
The Significance of Intra-Organizational Mobility Procedures in Modern Organizations

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Abstract:

Purpose: The aim of the article is to present the significance of the procedure of intra-organizational employee mobility in modern organizations. Additionally, the following answers were sought: what procedures occur most often in the field of human resources management, whether there are also separate ones related to intra-organizational mobility employee, and if the organization does not have them, whether they are included in other procedures.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This study is empirical in nature. The research was conducted in 2020 in 401 Polish organizations (medium and large). The research method included a diagnostic survey using an on-line questionnaire. Persons holding the position of HR Specialist or HR Manager in a given organization were directly responsible for completing the questionnaires.

Findings: The results showed that only a quarter of the surveyed organizations have procedures dedicated to internal mobility, in every third of them they are in written form, and in every tenth there are no such procedures and there is not even a plan for their implementation. It was also shown that they are most often included in the procedure related to internal recruitment, talent management and employee development.

Practical Implications: Those organizations that have procedures for intra-organizational mobility employee can consciously manage human potential, create a diverse work environment for employees, better utilize employee potential and prevent employee retention.

Originality/Value: This article makes a significance contribution to the research on the significance of intra-organizational mobility employee as a distinct procedure. It highlights its crucial importance for the functioning of contemporary organizations.

Keywords: Procedure, intra-organizational mobility, human resources management, personnel policy, employee retention.

JEL codes: M1, M12.

Paper type: Research article.

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1. Introduction

For many years, effective methods and tools have been sought, primarily aimed at using the competency potential of employees (Allen, Bryant, and Vardaman 2010). One of such elements is the intra-organizational mobility employee, which can be the organization's focus on its activity in terms of developing valuable employee potential.

Although the issue of intra-organizational mobility employee has been the subject of theoretical and practical considerations for many years (Vantaggiato *et al.*, 2024, Sagioglou *et al.*, 2023, Dlugos and Keller, 2021, Shen and Hall, 2009), there are still many areas that require in-depth analysis. All the more so because research most often focuses on such management instruments as strategy and structure (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2011) or organizational culture.

Moreover, when considering intra-organizational mobility employee as a change in the organizational structure, it should be remembered that it is not only initiated and created by subjective factors, but also by the work environment, which affects the employee's conditions and situation. Therefore, the role of the organization in shaping the space for the development of this mobility cannot be ignored (Bednarska-Wnuk 2021).

Thus, intra-organizational employee mobility should not only formally function alongside methods such as talent management (Marchington *et al.*, 2021, Shen and Hall, 2009) or be an alternative to humanizing work methods, but should be an integral element of strategic human resources management, additionally supported by specific organizational procedures.

It should also be noted that in most organizations there are no separate procedures describing intra-organizational mobility, but they are most often included in others, already functioning as part of the HR policy.

The lack of empirical research in the area of intra-organizational mobility employee and its connections with organizational procedures (Marciniak, 2018) as an important management instrument and understanding their current relationship were the main reasons for undertaking research in this area. Taking this into account, the aim of this article was to show the importance of the procedure of intra-organizational employee mobility in contemporary organizations.

Additionally, the following answers were sought: what procedures occur most often in the field of human resources management, whether there are also separate procedures related to intra-organizational mobility employee, and if the organization does not have them, whether they are included in other procedures. This study is an attempt to fill the research gap in this area.

2. Literature Review

When undertaking the task of defining mobility as a category describing movement in organizational space, it should be emphasized that it will be addressed to units occupying the area of the organization and the type of activities conducted by it, which are the result of its relations with the immediate environment (Sikorski and Bieńkowska, 2012, p. 205). Often, to explain its essence, terms such as turnover (Jackofsky 1984; Griffeth, Horn, and Gaertner 2000), employee reallocation (Gianelle, 2014) or intraorganizational mobility (Vantaggiato *et al.*, 2024; Sagioglou *et al.*, 2023; McElroy, Morrow, and Mullen 1996) are used.

Intraorganizational mobility can be defined as the movement of employees between different positions within the same organization. Such movements can be lateral—without a change in rank—or diagonal—which includes a change in rank—and may or may not involve adapting various tasks to a given person (Vantaggiato *et al.*, 2024). Vertical movements can also be included among such mobilities.

This is the most desirable model of mobility in an organization, associated with prestige, increased status, responsibility, and financial resources. Moving employees within an organization causes some employees to be open to diversity and mobility, as well as increasingly focused on achieving their own goals, thus being a source of more or less desirable employee turnover (Skowron-Mielnik and Gołembski, 2019).

The role of procedures becomes clear for the efficient functioning and undertaking of mobility activities in an organization. They are defined as combinations of data collection systems, detailed analyses applied to this information and principles of control of actions taken based on the results of these analyses (Butterworth, 2007).

Procedures therefore describe how individual processes in an organization should look like in the context of the implementation of their functions and the entire management system. The basic task that a procedure is to fulfill is to improve the way of proceeding in the area to which it relates.

Therefore, the procedure should reflect the authentic conditions of functioning of a specific area in which it will be applied. Otherwise, it will not fulfill its basic task and its presence in the system will not affect the improvement of the management system (Embros, 2014, p. 140). In addition, numerous regulations and procedures are intended to ensure the predictability of employee behavior (Białas *et al.*, 2023, p. 76). They are also an excellent tool that improves and organizes the management of an organization (Marciniak, 2018, p. 84).

Procedures concern every aspect related to the organization. In the context of the conducted considerations related to intra-organizational mobility employee, the personnel function takes on special significance, which includes all matters

concerning people in the organization, i.e., their acquisition, management or professional development (Król and Ludwiczynski, 2006, p. 34). According to J. Marciniak, in an organization, internal regulations referring to key elements related to the functioning of employees, such as: issues of division of labor, duties and rights of individual persons or organization of work processes, have extremely important formal significance (Marciniak, 2012, p. 10).

Procedures in organizations regarding personnel policy may differ from each other: in the degree of detail of the provisions formulated in them regarding the rules of conduct of employees and the number of those referring to the scope of personnel policy.

The most common procedures within the HR policy include: procedures related to employment planning, external and internal recruitment of employees, employee selection, employee adaptation, preparation and implementation of the individual employee development system – coaching, mentoring, training, employee assessment, employee remuneration system, employee development, job evaluation, employment restructuring program in the enterprise, employee retention, employee departure, HR function audit, controlling or image building (Marciniak, 2018).

A detailed description of these procedures indicates that intra-organizational mobility procedures can be found in other procedures such as: in the procedure related to employee development, training procedure, employee retention procedure, talent management procedure or in the procedure related to the employment restructuring program in the organization.

Therefore, it seems that taking into account the various activities included in the intra-organizational mobility of employees, formalized rules in the form of a separate procedure dedicated to intra-organizational mobility employee can also function in the organization. Moreover, standardization of such activities would not exclude the existence of other personnel policy procedures focused on their key aspects.

Thus, the procedures used by organizations to transfer employees to and between positions can be a key way in which human capital is allocated in organizations (Bidwell, 2000, p. 153). When designing them, various factors should be taken into account, especially in a large organization, and at the same time the fact that one operates in conditions of high variability and considerable uncertainty (Oleksyn, 2011).

Personnel policy procedures in an organization can also take on a contractual nature, and their application in this case can only be based on experience and practice rather than on specific, formalized principles. Nevertheless, a trend towards standardization of personnel activities is becoming visible, which aim to

develop a catalog of rules in the form of official documents (Konecki, Pawłowska, and Byczkowska-Owczarek, 2014, p. 26). This standardization determines law and order in the organization. Therefore, it is important to know whether there are procedures for intra-organizational employee mobility in organizations, or whether they are included in other procedures in the field of human resources management, and to what extent they are used by modern organizations.

3. Research Method

The research was anonymous and was carried out in 2020 using the diagnostic survey method using the survey technique. It should be noted here that the research presented in this article is only a part of the research conducted on intra-organizational mobility employee in Polish organizations (Bednarska-Wnuk, 2021).

The tool used was a survey questionnaire for the study of intra-organizational employee mobility (IME), which was designed independently. It consisted of two parts. The first part concerned the use of solutions for the function of intra-organizational employee mobility. The research tool included those solutions that were rated the highest by competent judges in the expert study and formulated on the basis of their opinions. The second part of the tool was related to management instruments, including the procedures used.

The sampling frame used was a database of business entities purchased specifically for the study from the Central Statistical Office, which contained 31,944 business entities employing at least 50 employees and entered in the REGON register as of April 30, 2020.

Medium and large enterprises were deliberately selected for the study. This selection was related to the functioning of a specific structure and strategy in these organizations, enabling intra-organizational mobility employee processes. A simple sample of 2115 entities employing at least 50 employees was selected.

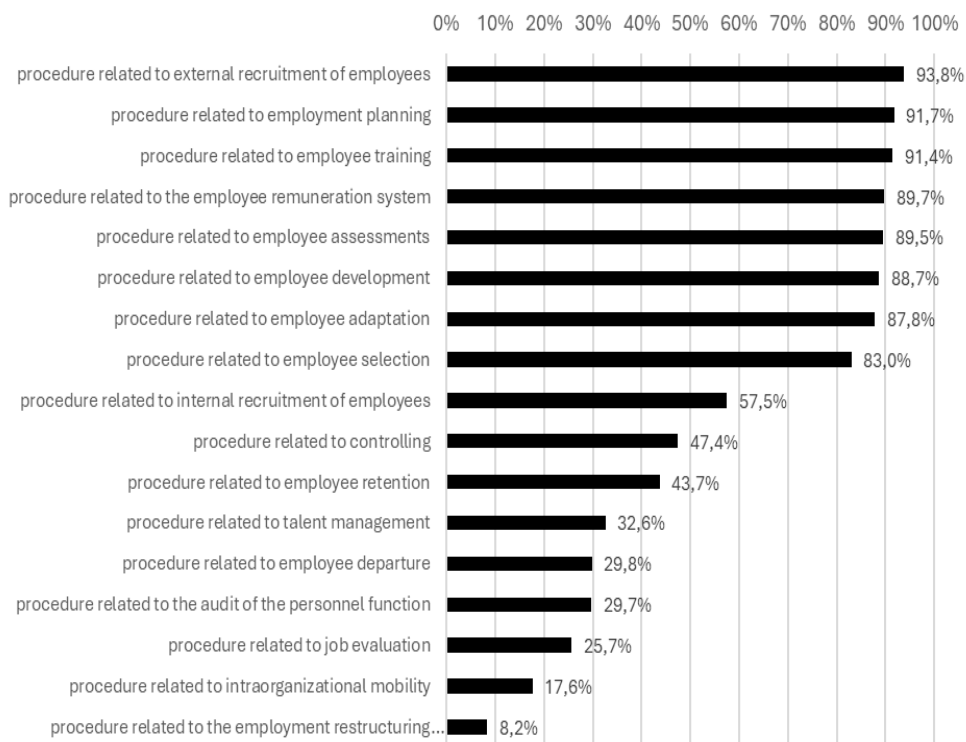
A link to an online survey questionnaire was sent to these organizations, to persons holding the position of Head of the Human Resources Department/HR or HR manager. It was assumed that only one person representing a given organization could participate in the study. 401 organizations participated in the study, of which 30.4% were medium-sized organizations and 69.6% were large.

4. Research Results and Discussion

When analyzing the procedures used by enterprises (more broadly Bednarska-Wnuk 2021, p. 207-218), it is necessary to first identify what – generally speaking – human resources management procedures are used in the surveyed organizations (Figure 1). Almost all of them use procedures related to internal recruitment of employees, employment planning and training. Nearly 90% concern the employee

remuneration system, employee assessments, employee development and their adaptation, and in 83% - also their selection. A specific policy related to employment restructuring was mentioned in approximately every twelfth organization. It should be emphasized that the procedure related to intra-organizational mobility employee was in second place from the end, with a percentage of indications of 17.6%.

Figure 1. *Human resource management procedures used in organizations*

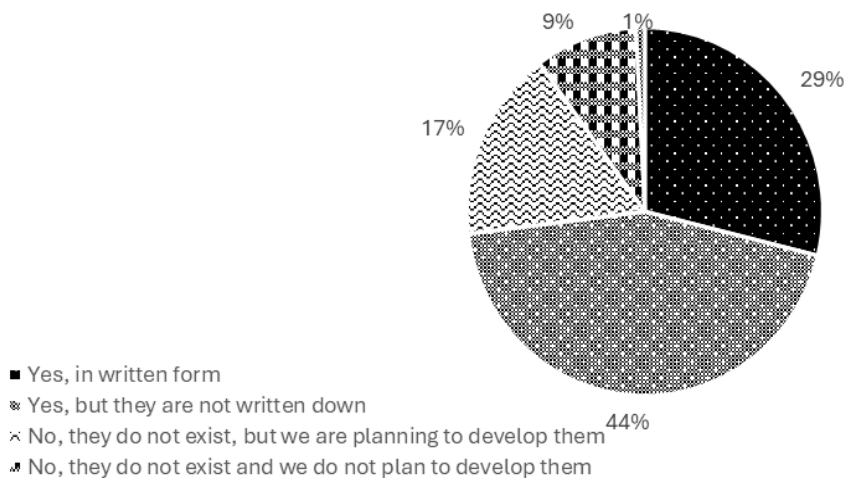


Source: *Own study based on the results of the CAWI survey.*

Thus, the respondents' declaration regarding the procedures applied related to intra-organizational mobility employee was not often mentioned. Interestingly, when asked about the next question – whether the organization has procedures regarding intra-organizational employee movements – almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents answered yes. It can therefore be estimated that they are implemented in three out of four medium and large enterprises (Figure 2).

Nevertheless, they are more often less formalized, not written down (44% of all respondents) – written procedures were declared in only 29% of organizations. It was also noted that almost every tenth company does not have them and has no plans to develop them.

Figure 2. Application of procedures for intra-organizational employee mobility (in %)



Source: Own study based on the results of the CAWI survey.

In organizations that indicated the existence of written procedures, we were asked to what extent they were used (it should be recalled that they constituted 29% of the entire group). Table 1 presents the results in this area (response rates and basic descriptive statistics). It should be noted that not all procedures were used in this group of organizations (this is illustrated by the option "not applicable", which indicates the percentage of organizations with written procedures regarding intra-organizational employee mobility that do not use a specific solution).

The lowest percentage, not exceeding 5% (indicating the commonness of using a specific procedure in this area) concerns eight solutions (procedures related to employment planning, external recruitment of employees, employee training, their adaptation, selection, employee assessments, the remuneration system). What may be surprising is that 12.6% of organizations do not use them in relation to procedures related to internal recruitment of employees.

It should be emphasized that as many as 79% of organizations with written procedures do not use them in relation to procedures related to the employment restructuring program in the company, about half do not use in this area procedures related to employee departure, HR function audit or job evaluation, and 1/3 - procedures related to talent management, employee retention, and almost 30% - to controlling.

If we compare these percentages to all organizations, it is clear that the scale of use of the discussed procedures is very low.

Table 1. Assessment of the degree of use of individual procedures existing in the organization in relation to intra-organizational employee mobility

Procedure	Degree of use of procedures					Me	M	SD	not applicable	
	Very low	low	average	high	Very high				n=116	n=401
Procedure related to internal recruitment of employees	0,2	0,5	0,5	26,1	59,8	5,0	4,66	0,54	12,6	74,8
Procedure related to talent management	0,5	0,2	5,2	8,5	48,5	5,0	4,66	0,71	36,8	81,8
Procedure related to employee development	2,5	0,2	2,8	43,7	47,8	4,0	4,39	0,78	2,8	72,0
Procedure related to employee retention	0,3	2,8	10,6	30,3	20,7	4,0	4,05	0,84	34,9	81,3
Procedure related to external recruitment of employees	0,8	10,8	28,9	44,0	12,8	4,0	3,59	0,89	2,5	71,9
Procedure related to employee training	0,8	11,6	45,9	25,3	13,6	3,0	3,40	0,91	2,5	71,9
Procedure related to the employment restructuring program in the company	2,8	2,6	3,0	7,9	4,1	4,0	3,39	1,34	79,1	94,1
Procedure related to employee departure	0,3	8,5	20,8	16,2	1,5	3,0	3,21	0,80	52,3	86,3
Procedure related to employee adaptation	11,0	35,8	26,9	19,3	3,6	3,0	2,68	1,04	3,1	72,1
Procedure related to employee assessments	2,2	54,3	31,0	3,3	6,1	2,0	2,55	0,86	3,0	72,0
Procedure related to the remuneration system	13,1	46,2	25,6	2,8	9,2	2,0	2,47	1,08	2,8	72,0
Procedure related to employee selection	11,6	50,5	21,7	8,5	2,8	2,0	2,37	0,92	4,6	72,5
Procedure related to job evaluation	7,2	32,6	6,4	2,8	0,8	2,0	2,15	0,80	49,9	85,6
Procedure related to employment planning	20,6	55,9	11,8	5,2	3,6	2,0	2,13	0,94	2,6	71,9
Procedure related to the audit of the personnel function	27,2	17,9	2,6	0,2	0,5	1,0	1,53	0,72	51,4	86,0
Procedure related to controlling	54,4	13,0	3,0	0,2	0,3	1,0	1,29	0,60	28,9	79,5

Source: Own study based on the results of the CAWI survey.

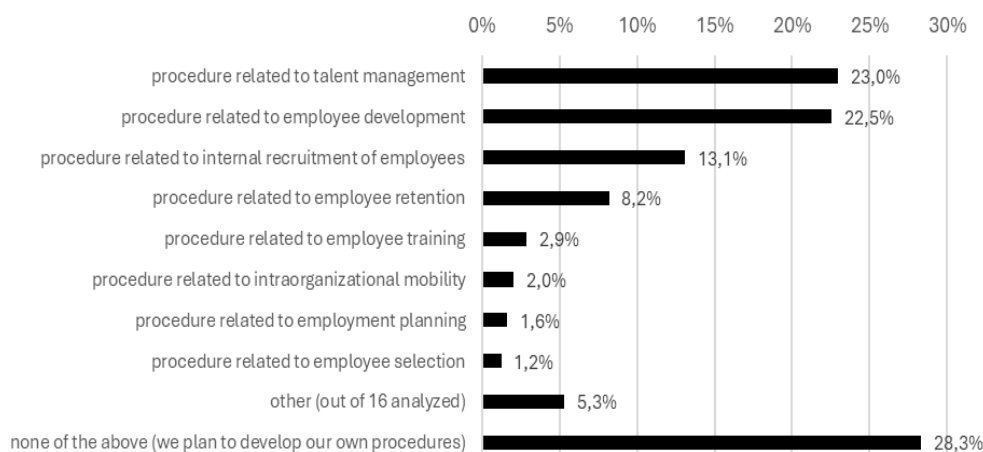
Excluding organizations that did not indicate a given type of procedure, basic statistics were determined. Their values indicate that procedures with greater common use are not necessarily used to a large extent in these organizations. This applies, for example, to the procedure related to employment planning – in $\frac{3}{4}$ of organizations with written procedures, the degree of use is low or very low (excluding the answers “not applicable” $M = 2.13$, $Me = 2$) and also procedures related to employee selection and adaptation, employee assessments or the

remuneration system (average below 3, Me at the level of 2-3). The situation is different with the procedure related to employee development, indicated as commonly used in the context of intra-organizational mobility employee, the average rating of which is 4.39 (with a maximum of 5), Me = 4, and over 90% of people assess the degree of its use as high or very high (including half of very high ratings).

However, the most important are two other procedures – related to internal employee recruitment and talent management ($M = 4.66$, $Me = 5$). The procedure for employee retention ($M = 4.05$, $Me = 4$) and external recruitment ($M = 3.59$, $Me = 4$) is also important. For all other solutions, the median does not exceed 3 (so while organizations use these solutions in relation to intra-organizational employee mobility, the degree of their use is at most average).

It should be added that they usually reach for more than 10 of the sixteen analyzed procedures. None of the organizations surveyed indicated less than 6 of them, and every tenth - the maximum number. Representatives of organizations who declared that they had procedures for intra-organizational employee mobility, but in an unwritten form, as well as those who indicated that they did not have them but were working on developing them, were also asked about specific procedures in this area - this time in the context of plans to include them in human resources management procedures (Figure 3).

Figure 3. *Planned procedures for intra-organizational employee mobility (in %)*



Source: *Own study based on the results of the CAWI survey.*

As the data presented in the above figure show, the procedures for intra-organizational employee mobility are planned to be written primarily into separate procedures dedicated to them by organizations - this was indicated by nearly 30% of respondents. Among the mentioned human resources management procedures,

the most frequent declarations were those related to the procedure related to talent management and/or employee development (23%), followed by internal employee recruitment (13%) and employee retention (8%). The remaining variants were mentioned rarely (no more than 3% of indications from people in this group, including those with unwritten procedures or planning to develop them, and in the group aggregated to the "other" category - it was no more than 1%).

5. Conclusions, Proposals, Recommendations

One of the key elements of the functioning of human resources in an organization are procedures. They organize the scope of the organization's activities and determine the course of action of its participants. This is an important management instrument, because it can help, among other things, in the socialization of employees in the context of intra-organizational employee mobility. This is related to the fact that, as indicated by research conducted by Vantaggiato *et al.* (2024), internal employee mobility is associated with significant integration costs, because people subject to this mobility in the organization are less embedded in their new departments.

On average, it takes almost three years for frequent contacts with colleagues within the new organizational unit to reach the level before mobility. Well-defined procedures could help in this. Organizations that have procedures for intra-organizational employee mobility implement their individual activities more consciously.

Therefore, formalization and standardization of procedures become important, because they determine the number of organizational solutions used. On the other hand, the more diverse sets of activities an organization has at its disposal, the better it can synchronize them with the goals it is to achieve and the needs of employees. In doing so, they serve the proper use of the potential of the people employed and shape intra-organizational relations. Moreover, all procedures determine the general direction and manner of proceeding, and their developed set of standardized tools and solutions constitutes a key mechanism for managing the organization (Ślęzak-Niezbalska and Niezbalski, 2014, p. 111).

Considering the degree of formalization of procedures in the organizations surveyed, the most common are those related to external recruitment, employment planning, training, remuneration and employee assessments. Only less than 18% of the surveyed entities have procedures for intra-organizational employee mobility.

At the same time, interestingly, respondents indicate that in every third of them they are in written form, and in every tenth there are no such procedures and there is no plan for their implementation. The results regarding the degree of use of individual procedures existing in the organization in relation to intra-organizational employee mobility turned out to be interesting.

It was assumed that organizations that do not have a clearly defined catalog of procedures may have such activities included in other procedures in the field of human resources management. The results obtained indicate that they are most often included in the procedure related to internal recruitment, talent management and employee development.

These procedures contain a catalogue of various practices that require the employee to undergo retraining as a result of changing tasks in a new job position (Król and Ludwiczynski 2006, p. 200) and their focus is on areas related to, among others, training, development or methods of retaining employees in the organisation (Otolá and Raczek 2016, p. 140).

Therefore, it seems that this is a justification for the lack of separate procedures regarding intra-organizational employee mobility in most of the surveyed organisations. These organisations do not demonstrate the need to have them.

The conducted research also shows that almost 1/3 of organisations want to develop their own procedures related to intra-organizational employee mobility. These organizations are therefore aware that such activities should constitute a separate procedure in the organization, next to the existing ones.

This promotes not only the formalization of the procedures in place in the entities under review, but also their transparency by precisely defining the catalog of specific solutions assigned to individual procedures (Bednarska-Wnuk 2021, p. 254). On the other hand, it should be remembered that even the best-proven procedures do not guarantee an objective and correct decision (Mikula *et al.*, 2023, p. 117).

The most important recommendations include creating and adding intra-organizational employee mobility procedures and linking them to the goals they can meet in the enterprise. Thus, it can also constitute added value and support those instruments in organizations that are already successfully implemented, e.g., in the recruitment, adaptation or motivation process.

Intra-organizational employee mobility as a supporting instrument can give organizations new opportunities not only in the context of their conscious management of human potential, but also in creating a diverse work environment for employees, while taking into account their needs, aspirations and expectations (Bednarska-Wnuk, 2022, p. 8). This promotes better use of employee potential and their retention, especially if they support other management instruments.

However, the study has several limitations. Firstly, the method used was a survey method. The results obtained may therefore not be entirely reliable and accurate. Given the existing financial conditions, the method and method of data collection used were the only ones.

The quantitative research could be supplemented by qualitative research, including document examination or in-depth personal interviews with HR managers or employees regarding intra-organizational employee mobility and learning about the justification for the organization to create separate procedures. Future research should therefore include examining what effects and benefits in the individual dimension are obtained by employees in the situation of separate procedures regarding intra-organizational employee mobility.

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