

Decision-making on the job choice in the condition of Slovak households

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Abstract: Getting, keeping as well as changing jobs are the moments in a person's life associated with not only the search and evaluation of the options but also with selection and decision-making. The article is one of the few in the Slovak Republic that deals with the issue of decision-making on the job choice in households, thus bringing new point of view into the knowledge about the Slovak labor market. The aim of the article is to analyse the decision-making process on the job choice of members of Slovak households and to identify the decision-making circumstances. It deals with the three selected parts of the decision-making process: the decision-making steps, the decision-making subject (decision-maker) and the decision-making circumstances. The contribution is based on the theoretical background concerned to decision-making, paid work and specific conditions of households and it draws the knowledge from the results of the original national research in more than 500 Slovak households. The primary data was collected through an anonymous survey, using a standardised anonymous questionnaire and guided interviews. Statistical sorting and descriptive statistics were used in data processing using the statistics software SPSS. The chi-square test was used to verify the representativeness of the research sample. The results show that the closer the final decision, the higher the proportion of individuals who implement decision-making actions. The most important decision-making circumstances include financial valuation, the character (difficulty) of the work and the childcare.

Keywords: Household, decision-making process, job choice, decision-makers, decision-making circumstances.

JEL Classification: J22, J29, D19.

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Introduction

Work is an integral part of human life. In the past, people worked primarily to secure resources for existence. This is still true today, with additional benefits related to the satisfaction of needs, especially higher-level needs (the need for self-realisation, personal growth, social belonging, and the desire for knowledge).

Paid work performed in the workplace, recognised with wages and services, means

security in modern societies. Primarily, the income from work provides basic living conditions. This is the reason why work is an essential element of people's self-esteem (Fedor, 2018; Móri, 2018). Because of technological progress and digitisation, the nature, content, complexity, and duration of work and its forms are changing significantly. The changes are reflected not only in the requirements placed on the worker, his training, and the need to acquire new skills

but also affect the extensive set of conditions in which this work is performed (Pilný, 2016).

Consistency of perception of this phenomenon requires attention to other elements forming its broader context. On the one hand, they are the labour market as an official environment in which labour demand and supply meet and which is a source of important information on both groups of participants and on the overall socio-economic situation. On the other hand, it is a relatively poorly analysed aspect of paid work – the household as the environment in which a person lives as a labour market participant. There is a mutual and very intense relationship between these environments (the labour market and the household), which reveals another current aspect on both sides (the issue of decision-making). The situation in the labour market visibly affects what is happening in households, and conversely, the household as a social unit influences its members intensively through needs and mutual relations, which can be of various natures (Riegel, 2007). In a changing labour market, declining and emerging jobs, together with career opportunities, present the greatest challenges to which household members, as labour market participants, will have to respond more quickly.

Job choice is a dynamic decision process in which job seekers move through various stages (Barber, 1988). Arguably, factors important to an individual likely vary at different stages of the job search and choice process as applicants become more aware of available opportunities and their own preferences (Boswell et al., 2003). Twenty-eight factors important to job choice were identified from a search of the academic and practitioner literature on attributes affecting job choice or attractiveness (Boswell et al., 2001; Mauger et al., 2019; Posner, 1981; Turban, 2001). The decision on paid work is not easy and it is natural that achieving the optimal state from the individual's point of view is accompanied by difficulties (Hirschi, 2018; Kulcsár et al., 2020).

The nature and content of work have different forms, complexity, and organisation, which implies the need for flexible adaptation of the workforce to these demands. The household has an important role to play in finding, hiring, and executing, but also in losing the employment of its members. Its significance lies in the fact that the household is an important microenvironment with a strong supportive but

formative influence on members. The household (together with schools and educational institutions) has been influencing the behaviour of its members for a relatively long time, and further influences the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and experiences of its members. This is not only through the performance of domestic (unpaid work), but also through the formation of the values, opinions, and attitudes of its members, from which it is very difficult to liberate (Roostin, 2018; Weick, 1965). At the same time, an environment gives its members a certain status and influences them in setting goals.

In this context, it is also useful to know in more detail an important part of household management, which is to decide on the job choice of a household member. When deciding on a job choice, we consider important to answer a questions: How do individuals in the household proceed when choosing a job and which circumstances are important when deciding? The aim of the paper, in the context of the above-mentioned reasons, is to pay more detailed, but not comprehensive, attention to the decision-making process on the job choice of individuals in Slovak households. The article intends to bring new knowledge of activities that are implemented in households before the job acceptance of their members, considering the different types of households. We expect that this will help to understand the decision-making process in choosing a job in the context of household management. The ambition of the authors is to highlight the importance of the environment of the household from which the employee comes from, and thus to overcome the traditional view of employment decision-making only from the individual's perspective.

From the processed results, we have reached several initial conclusions in decision-making on the job-choice in Slovakia, which also considers the household environment. We have divided and further examined the decision-making process in terms of four steps, which are implemented differently by household members. The results show that the closer the final decision comes, the higher is the share of individuals implementing decision-making steps. In the absolute majority (84.6%), a person decides on the job choice by herself or himself. The participation of other household members in the decision-making

process on the job choice increases with household size. We consider the most important decision-making circumstance to be the financial valuation of the job (salary). More than half of the respondents identified it as decisive. More than 17% of respondents ranked the nature and difficulty of the job, and more than 10% ranked childcare as decisive.

The article is structured as follows. The introduction section presents the background of the research. The literature review section presents the current knowledge in the literature. Section Research methodology presents the description of applied research methods. The Results and discussion section presents own original conclusions from primary research conducted in Slovakia.

1. Theoretical background

The decision-making process is carried out in specific conditions and time, available options, but most often in the household. According to Baron (2008, p. 8), "Decision-making is a choice of action – what to do or not to do." Decisions are made to achieve a goal and are based on beliefs about what action will achieve the goal. According to Connolly et al. (2000), decision-making is the act of resolving or terminating a process through judgment. Any decision is a response to a stimulus and leads to a changed initial state.

The theoretical underpinnings of decision-making in the household setting have received considerable attention, which has been developed more comprehensively, particularly by the theoretical paradigm of home management (Mohanti, 2016; Varghese et al., 2005). In this paper, we discuss the decision-making on the job choice of an individual as a household member in the context of practical considerations with respect to household type. This type of decision-making represents only one of many types of decision-making in a household environment.

We consider the terms employment, job, and paid work to be synonymous, as together, they represent work that can be defined differently depending on its type. According to the International Labour Organization, an employed person is a person aged 15 years or older who has worked (for pay or profit for at least one hour during a given week) or has a job from which being absent under conditions on the reason of absence (holidays, sick leave,

and maternity leave) or duration (INSEE, 2021). It is clear from the approach that this type of work differs from others so that the individual does it consciously for a reward, which is one of the most common but not the only reasons why this type of work is part of the life of household members. Although an individual or a household makes several decisions during the day (estimated at more than 35,000), which may be of different nature, regularity or importance, decisions about job choices are different precisely because they are infrequent, and the individual may not have enough relevant experience to decide on the job choice (Wansink & Sobal, 2007).

Choosing a job that is part of a career has long-term consequences for the lifestyle of individuals, emotional well-being, as well as economic and social status and the meaning of life. It is, therefore, natural for individuals to be involved in job choices at various stages of their lives, even repeatedly, with many people facing difficulties in this area (Amir et al., 2008; Gati et al., 2001; Osipow, 1999; Tinsley, 1992). Many studies have examined the organisational and job attributes important for job choice (Boswell et al., 2003; Brewer & Marsh, 2016; Carless, 2005; Harold et al., 2016), culminating in multiple meta-analyses (Chapman et al., 2005; Uggerslev et al., 2012). Individuals are likely to vary in the extent to which they make work decisions that are based on family factors (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). Not every individual makes work decisions that take family factors into account, and not every work decision made by a given individual takes family factors into account to an equal extent. In this article, we are concerned with the cognitive processes by which individuals take family factors into account in work decisions and the factors that influence their progression through successive stages in their decision-making (Powell & Greenhaus, 2012).

Little-known background, so far, of decision-making processes can become a starting point for a better understanding of the job choice of household members and a guide on how to promote the work-life balance of individuals. Knowledge of how job candidates combine their evaluations of each individual attribute in a job offer into an overall evaluation is still limited. However, this is an important question because knowledge of the mechanisms through which job seekers combine

multiple attributes into one overall evaluation can inform employers in structuring job offers in the most suitable fashion based on each situation (Acikgoz, 2019).

In the conditions of the Slovak Republic, the issues and implications of decision-making on job choice in the context of the environment and the specific type of households are only minimally elaborated. The results of various surveys focus mainly on the expectations of potential job seekers from a particular job. However, there is a lack of deeper knowledge and understanding of how the decision-making process of an individual as a member of a household takes place before choosing a job. Considering that the labour market in Slovakia has specificities that are determined by location, historical-political context, and cultural practices, we consider that decision-making on job choice may also be influenced by these factors. The process of transition from a centrally planned economy into a market one started in Europe in the late 1980s. Since then, over a dozen countries began the transformation of their economies. Since 2004, until 2013, eleven of them joined the European Union. After thirty years of the transformation process, we can observe the convergence process for the post-communist countries. The European labour market is affected by many external factors, such as the global economic situation and crises. These factors may affect national economies in different ways (Dmytrów & Bieszk-Stolorz, 2021). Nevertheless, very few scholarly contributions in research studies examine and justify employment decisions in terms of country specificities and thus find cross-cultural differences. As we have indicated above, attention is more often paid to other aspects of the decision-making process (young people, older individuals, preferences for public and private sector employment). From the knowledge about post-communist countries from the perspective of the labour market and its development in a broader context, we argue that a more precise understanding of decision-making on the job choice with respect to the household environment in Slovakia represents a knowledge gap and thus brings a new perspective on the decision-making process.

An accumulating body of research suggests that factors in individuals' family domains influence the decisions they make in their work domain (Powell & Greenhaus, 2012). To provide

additional examples, family factors have been associated with role entry decisions about whether to relocate (Baldrige et al., 2006; Chaliol & Mignonac, 2005), expatriate (Tharenou, 2008), and repatriate (Tharenou & Caulfield, 2010); role participation decisions about involvement in work activities (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003), organisational citizenship behaviours (Bragger et al., 2005), and requests for managerial support (Powell & Greenhaus, 2012); and role exit decisions about whether to interrupt paid employment (Reitman & Schneer, 2005) and leave a profession (Greenhaus et al., 2001). Career decisions are amongst the most important we make. Unsurprisingly, much published research exists on this particular aspect of career behaviour. However, the overwhelming majority of studies have been carried out on young people making initial career decisions (Bimrose & Mulvey, 2015).

In addition to considering the current knowledge of decision-making regarding job choice in Slovakia, we believe it is also important to be aware of the challenges that households face in making decisions and to be able to point out the possible shortcomings that occur in this process. At the same time, it can be one of the starting points for employers when creating job offers. We consider our approach to the study of this issue to be unique in the conditions of the Slovak Republic. Part of the results and findings and the interrelationships between employment and household decisions are still in the nature of initial basic findings, which will need to be analysed and reflected more in the light of changing societal conditions in post-pandemic economics.

2. Research methodology

The aim of the article is to analyse the decision-making process on the job choice of members of Slovak households and to identify the decision-making circumstances. It deals with the three selected parts of the decision-making process: the decision-making steps, the decision-making subject (decision-maker) and the decision-making circumstances.

In relation to the aim of the article, we formulated the research questions (RQs):

- *Which steps of the decision-making process did respondents implement before the job choice?*
- *Who made the decision about the respondent's current job?*

- *Which decision-making circumstances did respondents consider to be decisive in their job choice?*

The research itself was carried out in two steps, based on theoretical assumptions emphasising the influence of the household as a broader and specific social environment. In the first step, we used a qualitative approach. Subsequently, we conducted primary data collection through a quantitative questionnaire survey. The qualitative phase was based on informal, structured interviews in various types of households, carried out by research team members. These interviews resulted in small and “working” case studies, which highlighted that the decision-making process on job choice has several specifics and helped us refine the questions in the questionnaire. Based on the results of informal interviews, we divided the decision-making process into four logically consecutive steps. This approach allowed us to perceive the decision-making process more realistically and, in the interest of effective communication with the respondents, to offer a choice of four steps of the decision-making process, which come into consideration before the job choice.

First step. The perception of the level of household financial resources and the resulting awareness of the need to have a job as a necessary financial resource, where the need to have a job relates to getting, keeping, or changing jobs for better/more significant financial gain.

Second step. The orientation on the labour market, search for and collection of information on the possibilities of paid work in terms of the requirements placed on applicants and at the same time in terms of the requirements placed on the household.

Third step. The evaluation and a more thorough assessment of the suitability/acceptability/fulfilment of the requirements associated with the job, while considering the requirements/needs/limits of households and, eventually, their members.

Fourth step. The job choice – the final decision for the specific job the respondent has opted for. This step can be considered as the last stage of the decision-making process, followed by the actual job performance. It is the result of individual preferences as well as the broader circumstances associated with the household of which a person is a member.

Scientific studies have pointed out that the sequence of these steps is not always linear; some may be omitted and eventually repeated (Athanasou, 2003; Singh & Greenhaus, 2004). There is also the presumption that the decision-making process does not concern only a given member of the household, but to a varying, but not negligible extent, it concerns several members or the whole household, while the dynamic process of deciding on a job considers many factors as well as individual preferences (Boswell et al., 2003). A valuable contribution of this phase was the general mapping and concretisation of a wider range of circumstances and restrictions that households consider when deciding to get a job.

The decision-making process on the job choice was only one part of an extensive questionnaire survey, which was focused on the decision-making process of Slovak households on the time allocation on paid work and unpaid work, as well as household strategies. Incorporating knowledge from the qualitative phase, we prepared questions in one section (module) of the questionnaire in such a way that the data collected could be used to obtain initial results about the employment decision-making process.

To ensure the largest possible sample of households in the survey, we included several dozen interviewers from the ranks of university students of the second degree of studies at the Faculty of Economics, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (MBU). Their task was to establish contact with respondents in three households of different types in the designated region (according to pre-announced criteria), to obtain their consent to participate in the research and then to ensure the completion of the questionnaire in these households in the role of interviewers. Students were thoroughly prepared for the role of interviewers in the form of professional and practical training, the content of which was an explanation of the meaning, purpose and goal of research and their activities in achieving it, starting from household selection through preparation and visit organisation to qualified collection and sending empirical data. To minimise incorrect or misunderstanding of the questions, the preparation of the interviewers also concerned a detailed explanation of the essence of each question and the offered answers or possibility

of a free response. Two months (April and May 2019) were set aside for data collection. The interviewers recorded the data obtained from each household in a pre-prepared electronic form. This step was intentionally included in the data collection procedure to check not only the completeness of the completion but also the logical correctness of the answers before the final submission of the data. During the data collection, members of the research team were available to online interviewers and the creation of an online discussion forum was verified with a positive result, which served as a platform for informal and operational exchange of experiences the interviewer encountered and needed advice or help. We used the computer assisted personal interview method (CAPI) to record answers from respondents. The joint coordinated efforts of a twelve-member research team and interviewers obtained empirical data from 517 Slovak households and 1,202 individuals (individuals living in the surveyed households). From them, 776 respondents were employed persons. Considering that the basic set of all households employed in Slovakia is several thousands to millions and includes several specifics (or determinants), we did not claim to achieve a representative sample for the employed. We consider our approach to be correctly chosen at this stage of knowledge about

employment decisions, and our results do not allow us to generalise our conclusions.

For the purposes of our research, we consider all economically active respondents to be employed. It should be noted that 13% of respondents are self-employed. We accept certain specifics in the decision-making process on this group's job choice, but regarding the effort to generalise the results of this category, we do not pay separate attention to self-employed or employed persons.

The mentioned sample of households consisted of 25% single-person households, 22% double-person households, 20% three-member households, 19% four-member and 14% five-member and more members households. From the point of view of the number of households, the sample can be considered representative regarding the structure of Slovak households (we used the chi-square test to confirm that the research sample is representative in terms of the number of household members). This criterion was the starting point for us to be able to focus on the decision-making process on job choice regarding the number of household members. We used SPSS 17 statistical software to process the obtained information.

The information and data that we present in the article are based on a part of the questionnaire (module), which focused only on individuals in the household who had at least one paid

Tab. 1: Characteristics of the research sample – Part 1

Characteristics	Percentage of respondents (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Education level		
Primary school	1.5	1.5
Secondary education	57.4	58.9
Higher education	41.1	100.0
Type of working contract		
Fixed-term employment (full-time)	17.4	17.4
Fixed-term employment (part-time)	3.9	21.2
Employment for an indefinite period (full-time)	63.2	84.4
Employment for an indefinite period (part-time)	2.0	86.3
Employment relationship by agreement	0.5	86.8
Self-employed	13.0	98.9
Other type	0.2	100.0

Tab. 1: Characteristics of the research sample – Part 2

Characteristics	Percentage of respondents (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Organisation of work		
Fixed working hours without overtime	34.6	34.6
Fixed working hours with overtime	29.1	63.7
Flexible working hours	22.4	86.1
Shift work	11.9	98.0
Other type	2.0	100.0
Income category (EUR)		
Up to 200	0.8	0.8
201–500	4.5	5.3
501–800	39.9	45.2
801–1200	38.0	83.2
1,201 and more	13.8	97.0
No response	3.0	100.0

Source: own

job at the time of the questionnaire survey. Specifically, we evaluated module II, while some other parts of the questionnaire, such as the introductory part, module I, we used to process the characteristics of the research sample, which was the focus of attention when writing the article. Of the total number of employed respondents who answered questions about the decision-making process, 54.3% were employed men, and 45.7% were employed women.

The average age of respondents was 40 years (SD = 11.393). More than half of the respondents (57.4%) had a minimum secondary education, and more than 40% of respondents had at least the first level of university degree.

More than 60% of respondents had a job agreed for an indefinite period. Only a small proportion of respondents, approximately 17%, had fixed-term jobs. As stated above, 13% of respondents employed themselves, so we consider them self-employed. More than 30% of the respondents in the research sample had fixed working hours without overtime. This number is comparable to the number of respondents who have fixed working hours but also work overtime. More than 20% of respondents used flexible working hours, and more than 10% worked shifts (or in continuous

operation). Respondents also answered a question that focused on the job income. Almost 40% of respondents had a job income from EUR 501 to EUR 800. We consider the fact that only 3% of respondents were not willing to answer the question about their income as positive. We present information about the research sample of respondents in more detail in Tab. 1.

3. Results and discussion

The effort to analyse the decision-making process on the job choice of members of Slovak households is based on more detailed knowledge and mediation of findings on three selected aspects of this issue. The first aspect is the decision-making process of a household member, represented by the implementation of individual decision-making steps, which we described in more detail in the methodology. The second aspect is an in-depth knowledge of the entity that decides on the job choice in the household, and the third aspect is the circumstances that household members consider when making decisions eventually, which have an impact on the decision-making process. For a deeper understanding, the primary findings on these three aspects are specified in more detail according to household type.

Tab. 2: Implementation of decision-making steps on job choice (%)

	First step	Second step	Third step	Fourth step
Together	37.2	40.5	52.1	53.9

Source: own

3.1 Decision-making steps

The preparatory (qualitative) phase of the research demonstrated the difficulty of knowing the decision-making process. In Tab. 2, we present the processed results in the form of shares of respondents implementing individual decision-making steps.

In the questionnaire, we asked respondents to indicate the steps of the decision-making process that they implemented before the job choice. In Tab. 2, we present data on the percentage of respondents who consider each of the steps in the decision-making process when making a job choice.

The data in Tab. 2 show that respondents did not implement the individual steps of the decision-making process to the same extent.

The difference in the implementation of the first and second steps compared to the implementation of the third and fourth steps is about 12%. In practice, this means that fewer respondents considered initial decision-making activities important. The first step (the need to secure financial resources for the household) – just over a third of respondents were aware. The second step (more systematic activities aimed at orienting oneself on the labour market and obtaining current information about the possibilities and requirements of paid work) – was implemented by approximately 40% of respondents. The respondents attached greater importance to the third and

fourth steps, and more than half of respondents implemented them in their decision-making process on the job choice. This indicates that the closer the final decision comes, the higher is the share of individuals implementing decision-making steps. The data in Tab. 3 indicate whether the implementation of individual steps of the decision-making process on the job choice in Slovak households differs according to the household type and, eventually, what the differences are.

The data presented in Tab. 3 shows that the tendency initially observed (the closer the decision-making process is to the final decision, the higher the proportion of respondents using the second, third and fourth steps of the decision-making process) is confirmed for two-, three- and four-member households. We can also state that with the increasing number of household members, the share of respondents implementing the second, third and fourth decision-making steps also increases. We cannot confirm this fact for single-person and five-member households. In view of their different behaviour, we consider it necessary to examine the decision-making process on the job choice in more detail in the future. The average share of respondents implementing each individual step confirms this finding. This tendency has not been confirmed for five- and more-member households. In these types of households, the first step is given greater

Tab. 3: The implementation of decision-making steps according to the household type (%)

Household type	First step	Second step	Third step	Fourth step
Single person	44	42	54	59
Two-member	27	30	39	45
Three-member	37	40	55	59
Four-member	40	53	61	54
Five-member and more	56	46	46	44

Source: own

importance and is implemented by a larger proportion of respondents (56%). This indicates the knowledge that in these types of households (compared to less-member households), the awareness of the need to secure household finances by getting, keeping, or changing jobs as the first step in the decision-making process on the job choice is significantly more current and can be seen as a strong key moment in individual decision-making process. We believe that a higher number of persons naturally increases the material and financial demands of the household's operation, and thus, the importance of the first step of the decision-making process on job choice increases. We believe that the larger proportion of respondents, single-person households (44%), who are making the first step of the decision-making process is influenced by the fact that these households are typically made up of a young woman or a young man who is at the beginning of independent living.

The findings concerning four-member households are also noteworthy. It turned out that the implementation of individual steps is clearly the highest in this type of household. It can be assumed that such a large household has an internal environment that requires adequate attention to be given to all the steps

and activities that precede the final choice and the decision itself when deciding on an employment choice. We believe that from a methodological point of view, this type of household could become a model starting point when examining the decision-making process. It should be considered that with fewer or more household members, the emphasis on implementing one of the steps before the actual decision is likely to change. It is also clear that the model will require the incorporation of additional specifics that will further help to understand the essence of the decision-making process, which is characterised by several variants.

3.2 Decision-makers

We further deepen previous findings on decision-making steps with knowledge of who the final subject (decision-maker) is in the household and who decides on the selection of a suitable job option. We included this question in the questionnaire because we did not want to stay at the general level of knowledge, that follows from the overall concept in which the household is the central subject. Through free statements, the respondents indicated that even if a job (securing financial resources for the household) is a very intensive issue for the whole household, someone still must

Tab. 4: Decision-makers on the job choice (%)

	Decision-maker			
	Myself	Partner	Together	Other
Proportion	84.6	2.6	9.6	3.2

Source: own

decide on it. In the questionnaire, we asked respondents to indicate who decided on their current job. The results are presented in Tab. 4.

The findings show that in the absolute majority (84.6%), a person decides on the job choice by herself or himself. We assume this was not an authoritative decision, but there was some degree of cooperation and influence from other household members in previous decision-making steps. The second group represents respondents who declare that they have decided on the job choice together, as a whole household. Although there are not many of them (they represent about a tenth

of all households), they signal an interesting procedure that will need attention. An even smaller group (2.6%) comprises respondents from households where the partner made the final decision. This suggests that the prevailing decision-making model is based on the fact that households leave the final decision and responsibility to the member who will perform the job, and households conform to his or her decision. The model of joint decision-making, which indicates the application of certain elements of democratisation, is also not negligible. The findings also raise the question of what type, according to structure, are the households

Tab. 5: Decision-makers on the job choice according to the household type (%)

Household type	Decision-maker			
	Myself	Partner	Together	Other
Single person	99	0	0	1
Two-member	86	3	7	4
Three-member	83	3	13	1
Four-member	75	3	15	7
Five-member and more	67	2	24	7

Source: own

in which the decision was made in a different way. We are not yet able to specify this based on our findings. We believe these are fewer standard decisions made by non-family or single-parent households. We sorted the answers concerning the decision-makers according to the type of household (regarding the number of members), and we present the results in Tab. 5.

Based on the findings presented in Tab. 5, it is possible to identify three tendencies. The first is the tendency that the more members a household has, the smaller the proportion of those households in which the person decides on the job choice by her or himself. This is perfectly understandable in the case of single-person households, which are practically the decision-makers. But the proportions (approximately 75% to 85%) are also relatively large in two- to four-member households. The second tendency is the relatively constant and very low share of households (approximately 3%), in which, regardless of their size, job choice is decided by a partner. The third tendency that confirms the first one is the tendency according to which, with the growing size of the household, the share of such households in which the job choice is decided together also increases. The share of two-member households with joint decision-making is not large and does not exceed one-tenth; in the case of three- and four-member households, this share is slightly increasing and is at the level of 15%. The relatively highest share of jointly deciding households is in the case of five-member households, of which there are about a quarter in Slovakia.

The classification of findings according to household type confirms the original assumption that in households with a lower number of members, much higher emphasis is placed

on saturating the individual needs of the member (two members) of the household. This is related, on the one hand, to the need to perform work according to one's individual preferences and, on the other hand, to the need to ensure that its performance and its associated contexts (e.g., commuting, and overtime) do not have a very negative impact on the household's activities.

Our findings are close to the conclusions of research studies, e.g., Powell and Greenhaus (2012) and Fouad et al. (2015), in which the authors demonstrated the influence of factors related to family background on career decisions. However, our results cannot provide deeper findings that shed more light on the influence of factors that the household and its members consider important from the perspective of the member(s)'s career path.

3.3 Decision-making circumstances

The third aspect that we considered to be topical in our more detailed knowledge of the decision-making process on the job choice is the circumstances that the respondent considered when deciding on the job choice and which he considered decisive. The inclusion of this question follows the theoretical background, which points out that various circumstances influence the course and outcome of the decision-making process in any area (Boswell et al., 2003; Ronda et al., 2020), and therefore it is appropriate to know this aspect in the environment of Slovak households. Based on the findings from the preparatory phase, we concluded that significant circumstances affecting the decision-making process might include those relating primarily to the job, but on the other hand, also circumstances arising from the household (e.g., running the household, caring for children

Tab. 6: Decisive circumstance when choosing a job according to the household type (%)

Decisive circumstance	Household type					
	Single-person	Two-member	Three-member	Four-member	Five-member and more	Average value
Quality of job information	2.4	0.1	1.0	1.1	3.4	1.6
Job income (salary)	48.6	54.8	55.1	49.8	54.8	52.3
The character (difficulty) of work	28.5	21.6	16.4	10.9	7.7	17.0
Time spent on housework	10.1	7.0	1.9	5.2	1.6	5.2
Childcare	1.5	6.6	15.1	13.9	15.5	10.5
Adult care	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.0	2.9	0.7
Working time of the partner	0.0	1.5	0.5	2.8	3.4	1.6
Health condition	0.0	3.9	1.6	11.3	10.8	5.5
Traditions	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.5	0.0	0.4
Other	8.9	4.1	7.7	3.6	0.0	4.9

Source: own

or adults). However, others also come into consideration (e.g., health status, professional and physical readiness, attendance). In the questionnaire, the respondents were offered a list of ten circumstances from which they had the opportunity to choose the one they considered crucial in their decision-making process. To delve deeper into the issue, we sorted the respondents' opinions according to the type of household. We present clearly arranged findings in Tab. 6 according to the answers to the request to specify only one circumstance that respondents considered to be decisive in their job choice.

As expected, the frequency of indications of each circumstance, and thus their importance, varies. Based on the scores, we created a ranking of several groups of circumstances. The most important circumstances were those identified by more than 50% of respondents. We consider the circumstances that were marked by more than 10% and less than 50% of respondents as moderately important. We believe circumstances marked by less than 10% of respondents are marginal.

We consider the most important decision-making circumstance to be the financial

valuation of the job (salary). More than half of the respondents identified it as decisive. More than 17% of respondents ranked the nature and difficulty of the job, and more than 10% ranked childcare as decisive. Although the proportion of respondents indicating these two circumstances is noticeably lower, the finding suggests that these circumstances are moderately important in the decision-making process of these households. The marginal circumstances are those identified as crucial by less than 5% of respondents. In practice, this means that they are not among the influential circumstances in Slovak households. These are the quality of information about jobs, the length of working hours of the partner, care for adult members of the household and traditions.

The findings confirmed our initial assumptions that the issue of the money earned through paid work would be very important and would become the most salient circumstance influencing the decision to take up the job. We believe that this is because getting, keeping, or changing the job is primarily associated with its primary purpose – to provide financial resources as a basic and

universal source of household functioning. This creates all the conditions to ensure that the needs of individual household members and, not least, the needs of the household can be met. We also find it interesting to note that the character of work (its difficulty) is one of the important decision-making circumstances, which indicates that for a significant proportion of respondents (approximately 17%), financial resources are not the only important circumstance, but other job-related circumstances, especially its difficulty, also enter the decision-making process.

Findings on salary levels as well as other monetary benefits in relation to hiring and employer attractiveness, have been the subject of many scholarly studies with ambiguous conclusions that cannot be generalised. Tanwar and Prasad (2017) discovered that compensation and benefits were the least influential dimensions of the employer brand, whereas Roongrungsuke and Liefoghe (2013) discovered, during their research in China, India, and Thailand, that the importance of compensation and benefits were high, for all three generations studied (Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y). Lievens et al. (2007) identified pay and benefits as factors with the highest importance for perceived employer attractiveness among employees of the Belgian army. Schlager et al. (2011) confirmed that economic attributes (e.g., compensation) positively influence job satisfaction, although its positive correlation with organisational identification could not be confirmed. Summarising the findings, it can be said that the relevance of compensation for the perception of employer attractiveness in the eyes of employees depends on the context, and no clear views can be generalised (Dassler A. Khapova et al., 2022).

Our initial prediction that more respondents would consider household circumstances much more when deciding on a job choice has only been partially fulfilled. For example, childcare is “only” third in the order of importance of circumstances in the decision-making process. Only around 10% of respondents consider it to be a decisive circumstance. Other household-related circumstances (time spent on housework, working time of the partner and care of adult members) are also situated in the bottom half of the ranking.

A further look, considering the different household types, made it possible to identify

on the one hand similarities but, on the other hand, differences in which circumstances are considered by the different household types to be decisive. The consensus is that the financial valuation of the job is the circumstance considered decisive by respondents in any type of household.

Consensus also emerged on the circumstance (the character/difficulty of paid work), which is given as the second most important in single-person and two- and three-member households. Its importance becomes progressively weaker as the number of household members increases and its indication by respondents decreases from 28.5% in single-person households to 16.4% in three-member households. The declining importance of this circumstance is even more evident in households with four, five or more members. In these households, only 10.9% and 7.7% of respondents respectively consider it to be a crucial circumstance.

A similarity can also be seen in the circumstance of childcare, which increases in importance as the number of household members increases, which was expected and logical. This circumstance is the second and third most important circumstance in households with three, four, five or more members, respectively. Although the share of this circumstance is not very high (around 15%), it confirms the finding that it plays the second most important role after the financial valuation of work in larger households.

Other findings are also interesting. The first one relates to the time devoted to housework, a circumstance that is the third most important in single-person and two-member households. It was marked by approximately 10% of respondents. Interestingly, multi-person households do not consider it as a crucial circumstance, despite the assumption that a larger number of household members is likely to require more activities to be provided and thus more time to be spent on housework.

On the other hand, housework is divided among a larger number of members. It is very likely that respondents in these households are already comfortable with having to spend more time on housework and consider it natural. Another finding relates to the consideration of health status as a circumstance influencing the decision-making process on job choice. Although this circumstance is ranked third in the overall ranking, its importance varies

across households. On the contrary, more than 10% of respondents in households with four, five or more members attach more importance to it. We assume that running a multi-person household is more demanding and has an impact on health status, which is of increasing importance when deciding on a job choice in this context.

The assessment of the importance of the length of working time of the partner was interesting. While this is understandably of no significance in single-person households, it does change noticeably with household size. It is true that the larger are the households, the more importance they attach to it. As expected, this is closely related to the optimisation of the organisation and division of labour in households.

The final findings relate to circumstances that have only a minimal impact on the decision-making process of respondents regarding job choice. These include the quality of job information, care for adults, and traditions.

Our findings show that, on average, 4.86% of respondents consider other circumstances than those we have offered to be decisive. We, therefore, believe that we have been able to appropriately complete the range of circumstances that households might consider in their decision-making process on job choice, even based on the theoretical background mentioned above.

Conclusions

Several of our considerations based on theoretical premises were confirmed in the empirical investigation and subsequent analysis of the results. We have divided and further examined the decision-making process in terms of four steps, which are implemented differently by household members. The results show that the closer the final decision comes, the higher is the share of individuals implementing decision-making steps. This finding has been shown to be valid across all household types surveyed. The decision-making process on the job choice has a similar pattern for men and women, except that men implement the decision-making steps more intensively than women do.

The assumption that the household is involved in the job decision-making process was only partially confirmed. The participation of other household members in the decision-making process on the job choice increases with household size. The highest proportion of households

with five or more members makes joint decisions on job choice (almost a quarter).

In all households, irrespective of household type, job income, i.e., financial valuation for paid work (salary), is considered decisive in job decisions. Along with the job income, the character and difficulty of the work are considered as second important. Somewhat surprising was the finding that a relatively small proportion of household members consider circumstances related to the care of household members to be important in their decision-making process on the job choice. This means that although financial security is the most important consideration in the decision-making process, the importance of this circumstance diminishes as the number of household members increases and the importance of household aspects increases.

The above findings, although they relate to a selected area of household management, represent the primary information of this type in Slovakia. They seek to uncover the internal processes within households, which may be similar but also different in some respects, given the character of individual households. When expanding the knowledge on the management of other household activities, which we consider activities in the field of unpaid work and leisure time, they create the initial prerequisites for a comprehensive understanding of the issue, which is poorly known in Slovakia and the V4 countries.

We anticipate that regarding the changing environment and conditions in which households are functioning (e.g., post-pandemic environment, threatened security situation, economic impacts of the war in Ukraine, inflation), the importance of the issue of household management will grow. Learning about the decision-making process regarding job choice can have wide-ranging societal applications. The knowledge is applicable in various fields such as, e.g., labour market development (relevance for employers and their strategies), and psychology (career counselling, work-life balance). Given that employment and careers are integral parts of almost all people's lives, paying attention to knowledge about how individuals make job decisions and which factors they consider is one of the foundations for shaping labour market development strategies. Our results also show that job incomes continue to be an important consideration in employment decisions. The character of work, childcare,

and running a household are also aspects that play an important role in the decision-making process. It is essential to understand these linkages in more detail, considering the current state of the labour market in Slovakia, specifically using the example of the labour force entering the labour market. Thus, when recruiting new people, organisations need to be aware of family-related factors that might affect the prospective employee's decision to accept the job offer (Eby & Allen, 1998). We see opportunities for expanding knowledge in the context of the changing labour market, and our future research will focus on the decision-making process of specific groups of economically active individuals, such as the dependent self-employed (this type of employment is now increasingly used).

The article is one of the first in Slovakia to address the relationship between decisions and household size and environment. It thus provides original and basic findings that are treated by sorting and descriptive statistics. It is, therefore, challenging to compare the results within the Central European area, where, from our point of view, the issue has been studied only to a limited extent. We are aware that the paper has a few limitations that may arise from incomplete information about the survey sample. Another limitation of the paper is the difficulty in trying to achieve representativeness of the data due to the large and considerably heterogeneous underlying population. The information of different nature that we have obtained is only representative according to some aspects from the household perspective, such as the size structure of the surveyed households. Thus, the results are not generalisable to the conditions of the whole country in several aspects/dimensions. Another limitation of our findings is the retrospective view of respondents who made employment decisions at different times. Thus, responses may be biased and influenced by, e.g., memory optimism or, conversely, a view of the past with a tendency to evaluate events and memories negatively.

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