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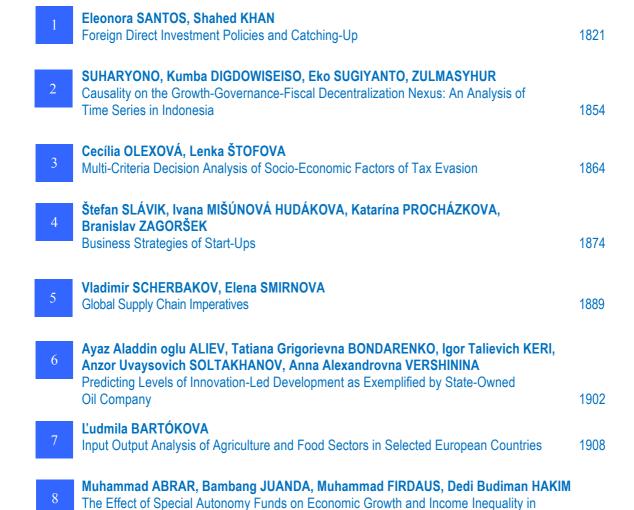
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The Management of Human Resources in Health Industries: A Multicriteria Approach

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Abstract:

In this paper we consider the problem of optimal management of human resources in a very peculiar framework that is Health Industry. Starting from a case study we consider a general problem of optimal mobility between employees that offer their services in a multidimensional Health Industry in a wide regional area. The case we have in mind is the possibility for a number of employees in the same Health Industry to move in different locations according to both personal and strategic reasons. The firm management must consider a number of variables and criteria in order to define a final ranking between the employees in the same category; consequently, a typical multricriteria decision problem arises. In this paper we propose a possible solution that takes into account quantitative criteria and optimal business strategies in order to define the optimal allocation of resources.

Keywords: health industry; multicriteria analysis; human resources; mobility

JEL Classification: O15; P36; D81; C44

Introduction

The problem of optimal allocation of human resources is a very important issue above all in the case of Health Industries were a public or a controlled company manages the health services of a geographical regions with many locations (Chen *et al.* 2004, Dowling, Schuler and Welch 1991, Grilli and Russo 2017, Hendry 2012, Leonard, Graham and Bonacum 2004). The health service is a 24 hours - 365 days service and must always guarantee a very high level of performance. In this study we consider, for sake of simplicity, three kinds of employees that are: nurses; rescuers and drivers. In general, a typical working day consists of three shifts (8-14; 14-20 and 20-8) with a fixed minimum number of nurses, rescuers and drivers in order to provide an appropriate health service.

Let us suppose that the region consists of k (integer) hospitals with a minimum number of employees sufficient in order to provide the health service also in the case of absences or leaves.

The health firm management must allocate or re-allocate periodically and optimally, all the employees in all the hospitals in the region (Grilli and Russo 2017).

The allocation of human resources takes into account different specific criteria that go from personal, familiar to working-economical issues. The management must re-allocate the employees in the area considering a number of criteria approved by all involved parts. In order to obtain this goal it is necessary a bargaining process that should involve workers, unions and firm management in order to find a number of criteria, related to residence, seniority, family status and also meritocratic aspects.

We consider a specific case-study proposed by a controlled Health Firm in the southern Italy, as shown in the section 3. The model has been successfully adopted by the health firm and can be considered in a must general framework.

1. The Methodology

We consider a general case of a firm with a fixed number of employees indicated by: L_i with i = 1, ..., n. The employees can be also of different types and categories. As stated before the health company must guarantee a 24 h - 365 days service provided in three working shifts of 8 hours each. The workers can be allocated in a geographical area with a fixed number of towns: T_i with i = 1, ..., m.

The Health Firm has to find an optimal allocation for all the n employees taking into account a number of criteria that are fixed and shared in advance. Let denote by C_i with i = 1, ..., k each criterion. In our case, the bargaining process with unions, workers and management has produced and selected the following criteria:

- Work Experience (in other health-companies):
 - less than 2 years = no points;
 - between 2 and 5 years = three points;
 - more than 5 years = six points.
- Work Experience in the firm: 6 points for each year (365 days);
- Children: eight points for each under-age child and four points for every adult-child in the family nucleus;
- Certified disability: 12 points;
- Work experience in the specific location in which the employee should be moved: 2 points for every year of service, up to a maximum of 10 points.

In order to compute the ranking in each town, all the employee of the company is invited to complete a survey that includes the following information: personal data, position, hire date in the company, city of residence, previous positions (with hire date and date of contract end), family status, under-age children and adult children, disability conditions, favourite work towns (up to four), work experience in each favourite work town.

Once the survey has been completed, the data undergo a review process in order to avoid errors and inconsistencies. The validated date is computed according to the selected criteria and a final ranking is obtained for each town and for each position involved in the analysis. The final rankings in each town and for each position allow the human resource manager to select and move employees among the different work locations by means of quantitative criteria. In the following section we present a case study in which this procedure has been applied.

2. Case Study

In this section we present a case study in which the previous methodology has been applied. We consider the case of a controlled health company in a region in Southern Italy which manage the emergency ambulance service in a wide area consisting of 34 towns.

The company counts about 275 employees divided into three main categories: nurses; rescuers and drivers. The problem is to manage optimally the mobility of employees in each town. It is a typical problem of ordering procedure in a multivariate context (Grilli, Russo and Sfrecola 2011, Grilli and Russo 2008).

Following the methodology illustrated in the previous section, the employees have completed a survey containing the following information: personal data; position; hire date in the company; city of residence; previous positions (with hire date and date of contract end); family status; under-age children and adult children; disability conditions; favourite work towns (up to four); work experience in each favourite work town.

We have collected 275 survey that are: 87 rescuers; 86 nurses and 102 drivers. Data have been validated in order to apply the selected criteria that are: Work Experience (in other health-companies); Work Experience in the firm; Family Status; Disability conditions; Work experience in the selected location.

In Table 1 we present an example (simplified) of data obtained (personal details have been erased) in the case of one workers' category:

Table 1. Town X. Selected data from the survey. In this table we have erased all the personal data and other information that are not relevant in the example.

Worker	Work Experience in this firm (days)	Previous Work Experience	Number of sons (TOTAL)	Under-Age Children	Vork Experience in the selected town	Disability Condition
Α	3163	3614	2	1	9	Y
В	3346	3942	4	3	6	N
С	3407	1976	0	0	6	N
D	2615	1644	1	1	4	Y
Е	3103	1005	1	1	2	N
F	3042	0	1	1	2	N

In the following Table 2 we present an example of the results of computations for one worker category.

Table 2. Town X. Criteria: C1 Work Experience; C2 Seniority in the present firm; C3 under-age children; C4 adult-children; C5 Certified Disability; C6 Work experience in the selected town.

Town X		Date: 31/12/2017						
Ranking	Worker	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	Score
2	Α	6	52	8	4	12	10	92
1	В	6	55	24	4	0	10	99
4	С	6	56	0	0	0	10	72
3	D	3	43	8	0	12	8	74
5	Е	3	51	8	0	0	4	66
6	F	0	50	8	0	0	4	62

The health firm management, provided with rankings for all workers' category, can decide optimally how to re-allocate the human resource according to the firm and service needs.

The present method has been usefully tested and the firm currently applies this method for the management of the human resource in term of spatial allocation.

Conclusions

We have presented a method to solve the problem of optimal allocation of human resource in the health industry in the case of a big number of employees and different working locations (in different towns). The problem has been addressed by a big health public company with about 300 employees in 34 towns. The human resource manager has the problem of optimal reallocate the employees according to specific needs that are often service related. The health service has peculiar characteristics since it must be ensured 365 days per year, 24 hours per day. The company was not able to apply quantitative methods in order to decide how to distribute the workers among the different towns. The decision process started with a consultation with the stakeholder including workers' unions in order to define the criteria to be adopted in order to create the final rankings.

Once obtained the list of criteria and weights for each criterion, a method of ordering data by means of a multicriteria method has been proposed and the firm has successfully applied it. We think that similar methods can be adopted in other similar contexts in which there are a big number of employees to be re-allocated in different locations.

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