

## Professional Working Conditions, Mental Health And Mobility In The Hungarian Social Sector Preliminary Findings From A Multi-method Study

**Authors :** Ágnes Gyóri, Éva Perpék, Zsófia Bauer, Zsuzsanna Elek

**Abstract :** The aim of the research (funded by Hungarian national grant, NFKI- FK 138315) is to examine the professional mobility, mental health and work environment of social workers with a complex approach. Previous international and Hungarian research has pointed out that those working in the helping professions are strongly exposed to the risk of emotional-mental-physical exhaustion due to stress. Mental and physical strain, as well as lack of coping (can) cause health problems, but its role in career change and high labor turnover has also been proven. Even though satisfaction with working conditions of those employed in the human service sector in the context of the stress burden has been researched extensively, there is a lack of large-sample international and Hungarian domestic studies exploring the effects of profession-specific conditions. Nor has it been examined how the specific features of the social profession and mental health affect the career mobility of the professionals concerned. In our research, these factors and their correlations are analyzed by means of mixed methodology, utilizing the benefits of netnographic big data analysis and a sector-specific quantitative survey. The netnographic analysis of open web content generated inside and outside the social profession offers a holistic overview of the influencing factors related to mental health and the work environment of social workers. On the one hand, the topics and topoi emerging in the external discourse concerning the sector are examined, and on the other hand, focus on mentions and streams of comments regarding the profession, burnout, stress, coping, as well as labor turnover and career changes among social professionals. The analysis focuses on new trends and changes in discourse that have emerged during and after the pandemic. In addition to the online conversation analysis, a survey of social professionals with a specific focus has been conducted. The questionnaire is based on input from the first two research phases. The applied approach underlines that the mobility paths of social professionals can only be understood if, apart from the general working conditions, the specific features of social work and the effects of certain aspects of mental health (emotional-mental-physical strain, resilience) are taken into account as well. In this paper, the preliminary results from this innovative methodological mix are presented, with the aim of highlighting new opportunities and dimensions in the research on social work. A gap in existing research is aimed to be filled both on a methodological and empirical level, and the Hungarian domestic findings can create a feasible and relevant framework for a further international investigation and cross-cultural comparative analysis. Said results can contribute to the foundation of organizational and policy-level interventions, targeted programs whereby the risk of burnout and the rate of career abandonment can be reduced. Exploring different aspects of resilience and mapping personality strengths can be a starting point for stress-management, motivation-building, and personality-development training for social professionals.

**Keywords :** burnout, mixed methods, netnography, professional mobility, social work

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