




Personnel Current in Service Companies under COVID-19 Distribution on the Example of Russian Post JSC

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Abstract: During the period of coronavirus restrictions, the issue of staff stability is of particular importance, and, as a consequence, the management of staff turnover. In the difficult economic situation caused by the pandemic, employers need not only to keep the team, not allowing massive layoffs, but also to retain valuable workers. We conducted a survey among the quitting employees in the branches of the Volga Macroregion of the Russian Post JSC. Based on the data obtained, the reasons for dismissal were analyzed during the period of restrictive government measures in connection with the spread of COVID-19 and immediately after the lifting of severe restrictions. The main trends in changes in the behavior of employees during a pandemic and their impact on staff turnover have been identified. In the course of the study, the following conclusions were made: - employees of the organization, in the context of instability in the country caused by COVID-19, are less likely to decide on layoffs, but they still occur, even in such a difficult period of a pandemic and rising unemployment and increase sharply after the lifting of severe restrictions; - the main reasons for dismissal are still "insufficient wages" and "high intensity of work, heavy physical activity", while the reasons of a domestic nature that can be endured are fading into the background. Thus, an employee makes a decision to dismiss if he/she is not satisfied with materially significant working conditions; - due to the peculiarities of the age structure of the organization, the change in the turnover rate, both during severe restrictions and after their relaxation, is not affected by the number of employees leaving due to retirement, which changes insignificantly from month to month.


1 INTRODUCTION


In modern conditions, when the country and the world are constantly undergoing economic changes caused by the influence of restrictions associated with COVID-19, organizations are forced to use their resources more and more economically (Avdeeva, Emcova, 2020). The personnel have always been one of the main competitive advantages that ensure the sustainable operation and development of the organization (Grihno, Simonova, 2018). However, it was during the period of coronavirus restrictions that the question of the presence of the employees themselves in the workplace arose, and, therefore, the issues of the principle of the organization's

functioning (Mitrofanova, Mitrofanova, Margarov, 2021). Under the new conditions, the employer needs not only to retain the personnel, preventing its reduction, but also to retain valuable employees (Elsafty, Ragheb, 2020).

Personnel turnover management (Simonova, Sankova, Mirzabalaeva, 2021) can be defined as a system of measures aimed at researching, preventing and reducing personnel turnover to maintain the effective functioning of the organization and ensure the achievement of the set goals and objectives (Cymbal, Litvak, Wilder, Burns, 2021).

However, before taking measures to reduce turnover in the organization, it is necessary to identify its causes (Brusencova, Sheina, Mashkova. 2020). All

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Table 1: Personnel turnover rate, %. Source – developed by the authors on the basis of public data of Russian Post JSC.

YEAR	2017	2018	2019	3-year average
Actual value	34.83	34.84	33.73	34.47
Distribution of fluidity by age				
up to 30 years old (inclusive)	8.54	8.54	9	8.69
from 31 to 40 years	8.13	8.14	8.18	8.15
from 41 to 50 years old	7.01	7.01	6.85	6.96
from 51 to 55 years old	3.7	3.7	3.45	3.61
over 55 years old	7.44	7.45	6.26	7.05
Sex distribution of fluidity				
Men	8.08	8.04	8.01	8.04
Women	26.75	26.8	25.72	26.42

dismissals can be conditionally divided into three categories: dismissals that can be avoided, dismissals that are inevitable (for example, for family or personal reasons), and desirable dismissals concerning employees that are not quite suitable for the enterprise.

Based on the data on turnover (Table 1) and the data obtained as a result of a sociological study among the leaving employees in the branches of the Volga Macrorregion of Russian Post JSC, we will analyze the reasons for dismissal during the period of coronavirus restrictions and immediately after the removal of severe restrictions

Over the 3 years under study, the personnel turnover of the Russian Post has decreased slightly, but represents very high values, since according to the results of numerous studies (Petrova, M., Koval, V., Tepavicharova, M., Zerkal, A., Radchenko, A., Bondarchuk, N., 2020), the normal level of turnover shall be 3-5 %.

According to the operational study, the turnover rate in 2020 remained almost the same as in the period from 2017 to 2019. This situation negatively affects many production indicators and entails additional costs for the organization to find, train and adapt new employees. In addition, due to the fact that highly qualified specialists are distracted by training newcomers who are slowly getting into the business and are not yet able to fulfill their duties at the level of already experienced employees, labor productivity decreases, and, accordingly, the enterprise does not receive possible profit.

Despite anti-epidemiological measures and an increase in unemployment, personnel turnover at the

Russian Post has decreased slightly. It is of scientific and practical interest to study the reasons for dismissals, which could not be influenced by the growth of unemployment and the unstable economic situation in the country.

We used the following study methods: the method of theoretical analysis, the method of statistical analysis, the method of analogy, the analytical method, as well as questionnaires, comparison and generalization of data.

2 RESULTS

The results of the survey are of interest for identifying the reasons for dismissal (Lata, L., Mohamed Zainal, S. R., Jan, G., Memon, U., 2021). Let's consider in more detail the results of the survey. Data on the reasons for dismissal are shown in Table 2. The table contains the calculation of the number and proportion of respondents choosing one or another reason for dismissal from the total number of interviewed employees. The sample is representative, since during the period of the survey, 896 and 1100 employees left the organization, 672 and 800 people were interviewed, respectively, which is 75 % and 73 % of the total number of employees who quit.

Table 2: Reasons for dismissing employees. Macroregion Volga of Russian Post JSC during the period of coronavirus restrictions and immediately after the lifting of severe restrictions. Source - developed by the authors.

Reasons for dismissal	for 1 month during the period of corona-virus restrictions, pers.	Proportion, %	1 month after the removal of strict corona-viral restrictions, people	Share, %
Insufficient salary	245	36.5 %	288	36.0 %
High work intensity, heavy physical activity	73	10.9 %	67	8.4 %
It is necessary to sell goods and services	47	7.0 %	61	7.6 %
Inconvenient work schedule	31	4.6 %	37	4.6 %
I had a different idea of what to do	20	3.0 %	35	4.4 %
Poor living conditions (lack of renovation, old furniture, and etc.)	24	3.6 %	18	2.3 %
Difficult working conditions (hot, cold, dusty, stuffy, cramped, etc.)	10	1.5%	32	4.0%
Long working hours, overtime	7	1.0%	13	1.6 %
Getting far to work	7	1.0%	7	0.9 %
Unfair payroll system	4	0.6 %	11	1.4 %
Lack of special clothes and other supplies (paper, stationery, etc.)	4	0.6 %	5	0.6 %
Incomprehensible payroll system	1	0.1 %	7	0.9 %
Army	3	0.4 %	8	1.0%
Pension	61	9.1 %	63	7.9 %
Disease of close relatives	21	3.1 %	43	5.4 %
Changing of the living place	54	8.0 %	49	6.1 %
Health problem	60	8.9 %	56	7.0 %
Excessive red tape	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Conflict with the leader, prejudiced attitude of the leader	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Conflict with colleagues	0	0.0 %	0	0.0 %
Total	672	100 %	800	100 %

As before the pandemic, the main reason for changing jobs during the pandemic was “insufficient wages” - 245 employees (36.5 %) out of 672 respondents, after the restrictions were removed, 288 employees (36 %) out of 800 employees indicated it.

In second place is the reason for dismissal - "high work intensity, heavy physical activity", it is chosen more often during a pandemic - 74 employees (11.5

%), versus 67 people (8.4 %) after the restrictions were removed.

In the third place in the reasons for dismissal there are various living conditions. For example, only 10 employees chose the item "difficult working conditions" during the pandemic, while after the restrictions were removed, 32 employees noted this item. Also, the item “long working hours” was chosen less.

Table 3: Analysis of the reason for dismissal "Retirement". Source - developed by the authors.

Work experience of employees in the organization with the reason for dismissal "Retirement"	for 1 month during the period of coronavirus restrictions, people	1 month after the removing the strict coronavirus restrictions, people
Up to 1 month	0	0
Up to 3 months	0	1
From 3 months to 1 year	3	5
From 1 year to 3 years	12	11
From 3 years and more	46	46
Total	61	63

Thus, analyzing the reasons for dismissal, we can conclude that during a pandemic, an employee makes a decision to dismiss if the reason for dismissal significantly affects his working conditions (Tsareva, N.A., Tyugaev, A.R., 2020). At the same time, the employee is ready to wait for more favorable conditions for changing jobs, if the reason is insignificant at this stage. However, after the stabilization of the situation and the removal of time constraints in connection with the pandemic, we see an increase in turnover, including for various domestic reasons for dismissal.

The reason "Retirement" is chosen by almost the same number of leaving employees, 61 and 63, respectively. Analyzing the data shown in Table 3, we can conclude that this category of employees in most cases has been working in the organization for more than 3 years, adjusting the length of service to the retirement age. Pre-retirees are not inclined to make a decision on dismissal for other objective or subjective reasons, since, despite the state policy and pension reform, it is difficult for employees of this age category to get a qualified job (Brusencova, L.S., Sheina. A.YU., Mashkova. A.M., 2020). During the period of coronavirus restrictions, difficulties in finding and applying for a new job were also largely associated with the use of online technologies by organizations, in which workers of pre-retirement age are poorly oriented (Bueno-Sánchez, L., Martínez-Molina, S., Marqués de Almeida, S., Garcés-Ferrer, J., Pérez, D., Quílez, M., 2019).

The increase in dismissals is alarming as the length of service in the organization increases, especially those who have worked for more than three years, that is, people who have undergone adaptation, who were taught to work, are quit, most likely, training was carried out, that is, the organization carries not only direct, but also indirect losses.

The structure of those leaving the company given in Table 2 corresponds to the structure of the number of employees of the organization by age. Comparing the data on the structure of personnel by age as a whole for the enterprise Russian Post JSC for 2017-

2019, in Table 4, it is possible to see almost complete correspondence. The table shows the actual number of employees in the specified period, breaks down the number of employees by age categories, calculates the ratio of the number of employees year to year as a percentage, displays the average age of personnel and the number of working pensioners.

Analyzing the organization's statistical data on this indicator, one can draw attention to the fact that, despite the fact that the number of employees in the pre-retirement age category from 51 to 55 years old decreases by an average of 4 % from year to year, the average age of the organization's employees has grown from 43.4 years in 2017 to 43.6 and 43.9 years in 2018 and 2019, respectively. The share of working pensioners at the enterprise is 16-17 %.

This indicator, in our opinion, was influenced by the current pension reform in the country to increase the age of pensioners retiring. This is confirmed by the statistics of the organization. In the category of employees over 55, there is an increase in 2019 from 64,028 people. up to 65,696 people, i.e. by 2.61 %. Wherein, the number of working pensioners decreased from 55,847 people up to 53,615 people, which amounted to -4 %.

It shall also be noted that Russian Post JSC takes part in implementation of the national project Demography, within the framework of which, in order to provide systematic support and improve the quality of life of older citizens, this category of employees of the organization is trained. Participation in the programs made it possible to present for drivers of the target audience to get and develop a computer tendencies demanded by the Russian Post and applied in modern production and business processes. When implementing the project together with the centers of population employment and WorldSkills Russia in 2019 about 1,055 employees were trained. Of these, 631 employees passed advanced training, 332 employees professional training – professional, 72 employees – retraining, 20 employees – vocational training.

Table 4: Personnel structure by age, people. Source - developed by the author based on public data. Russian Post JSC.

YEAR	December 31, 2017		December 31, 2018			December 31, 2019			
	Actual number	Share of the total number, people	Actual number	Share of the total number, people	Headcount ratio 2018/2017	Actual number	Share of the total number, people	Headcount ratio 2019/2018	Headcount ratio 2019/2017
Russian Post JSC	340,772	100 %	335,921	100 %		331,011	100 %		-2.86%
up to 30 years old (inclusive)	60,780	17.8 %	55,986	16.7 %	-7.89 %	51,929	15.7 %	-7.25 %	-14.56 %
from 31 to 40 years	83,854	24.6 %	84,483	25.1 %	0.75 %	83,575	25.2 %	-1.07 %	-0.33 %
from 41 to 50 years old	86,047	25.3 %	86,713	25.8 %	0.77 %	86,625	26.2 %	-0.10 %	0.67 %
from 51 to 55 years old	46,834	13.7 %	44,711	13.3 %	-4.53 %	43,186	13.0 %	-3.41 %	-7.79 %
over 55 years old	63,257	18.6 %	64,028	19.1 %	1.22 %	65,696	19.8 %	2.61 %	3.86 %
Average age of employees	43.4		43.6			43.9			
Working pensioners	59,399	17.4 %	55,847	16.6 %	-5.98 %	53,615	16.2 %	-4.00 %	-9.74 %

Table 5: Analysis of the reasons for dismissal "Disease of close relatives." Source - developed by the authors.

Work experience of employees in the organization with the reason for dismissal "Disease of close relatives"	for 1 month during the period of coronavirus restrictions, people	1 month after the removing the strict coronavirus restrictions, people
Up to 1 month	0	6
Up to 3 months	3	11
From 3 months to 1 year	6	9
From 1 year to 3 years	4	6
From 3 years and more	8	11
Total	21	43

Continuing to analyze the data obtained in the course of a sociological survey of quitting employees, special attention shall be paid to the item "illness of close relatives". With the increase in the COVID-19 incidence rate in the regions, for this reason, they began to quit almost 2 times more often – 21 employees per month of severe coronavirus restrictions and already 43 employees after. Wherein, as we can see from the data given in Table 5, this reason for dismissal is indicated by employees, regardless of the length of service in the organization. Therefore, it can be assumed that this reason is significant for the decision to dismiss.

The items of the questionnaire "conflict with colleagues", "conflict with the manager, "biased attitude of the manager", "excessive bureaucracy" were not chosen by the dismissing employees. From

which we can conclude that both during the period of severe coronavirus restrictions, and in the period after their removal, the psychological characteristics of interaction in the team are not a significant reason for dismissal.

When analyzing the reasons for the turnover, one can also draw a conclusion about the quality of staff recruitment. The item of the questionnaire "I had a different idea of what would need to be done" speaks just about the quality of filling vacancies in the organization. During a pandemic, this item was chosen by 20 respondents (3 %), after the restrictions were removed - by 35 people (4.4 %). The growth of this category of quitting shows that when hiring the candidate was not informed about the essence of the forthcoming functions or was not fully communicated. .

Table 6: Work experience in the company of dismissed employees. Source - developed by the authors.

Work experience in the company	Those who quit within 1 month during the period of corona-virus restrictions, people	Proportion, %	Those who quit within 1 month after the removing the strict corona-viral restrictions, people	Proportion, %
Up to 1 month	64	9.6 %	100	12.6 %
Up to 3 months	90	13.5 %	97	12.2 %
From 3 months to 1 year	171	25.6 %	202	25.4 %
From 1 year to 3 years	123	18.4 %	159	20.0 %
From 3 years and more	223	33.3 %	242	30.3 %
Total	672	100 %	800	100 %

The quality of personnel selection, adaptation and training of employees is evidenced by the analysis of the length of service in the company of dismissed employees (Lata, L., Mohamed Zainal, S. R., Jan, G., Memon, U., 2021). The largest percentage of quitting employees, as a rule, are “newcomers”, that is, those who came to the organization less than one month, 3 months or less than a year ago (Grihno, V.V. Simonova, M.V., 2018), which is confirmed by our data and calculations (Table 6). The total share of these categories is 48.7 % of the total number of people leaving. The issue of the formation or improvement of the existing personnel adaptation management system as one of the tools for reducing personnel turnover is acquiring particular relevance.

During the pandemic, 64 employees working less than 1 month and 90 employees working less than 3 months made a decision to dismiss. After the restrictions were removed, there were 100 and 97 such employees, respectively. That is, even the increase in unemployment during the pandemic does not stop people from dismissing, and after the removal of severe restrictions on the work of the service sectors and holding public events, the increase in the share of dismissals in the segment of employees with little work experience in the organization increased.

The most stable group of employees in an organization is those who work from 1 to 3 years. During the period of coronavirus restrictions, only 123 people quit (18.4 %), after the removal of strict restrictions - 159 people (20 %). It is necessary to pay attention to a group of employees working for 3 years or more. In comparison with the previous group, layoffs occur almost 2 times more often. The decision to dismiss was made by 33.3 % (223 people) and 30.2 % (242 people), respectively. The assumption that this group includes employees who have been working at the enterprise for a long time and have reached retirement age is confirmed by the analysis of statistics due to dismissal “Retirement”, broken

down by length of service. The data was shown earlier in Table 3.

3 CONCLUSIONS

According to the results of the study of the reasons for the dismissal of employees during the period of severe coronavirus restrictions and immediately after the removal of severe restrictions, using the example of branches of the Volga Macroregion of the Russian Post JSC, it was revealed that employees in an unstable situation in the country rarely make decisions about changing jobs, however, layoffs occur even in such a difficult period of growth in unemployment, which, after the removing the severe restrictions, begin to grow. If such a decision is nevertheless made by the employee, then most often for reasons that significantly affect his/her working conditions. The most common reasons for dismissal in the respondents' questionnaires are:

- Insufficient salary
- High work intensity, heavy physical activity
- It is necessary to sell goods and services

During a pandemic, the reasons for dismissal, which are of an everyday nature, and which can be endured until a more stable time, go into the background.

An analysis of the structure of personnel by age was carried out, which made it possible to identify significant age characteristics of an organization in which a large number of employees of pre-retirement age work. The number of people retiring per month, regardless of the coronavirus restrictions, is almost the same. In addition, due to the fact that the country is currently undergoing a pension reform to increase the retirement age, it can be concluded that the share of older employees is growing at the enterprise. In the future, this may lead to a delayed effect of increased personnel turnover due to the achievement of retirement age by such employees. Wherein, the share of working pensioners at the enterprise is currently

quite high and amounts to 16 %, which is also reflected in the statistics. As a rule, these employees are devoted to the organization and have been working in it for more than 3 years. However, this age group is more susceptible to morbidity and is suitable for restrictive measures in connection with COVID-19, which also affects the decision of workers to leave due to "Retirement".

When analyzing the reason for dismissal "Disease of close relatives", it was revealed that this reason for dismissal during the spread of coronavirus infection began to be chosen 2 times more often. Wherein, the choice of this reason as a decision to dismiss is not influenced by the length of service in the organization.

In order to study more detailed the reasons for staff turnover during the period of coronavirus restrictions, we plan to conduct a more detailed study of the organization's motivation program, and it is also necessary to analyze the quality of personnel recruitment and training.

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