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Publication date:
2013

Citation for published version (APA):
Javakhishvili Larsen, N. (2013). The role of human capital within “new cross-national regionalism”.

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Download date: 18. dec., 2018
The role of human capital within “New Cross-national Regionalism”

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The research is about the link between human capital and regional growth, examined using demography and mobility patterns of highly skilled labour in the Danish-German border Region. The research has the explorative nature and aims to generate the knowledge on how to make region attractive for the labour with relevant competences and skills. The general scope of this research is to find the interdependent relationship between the factors of Human Capital, geography, policies and institutions to the regional economic competitiveness.

One of the research problems is to identify how does the cooperation between the institutions (governmental, educations, labour market, and local businesses) make place attractive to the human capital flow? In this regard, it is necessary to understand the factors that make the place (region, city, area) attractive for the people with the higher education and specialised expertise.

In this poster we will design the methods to identify the decision-making behaviour when it comes to the mobility due to job, personal affairs, or just for the attractiveness of the place.

1) Research question
What are the main “key words”, i.e. factors that play the significant role in the individual decision-making process, when it comes to move the residential place from one area/region to another?

2) Method

1st Step : Focus Group Technique: based on the individuals, who already moved. Identify the factors that persuaded them to move?

2nd Step - Follow Up: Online survey of bachelor and graduate students to investigate whether these factors from step one are considerable for the potential movers.

3) Screening guide: 1st Step

Homogeneous factors:
Age (29-40 and 41-52)
Education (Masters degree or/and up)

Heterogeneous factors: Gender
Condition: 10-15 participants recently moved to the study area (for the last 12 months)

4) Moderation technique

Brainstorming:
The task for the participants will be to come up with any of the “key words” (i.e. the factors) that were significant during making their decision to move to the study region. This technique will warm up the participants and set the scene.

Tic-Tac-Toe:
This technique will help the participants to group (cluster) the “key words” into the tic-tac-toe table, where one side reflects the work-related decisions for moving and on another side – personal/family related decisions.

2nd Step: Focus group techniques will be reported in the in-focus table, where one side reflects the work-related decisions for moving and on another side – personal/family related decisions.

5) Follow Up - 2nd Step

The second step is following up. In this step the “key words” will be grouped in the online survey form.

There are following considerations:

a) Selecting the sample: One sample should include the university students that are about to graduate from the Bachelors/Masters programs, as well as young researchers. The students/youth researchers will represent the most potentially mobile group of population. Second sample should include the highly specialised persons between the ages of 41-52 to represent the immobile group.

b) The online survey will include the “key words”, i.e. the factors of mobility and will ask the respondents to rank the given factors according to their preferences if considering moving the residence from one region to another. The respondents will be asked to come up with more “key words” (i.e. factors) that might be relevant for them to make the decision to move the residence in future.

6) Limitations
There are possible obstacles by applying the focus group method:

a) People might not recollect the exact factors they considered during the decision making process for moving the residence.

b) During the focus group meetings, the participants might feel confined to share their true feelings to others.

c) Focus group participants might become under the influence of each others opinions, which might bias the accuracy of the results delivered during the meetings.

d) During the follow-up process in the second step, the respondents might feel not obliged to answer all the questions in the online survey, or avoid to express their thoughts freely.

Due to the limitations of the methods, the received results has to be treated carefully and considerably during analysing and reporting. The conclusive results will be reported as the recommendations for the policy-makers to consider during the regional planning processes.

Outline:

Technique 1

Brainstorming:
The task for the participants will be to come up with any of the “key words” (i.e. the factors) that were significant during making their decision to move to the study region. This technique will warm up the participants and set the scene.

Technique 2

Tic-Tac-Toe:
This technique will help the participants to group (cluster) the “key words” into the tic-tac-toe table, where one side reflects the work-related decisions for moving and on another side – personal/family related decisions.

Technique 3

Decision making technique:
This task will let the participants to sort the “key words” that they elaborated during the first and second techniques. The participants will be asked to sort the groups of “key words” in the matrix and identify how important these factors while making the decision for moving to the study area.

Reporting and analysing of the expected results:
The focus groups will be video recorded in order to document, prove or disprove the results. The focus group techniques will be reported in the individual responses. The results will be grouped in the main thematic categories. The video results will be reviewed to discover the frequencies of the mentioned and discussed “key words”; as well as to identify the facial and emotional expressions in order to avoid the bias of perceptions. Collected information will be used to design the online survey for the follow-up process.