

Professional Mobility and Organizational Performance: Evidence from Tunisia

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Abstract—This article explores the impact of employees, professional mobility on organizational performance, focusing specifically on the Tunisian context. Through a thorough analysis, we assess the dynamics of professional mobility, including skill transfers, associated benefits, and challenges. We employ a mixed-methods methodology, combining quantitative data collected from Tunisian businesses with in-depth case studies. Our findings highlight the positive implications of professional mobility, such as skill enrichment and the stimulation of innovation. By analyzing specific characteristics of the Tunisian labor market, we provide recommendations to optimize the benefits of professional mobility while mitigating its drawbacks. These conclusions offer valuable insights for managers, human resources professionals, and policymakers aiming to enhance organizational performance in the Tunisian context.

Keywords: Professional mobility – Mobility – Internal and external mobility – Geographic mobility
– Organizational performance

I. INTRODUCTION

In a contemporary context characterized by the increasing complexity of organizational environments, companies face constant challenges such as globalization, personalized customer demands, and ever-intensifying competition. Under this relentless pressure, efficient resource management becomes crucial to ensure adaptability and competitiveness for businesses.

According to [1] and [2], human resource management emerges as a fundamental strategic function, providing a significant competitive advantage for companies. The traditional approach of viewing employees as mere pawns is outdated. Today, they are seen as essential resources that an organization must not only attract, train, motivate, and engage but, most importantly, retain. Effective management of human capital has become essential for driving innovation, a key factor in improving organizational performance.

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between professional mobility and organizational performance, highlighting the importance of integration and coherence in these practices [3]. Theoretical modeling in human resource management has significantly progressed, contributing to advancements in management sciences.

The central objective of this document is to explore the impact of employee professional mobility on the overall performance of the company. This article is divided into three parts. The first part is dedicated to an in-depth analysis of the literature, presenting the theoretical foundations of professional mobility. The second part outlines the research methodology, implementing a case study. Finally, the third part presents and discusses the research results, thereby enriching the understanding of this crucial area of human resource management.

II. Literature Review

II.1. Professional Mobility

Numerous studies, such as those conducted by [4], [5], as well as [6], demonstrate a positive correlation between mobility practices and improved organizational performance. [7], [8], [9], and [10] also support the notion that mobility practices can be considered strategic variables that facilitate the overall functioning of the company.

According to [11], mobility is defined as "a set of activities aimed at planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling workforce movements from the entry of individuals into the organization to their departure, including internal mobility and various supporting programs underlying it." These diverse perspectives on employee mobility enrich our understanding of its strategic advantages and links to organizational performance. This section explores various models of employee mobility, sharing the common goal of defining, describing, and identifying the determinants of the concept of mobility. Several of these models are inspired by the decision model of March and Simon (1958) [12], emphasizing the necessary balance between individual contributions and

offered incentives to maintain employee motivation. The job offer chain theory, developed by [13] and [14], views the labor market as an interconnected system of mobility. However, gaps in characterizing the type of mobility led to a decomposition of the job offer chain by Stewman and Konda [15], distinguishing promotions, demotions, transfers, etc.

Mobility:

The Larousse dictionary (2020) defines mobility as "the ease of moving, being put in motion, changing, moving." If we expand this definition to the professional domain, it involves employees moving from one employment region to another, changing profession or qualification. Mobility can be defined in relation to the notions of movement and time.

Indeed, [15] consider that "professional mobility consists of moving from point A to point B." Several authors refer to professional or geographical mobility, such as resignation, retirement, taking a leave to start a business. In most situations, this type of mobility is chosen by the employee. However, economic conditions and labor relations have, in recent years, altered the nature of these external mobilities: negotiated resignations, early retirement plans are multiplying. These external mobilities are not solely the result of the employee's decision [16], introducing an additional variant by discussing external mobility. The opportunity is given to the employee to reintegrate into their original company after a determined period. This is the case for employees taking training leave, parental leave, or when they are seconded or detached to a different company or structure from the original one.

External Mobility:

External mobility, known as "secured voluntary," aims to allow employees to develop their skills through their work experience in another company while being assured of the possibility of returning to their original employer if they wish. [17] and [18] note that "external professional mobility is generally sought when individuals feel that their personal and technical development is blocked, the projects assigned to them lack challenges, and their desire for autonomy is stifled." External mobility has become a phenomenon observed very frequently. If individuals believe that the company they work for does not sufficiently value their skills and does not meet their expectations, they seek to leave [19].

Internal Mobility:

According to [20] and [21], the term internal mobility describes the plurality of possible movements of people working within an organization. While there is controversy over the direction of this movement, some authors consider internal mobility solely as a lateral transfer of employees, not to be confused with promotion [22].

Internal mobility is a critical issue for companies that need to use resources flexibly, fitting into these new forms of work organization. Candidates for mobility can be called upon to meet managerial resource needs and forge a corporate culture marked by a strong identity.

Geographical Mobility

Geographical and professional mobility are interconnected, presenting complex and causal links. Changing residence increases promotion opportunities, but professional advancement is often linked to geographical mobility. Managing employee mobility has become a common human resources practice, sometimes set as a goal, with potential consequences on the professional and personal stability of mobile employees [23]. However, geographical mobility is often treated as mere "internal mobility," despite its deep territorial impact on individuals' lives, encompassing professional, residential, and family dimensions [24]. Territoriality becomes crucial for understanding how individuals balance resources and constraints in their daily lives [25].

1.1. Organizational Performance

Long considered a unidimensional notion, organizational performance is increasingly recognized as multidimensional. This concept has interested several theorists, researchers, and practitioners in HRM. Organizational performance once signified only the financial aspect.

The neoclassical notion predominated for a long time following several criticisms and limitations of this purely financial and economic criterion [26]. Furthermore, performance evaluation neglected the various actors contributing to performance, such as managers, employees, customers, etc [27]. It also introduced the notion of performance multidimensionality, highlighting the importance of purely qualitative indicators such as product and service quality, employee mobilization, work climate, employee/customer satisfaction, etc. Other authors have focused on this concept, considering organizational performance as a concept rather than a notion [28]. For the purposes of our study, we opted for the model by [29], emphasizing the importance of evaluating organizational performance.

Table 1: The Four Dimensions of Organizational Performance - E. M. Morin et al. (1994)

Value of Human Resources	Economic Efficiency
Mobilization of personnel Morale of personnel Performance of personnel Development of personnel	Resource economy Productivity
Legitimacy of the Organization Among External Groups	Sustainability of the Organization
Satisfaction of funders Satisfaction of clients Satisfaction of regulatory bodies Satisfaction of the community	Product quality Financial profitability Competitiveness

This organizational performance model by Morin et al. [30] provides a comprehensive view of this concept, incorporating not only the financial aspect but also the human aspect while controlling the organization's internal and external environment. It encompasses classical-

bureaucratic theories (economic dimension), the human relations school (integration of individual expectations, needs, and objectives), the systemic approach (the organization as an open system aiming for survival), and finally the political approach (satisfying different external groups). This model is subdivided into two parts:

Objective Dimensions: Economic efficiency and organizational sustainability

Subjective Dimensions: Organizational legitimacy with external groups and the value of human resources. However, evaluating organizational performance does not mean that each individual evaluates the organization's effectiveness on each of the four dimensions but rather that their evaluations fall within one or more of these dimensions. Thus, to address our central research question and better understand and explain the relationship between HR practices and organizational performance, we will focus on the subjective dimension of organizational performance: "the value of human resources."

Financial Performance: The first variable measures the financial performance of the company in our study. Thus, the variable "financial performance" is defined as all subjective measures to assess the company's profitability, productivity (annual average growth rate of financial capital productivity), and profitability (the internal profitability of your company).

Economic Performance: This second variable measures the company's performance in our study. Hence, the variable "economic performance" is defined as all subjective measures to assess the company's sales growth, market share growth, and gross operating surplus growth.

Product Quality: The quality aspect mainly lies in the company's ability to meet stakeholder expectations on dimensions that have value for them [31]. In the vast majority of studies that have examined this variable, quality is measured by the impact of ISO standards. Indeed, the goal is to identify to what extent implementing such a quality standard significantly influences the company's performance.

Customer Satisfaction: The variable "customer satisfaction" is defined in this research as all subjective measures to assess the number of new customers, the number of customer complaints, and the number of customer requests considered in the development process.

Innovation: Innovation has been conceptualized in various ways, depending on the perspective of several researchers [32]. However, the theoretical corpus mobilization shows that innovation can be defined as "the adoption of an idea or behavior, whether a system, policy, program, device, process, product, or service, that is new to the organization." Innovations can be classified according to different criteria: product innovation, process innovation, and marketing innovation (commercialization).

1.2. The Link Between Professional Mobility and Organizational Performance

The association between professional mobility and organizational performance is a crucial challenge for HRM professionals and researchers, offering a constructive perspective to understand the impact of HR practices on organizational performance. Authors such as [33], [34], [35], [36], and [37] have examined the links between professional mobility and organizational performance. According to [38], organizational performance involves a judgment based on criteria such as desired outcomes. However, defining performance is complex due to the diversity of actors and concepts. Literature dating back to the 1970s identified 30 measurement criteria by Campbell, varying according to their impact on economic efficiency and employee needs. Some criteria pertain to HR practices, while others relate to employee satisfaction, morale, and motivation. Rules such as parsimony, operationalization, discrimination, validity, reliability, and representativeness guide the choice of measurement criteria [39].

Thus, we can formulate the following hypothesis:

H1: Well-implemented professional mobility has a positive effect on organizational performance.

H1.1: Well-implemented professional mobility has a positive effect on economic and financial performance.

H1.2: Well-implemented professional mobility has a positive effect on organizational innovation.

H1.3: Well-implemented professional mobility has a positive effect on product quality.

H1.4: Well-implemented professional mobility has a positive effect on employee satisfaction

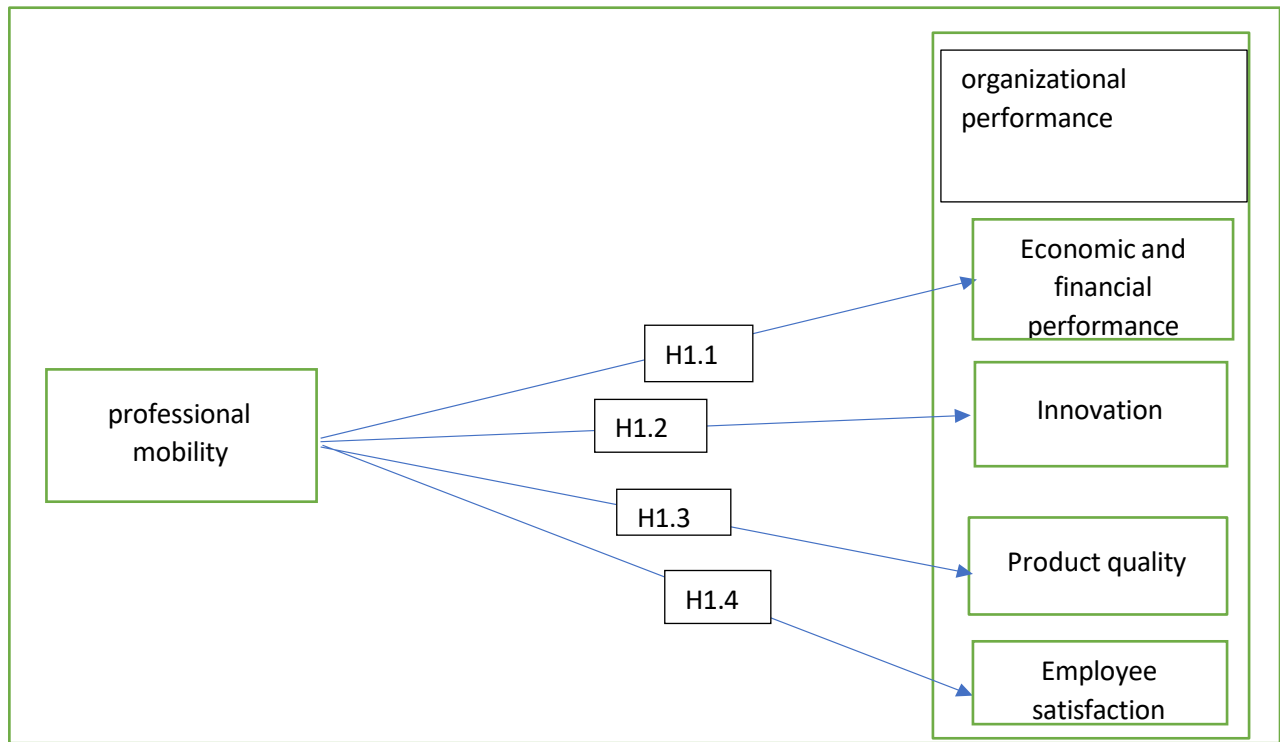


Figure 1: Structure of the Proposed Conceptual Model

Researchers in Human Resource Management (HRM) have made considerable efforts to demonstrate that the way professional mobility is managed can impact organizational performance [40]. More generally, we can note a divide between academic models proposed by some pioneering organizations for which human resource activities are crucial to achieving organizational goals [41] and a series of empirical studies that are more nuanced in their analysis.

Therefore, it seems very timely to analyze, in the following section, the effect of employee professional mobility on organizational performance in the Tunisian context.

III. Research Methodology

The quantitative approach is characterized by its ability to grasp the phenomenon studied through a calculation and modeling process aimed at explanation, seeking primarily to establish causal links between variables while focusing on the research object [42]. Its methods are more subject to reliability and validity tests and rely more on statistical tools than on the researcher's skills, unlike qualitative methods. Additionally, quantitative methods cannot achieve a high degree of depth as is the case with qualitative methods.

To achieve our research objectives, we have referred to two types of literature: one on professional mobility and another on organizational performance.

❖ Sample Size

The preliminary survey is conducted to purify the measurement instruments and verify their dimensionality. It ensures the implementation of steps 3 and 4 of Churchill's paradigm. Consequently, we have chosen a sample composed of 206 companies. This number is more than sufficient as it facilitates the establishment of appropriate exploratory analyses (PCA and Cronbach's Alpha).

Regarding the main survey, the number of observations must comply with several conditions, namely: the level of model specification, the size of the tested model, the normality of the data, and the appropriate estimation technique of the measurement model or the causal model [43]. The sample size depends on the number of items and latent variables for the theoretical model. According to [44], a large number of items and dimensions implies the presence of a large sample size.

IV. Analysis and Discussion of Results

This section delves into the analysis and discussion of the results obtained from our study. We first present the outcomes of the exploratory phase, followed by a detailed discussion on the confirmatory phase results, and conclude with an overall interpretation of the findings.

Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

The exploratory factor analyses (EFA) applied to the variables "Mobility", "Economic and Financial Performance", "Organizational Innovation", "Product Quality", and "Customer Satisfaction" show robust and significant results. Each variable presents high-quality indices, confirming their validity and reliability.

Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis

Variable	KMO	Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor Loading	Communalities	Excluded Items
Mobility	0.887	69.556%	0.890	> 0.612	> 0.579	mobility 3, 6, 8
Variable	KMO	Variance Explained	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor Loading	Communalities	Excluded Items
Economic and Financial Performance	0.885	71.540%	0.900	> 0.803	> 0.706	-
Organizational Innovation	0.912	70.485%	0.915	> 0.749	> 0.691	Innov1, Innov5
Product Quality	0.793	75.687%	0.891	> 0.625	> 0.719	-
Customer Satisfaction	0.808	69.088%	0.850	> 0.716	> 0.656	-

General Interpretation

The exploratory factor analysis helped to refine the measurement scales and confirm the factorial structure of the studied variables. For each variable, high KMO indices and significant Bartlett's test of sphericity indicate strong data adequacy for factorization. The positive definiteness of the correlation matrices is assured by non-zero determinants, ensuring their invertibility. MSAs above acceptable thresholds show strong correlations between items, validating the appropriateness of factorization. The satisfactory factor loadings and communalities confirm the unidimensional factorial structure of the variables after the exclusion of non-compliant items. High Cronbach's alpha values for each variable demonstrate excellent internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales used. In conclusion, the studied variables are valid and reliable for further analysis.

3.2. Hypothesis Verification and Discussion

Table 3: Hypothesis Verification

Hypotheses	Student's t-test (CR > 1.96)	Significance	Hypothesis Validation
H1	H1.1: Properly implemented professional mobility positively impacts economic and financial performance	3.532	Significant
	H1.2: Properly implemented professional mobility positively impacts organizational innovation	2.398	Significant
	H1.3: Properly implemented professional mobility positively impacts product quality	2.278	Significant
	H1.4: Properly implemented professional mobility positively impacts employee satisfaction	3.206	Significant

Good model fit is a necessary but not sufficient condition for validating model hypotheses. An analysis of the different correlation coefficients must follow the examination of fit indices [43]. Thus, to confirm a tested hypothesis, the Critical Ratio (CR) coefficient must be greater than 1.96, and the probability of rejecting H_0 (p) must be less than 0.05 with H_0 : "There is no link between the explanatory variable and the variable to be explained." The results related to the research hypotheses are presented in the table below. bAfter testing our research hypotheses, we will discuss the findings in this section. To do so, we will refer to results from previous studies on similar relationships and consider the specific context of our research.

The indicator values show satisfactory results and indicate a good model fit. However, a good model fit is a necessary and sufficient condition to confirm that the model correctly reproduces the data. This

assessment must be complemented by verifying the significance of the relationships [43]

We will thus analyze the significance results of all our research hypotheses:

H1.1: Properly implemented professional mobility positively impacts economic and financial performance.

Hypothesis H1.1, suggesting a positive impact of professional mobility on economic and financial performance, is validated with a significant relationship ($CR=3.532 > 1.96$; $p=0.024$

< 0.05). The regression coefficient of 0.333 confirms this relationship, consistent with previous

findings by [45] and [46], indicating a direct positive influence of professional mobility on economic and financial performance.

H1.2: Properly implemented professional mobility positively impacts organizational innovation.

The hypothesis suggesting a direct positive influence of professional mobility on organizational innovation is confirmed ($CR=2.398 > 1.96$, $p=0.000 < 0.05$). These results align with previous studies by [47], adapted from [48], and [49], demonstrating a significant positive effect of professional mobility on organizational innovation. In this research, the relationship between professional mobility and organizational innovation is confirmed with a structural link of 0.321.

H1.3: Properly implemented professional mobility positively impacts product quality.

This hypothesis is well confirmed by our model ($CR=2.278 > 1.96$, $p=0.001 < 0.05$). Professional mobility positively impacts product quality. Our results regarding product quality align with those of [50], suggesting that professional mobility has a positive effect on the performance variable "product quality." Thus, professional mobility has a direct positive influence on "product quality" with a structural link of 0.409.

H1.4: Properly implemented professional mobility positively impacts employee satisfaction.

Based on the literature, we assume that "professional mobility" positively influences "employee satisfaction." Our results regarding employee satisfaction align with those of [51]. This hypothesis H1.4 is validated. Indeed, the results table indicates ($CR=3.206 > 1.96$, $p=0.032 < 0.05$). Thus, "professional mobility" has a direct positive influence on "employee satisfaction" with a structural link of 0.319.

V. Discussion

The professional mobility of employees within Tunisian companies, characterized by a significant correlation coefficient (CR) of 16.288, is increasingly adopted by managers. This dynamic plays an essential role in skill development, thereby strengthening employee involvement and motivation. According to [43], involvement establishes a significant connection between the individual and their organization, highlighting the importance of personal achievement, self-esteem, and pride. Our results indicate predominant motivation, with a correlation coefficient (CR) of 4.462, showing that Tunisian employees are primarily motivated by pressure and obligation towards the employer. Unfortunately, despite their efforts, there is a growing trend of demotivation. Moreover, the analysis of organizational involvement, confirmed by a reliability of 2.459, demonstrates that it aims to establish effective communication between the employee and the organization. In conclusion, organizational performance is highly dependent on the development and maintenance of professional mobility, which significantly influences motivation and involvement, both of which depend on the effective implementation of human resource practices, particularly professional mobility.

VI. Conclusion

The conclusion of this research aims to enrich the theoretical framework of organizational performance by exploring the specific determinants of employee professional mobility in Tunisian companies. Theoretical, methodological, and managerial contributions are highlighted, including the creation and validation of a conceptual model, the adaptation of measurement scales, and managerial contributions by providing arguments in favor of company performance.

However, significant limitations are identified, including the lack of research in the Tunisian context, potential criticism of the conceptual model variables and measurement scales. The study recognizes the need for further exploration of these aspects and emphasizes the importance of repeating the exercise in different contexts to enhance the quality and validity of the results.

Regarding research perspectives, recommendations include the need for additional research to deepen the understanding of the variables in the conceptual models of professional mobility. On the economic and strategic level, it is suggested that companies should develop skills focused on creating value by relying on an experienced and qualified workforce.

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