, 24 years old, junior programmer);

- encouraging employee imagination and creativity ("I'd encourage them to *think out of the box*. You need imagination and creativity also, not just money" – IT.E.8, 30 years old, programmer)

Along with the measures that employees would take, provided they had management attributions, here are also the tangible measures that the interviewed managers have actually taken, in order to improve the working conditions of their employees, a small number of them actually, and insufficiently responding to the needs of the employees. Thus, in the advertising-marketing sector, the measures that the three respondents claim to have taken in order to improve their employees' life quality differ based on the company dimension and type of investment, budget implicitly:

- in the large multinational company, which has considerable revenue: "annual medical check, private heath insurances, in-house kitchen, in order to ensure access to healthy eating at lunches, trainings for professional development based on skills, making internal procedures more efficient" (A.M.1);

- in the smaller multinational organization, measures that do not involve financial investments, such as a relaxed work atmosphere – "work atmosphere is pretty relaxed, employees having time to solve also their personal problems" (A.M.2);

- in the small Romanian company, the same policy applies, because of lack of high revenues – a flexible working schedule – "we've established a flexible working schedule, so that employees are not forced to spend a fixed amount of time at the office. Practically, we've changed our focus from spending more time at the office, to the quality of task accomplishment" (A.M.3).

In the IT& C sector, the measures that the three interviewed managers claim to have taken in order to improve their employees' life quality are different, based not on the budget, but on company policy:

- in the large multinational company, where one would have expected raises or more trainings paid by the company, employees are simply offered "emotional and informational support" (IT.E.1);

- in the smaller multinational company, there were both measures implying financial investments, but also psycho-social ones –"private health insurance, a Health & Fitness subscription, possibilities to work from home, flexible working time" (IT.E.2);

- in the small Romanian company, there are even money stimulents - "wage raises, days off when the employee needs it urgently, going out at restaurants with the team after work for recreation" (IT.E.3).

Conclusions

Research limitations are related to the characteristics of qualitative research through interviews, research whose results are exploratory, descriptive and can not be generalized to all employees and managers in the two sectors in which interviews were conducted, the more can not be generalized to all employees in knowledge-intensive services sectors in Romania.

According to the results of the performed research in the two economic sectors from the area of intensive-knowledge services, there are several similarities regarding highly-qualifies employees' discontent, often related to the knowledge nature of their work, such as: health problems common to both sectors that managers are not entirely aware off, complex and intense work (too short deadlines, too many different tasks in the same time, that also change very rapidly, but over 50% of daily activities are creative ones, not routine).

Unlike another research conducted internationally on a theme related (Brinkley et. al., 2009), which identifies only overload as cause of employees stress, it is true in view of HR managers, our research brings a new perspective, the employees and their superiors view, that brings to light other employees complaints: lack of work-life balance, insufficient professional development courses paid by the company, physical health problems caused by the pressure of deadlines and tasks that change too often etc. Measures taken to improve the situation of managers surveyed are superficial and do not solve the underlying problems, noticing the lack of implementation of some managerial practices used of firms in the KIBS sector in which a previous research was conducted, in Hungary and Slovakia (Mako et al., 2011).

There have also been identified differences in the employees' discontent from both sectors, related to the specifics of their work: in the advertising sector, a regular working time of 8 hours a day is an exception, while the general rule is to work extra hours, sometimes even at week-ends, which leads to the lack of balance between work and private life; in the IT&C sector, the regular 8 hours a day working time is the rule, there is balance between professional and private life – these have been confirmed by the managers of both sectors. In the advertising sector the causes lie in having to work directly with a client who can ask for repeated changes in the project, participating in pitches in order to win the right to conduct certain advertising campaigns etc. Another difference lies in the fact that in the IT&C sector, a part of the employees are sent to training courses paid by the company, probably because in the IT&C sector technological progress is more rapid. Furthermore, we have found a higher degree of workplace autonomy and results-based control in the advertising sector compared to the IT one, probably because of the need of advertising workers to feel free in order to create "fresh", artistic messages.

There are also several differences coming from the company's size and source of capital. Thus, there are common situations in the small Romanian advertising-marketing and IT&C companies and other common situations in the large multinational companies of the two sectors. More precisely, with regard to decision-making, the important strategic ones are taken by the mother company, and the project related ones, are taken by the department heads, sometimes after consulting with members in multinationals from both sectors; in the small companies of both sectors, decisions are taken by the general manager also taking into account employee opinions, which has been confirmed also by the interviewed managers. In the case of motivational means there is similar symmetry: psycho-social means in the small Romanian companies from both sectors and financial means in the larger foreign ones.

The measures to improve the situation, proposed by employees, are similar for both sectors and are related to the knowledge nature of their work: decreasing overload, professional development possibilities, relaxed and friendly working environment, etc. The results of the present research is aimed especially managers of organizations from the studied sectors, but in general managers of knowledge-intensive organizations, which by improving their experts-employees working conditions, will help increase the competitiveness of their firms through their employees loyalty and thus avoiding their migration, and also by motivating them to raise their performance at work.

Intensive-knowledge services have a low level of associating employees in trade unions, with professional associations being more relevant for them. Since there is no tradition of protecting employee working conditions, it is thus crucial to encourage managers from these sectors to follow best practices in order to create satisfying working conditions and achieve a balance between work and private life of the employees, which are in fact the vital resource of these companies.

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