



Promoting the attractiveness of jobs in the logistics service provider sector

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Abstract. A major reason for the lack of qualified personnel is the low attractiveness and image of a sector. The logistics service providers represents one of the sectors struggling with an urgent need for qualified personnel. Due to the high labour intensity, the logistics service provider sector highly depends on the qualification and motivation of its employees. The aim of this paper is to develop recommendations to increase the job attractiveness in the logistics service provider sector. Therefore, after realizing a literature review and we conducted seven qualitative expert interviews with executives and HR managers of the sector to identify the target group for potential employees. Then, we did a quantitative survey with 349 potential employees to evaluate potential employee's view. Based on the results of the qualitative and quantitative research, we developed recommendations for companies, public and educational institutions. The results show that it is of major relevance to promote the sector actively, either through field trips, company visits or internships. Since the knowledge about the sector is often limited, it is vital to promote the sector already in schools. .

1 Introduction

Qualified personnel is essential for a properly working economy. The lack of qualified personnel leads to a decline in the productivity of companies [1]. Certain sectors are more affected by a lack of qualified personnel than others, such as the health or the logistics sector [2]. In general, the supply and demand of jobs is unbalanced meaning that potential employees face a wide range of choices as companies are desperately looking for personnel. This unbalanced situation on the labour market underlines the importance of analysing those sectors, which are currently rather unattractive for job seekers. To increase efficiency and productivity in those sectors it is particularly relevant to define measures to increase attractiveness [3].

2 The shortage of qualified personnel in the logistics service provider sector

Logistics service providers are organizational units dealing with the physical transport of goods. In recent years, other services such as storage or order picking of goods have been added to the main task of transportation [4]. The logistics service provider sector is showing a thoroughly positive development with an worldwide increasing demand for logistics jobs [3].

However, the logistics service provider sector is increasingly complaining about a shortage of qualified personnel [1,5,6]. One of the challenges, which is faced by the sector are the changing job profiles due to increasing digitalization [7]. Another great challenge is the fact, that the sector is hardly attractive for potential employees. Since the logistics service provider sector is confronted with a tense personnel situation, it is essential to promote the job attractiveness in order to encourage qualified personnel, i.e. not only prospective apprentices but also career changers, to take up one of the professions in the logistics service provider sector [8,9].

3 Methods

The research design consists of both qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative interviews with experts from the logistics service provider sector reflect the employers' view and the quantitative survey represents the employees' view. All empirical work was done in Austria. The focus of the expert interviews is the current personnel situation in the logistics service provider sector, the used personnel recruitment channels and the desired educational level of potential employees. The response about the needed educational level defined the target group for the subsequent quantitative survey. The quantitative survey consisted of three parts: the requirements for a future job, the presentation of jobs on the web and the logistics service provider sector in general.

Afterwards, the results of the qualitative and quantitative results were analysed and recommendations for measures to increase the attractiveness of the logistics service provider sector were derived.

3.1. Qualitative methods

We conducted seven qualitative interviews with managers and personnel executives of the logistics service provider sector. This type of survey is particularly suitable for incorporating the personal opinions of the respondents into the research [10]. The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and edited through literal transcripts. The interviews were evaluated using the qualitative content analysis according to Mayring. The qualitative expert interviews determined the target group for the subsequent quantitative survey as higher schools specialized in economics [10].

3.2 Quantitative methods

For the quantitative survey we contacted higher schools specialized in economics. Four of the ten contacted schools agreed to participate at the survey. The survey was conducted using a standardized questionnaire, which was pre-tested with three didactical experts. We conducted the survey face-to-face in the schools with 394 respondents. The questionnaires were completed in paper format and afterwards digitized for evaluation. For the digitization, the individual questionnaires were transferred to an online survey. The standardized questionnaire consisted of closed questions to facilitate comparability and evaluation. The evaluation of the questionnaires was done using descriptive statistics [11].

4 Results

The qualitative interviews showed that although the personnel situation in the logistics service provider sector is very difficult there is hardly any apparent shortage noticeable at the moment. Higher schools

specialized in economics represent well-qualified potential employees for jobs in the logistics service provider sector. The experts evaluate their sector as highly attractive with varying job profiles and interesting challenges. However, the attractiveness is hardly visible enough for people from outside the sector. They argue that there is a lack of transparency about what the logistics service provider sector has to offer. In addition, the ancient reputation of the traditional logistics job as freight forwarder needs to be changed in people's minds, since it contributes to low attractiveness of the logistics service provider sector.

The quantitative survey with potential employees found that the logistics service provider sector is to some extent known to the students. Rather unknown is the fact that customer advisory service and sales are among the activities of logistics service providers. The respondents stated that they knew the logistics service provider sector mainly from school. Around one quarter of the participants could imagine working in the logistics service provider sector. Those who did not consider a job in the logistics service provider sector said that the sector was too unattractive and the job itself is uninteresting.

In general, the most important criteria for choosing a profession are the enjoyment and an interesting work. Information about jobs are mainly obtained from company websites, but also from websites of public institutes such as labour market services. When presenting jobs on the web, it is essential to present information about the career path and detailed information about the daily activities. The integration of videos is less relevant

5 Recommendations, conclusion and further research

We developed recommendations for companies, public and educational institutions to increase attractiveness of jobs in the logistics service provider sector based on the literature and qualitative and quantitative empirical research. It is important that public institutions contribute to improve the image of certain low-attractive sectors by the implementation of image campaigns tailored to the target group [6] e.g. by means of lectures or bring the awareness of logistics professions to the students in a gamified way [12]. Furthermore, it is important to publish uniform job descriptions across various public institutions [13].

In order to increase the attractiveness of jobs, companies should use marketing directly at schools. For example, company presentations, company visits, field trips, the regular offer of internships and supervision of final theses are suitable ways to approach potential employees [14]. Moreover, companies should position jobs at online labour job exchanges, as those are the most frequently used platforms by students. It is important to present job profiles on the company's website, since potential

employees often obtain information about jobs directly on the company's websites.

The topic of promoting the job attractiveness is a young field of research, which receives increased attention when the situation on the labour market became more challenging and the first negative effects appeared. It is important to keep potential workers in the focus of future research initiatives. Knowledge about the needs and requirements of the workforce can enable companies to successfully recruit personnel and to relax the personnel situation in their own company. Since the results showed that almost 25% of the respondents would take a job in the logistics service provider sector, further research should focus on the application phase of potential employees. The question on why these potential employees finally decide against a job in the logistics service provider sector should be clarified. Moreover, this study was purely conducted in Austria, a transfer to other regions would deliver further results.

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