After the change

How work role changes affect job satisfaction,
turnover intention and general health

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AFTER THE CHANGE: HOW WORK ROLE CHANGES AFFECT JOB SATISFACTION, TURNOVER INTENTION AND GENERAL HEALTH

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This study examined the role of people's changing work roles and choice of work position for job satisfaction, turnover intention and general health after organizational change. Participants were 131 government agency managers undergoing a change of the management structure whereupon manager positions were cut down and everyone had to re-apply for the positions they wanted. Questionnaire data was collected before the organizational change and afterwards, when 43 of the participants were no longer managers. Four groups were formed from a combination of getting first choice of position or not and transferring down or not. A repeated measures ANOVA showed that the combination of not getting first choice of position and downward transfer resulted in significantly larger decrease in job satisfaction, larger increase in turnover intention and bigger decrease in general health than all other combinations. Practical implications for human resources management are discussed.

Across the globe, organizations reorganize and restructure their activities to adjust to an ever changing environment, even in the public sector (Sverke, Hellgren & Öhrming, 1999). The external environment now sometimes changes faster than organizations do; particularly when markets fluctuate wildly. Organizations thus continuously strive to catch up in order to remain competitive and effective (Burke, 2010). One consequence of this development is that coping with change has become a necessity both for organizations and for the individuals in them (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). In previous research, organizational change is often seen as a negative and stressful event for the individual (e.g., Nelson, Cooper & Jackson, 1995), but it can also be a more positive experience for some employees, for example in cases when working conditions, for example position or work tasks, improve as a result of organizational changes (e.g., Neumann, Edwards, & Raju, 1989).

How employees react to a change is important to consider, since successful organizational change is dependent on employee support for the changes, not just employee compliance (Piderit, 2000). How open and positive employees are to change, depends on such things as the scale of the change (Mossholder, Settoon, Armenakis & Harris, 2000), perceived favorability of outcomes and fairness of outcomes (Weiss, Suckow, & Cropanzano, 1999). Even organizational changes that do not create redundancies may create "winners" and "losers", who feel very differently about their support for the change and for the organization (Smollan, 2006).

To complement previous research, the present study set out to examine how outcomes of an organizational change affect employee satisfaction with their job, their intentions to stay with or leave the organization and employee general health.

Models for coping with change

Employees cope with and respond to reorganization in different ways. Mishra & Spreitzer (1998) categorizes various employee responses to reorganization as constructive/destructive and active/passive. This can be related to Hirschman's (1970) classification of action strategies for handling dissatisfaction with organizations, with "exit" and "voice" as the more active responses and "loyalty" and "neglect" as more passive ones. Exit is tantamount to voting with your feet, i.e. to seek employment with some other organization. Voice, instead of leaving, means trying to change the organization from within by voicing concerns. Voice can be constructive or destructive. For instance, Piderit (2000) warns against seeing all complaints or resistance as simply negative or unconstructive, pointing out that much of employee criticism may be motivated by constructive intentions. Such criticism, when addressed properly, holds great potential for successful organizational change. Aronsson (2000) writes that the likelihood of a "voice" response is dependent on the possibility of the individual to use the "exit" response. Voiced concerns might be taken more seriously if one is actually able to leave. Some people respond with "neglect," a passive, destructive response pattern including such things as absenteeism and lateness. This coping is more likely to be used if neither exit nor voice is possible.

For a change process or reorganization to be considered successful, the goals for the change process matter. Downsizings (after which the employees left in the work place usually have to manage more work with less people), corporate mergers, and privatizations each have their special challenges. Studies of organizational change and downsizing have often examined job insecurity (e.g. Nelson et al., 1995; Neuman et al., 1989) and job loss (e.g. Blau, 2008) or how managers should lead employees in a change (Fugate, 2012).

Managers as subjects for restructuring

A different kind of organizational restructuring is where those leading the change themselves are the prime subjects of the change, for example when the management structure itself is what is being reorganized. A restructuring of management without formal layoffs can pose many challenges to those affected by the change. For instance, in such a restructuring, a group of employees may be considered to be "laid off" in the sense that they are removed from the jobs they had and being denied the jobs they wanted. But they are not actually laid off, they still have employment. They could of course look for other work elsewhere, but they do not have to. They are allowed and perhaps expected to stay in the organization, but they have been demoted against their will, and this may cause resentment.

This is the kind of reorganization studied here. This restructuring had the intention to reduce the number of lower level managers so that each manager would be responsible for a larger group of employees and have a clearer mandate to manage. It was also a restructuring without layoffs, with the intention that "ex-managers" would find other positions within the organization, with all managers being affected to some degree as everyone had to re-apply for the jobs in the new management structure. This provided an opportunity to study the consequences of change in the work role on the employees' job satisfaction, turnover intention and well-being without the threat to the individual of losing their employment or income.

Organizational change – role loss through change of structure

A change of position within the same organization will likely mean a change in status and a change of the content of the job. Desirable tasks may be gained or lost, which means that different employees in the same organization have to deal with very different types of organizational change in terms of how it affects them personally. For some, the changes are likely to give rise to stress. In work and organizational psychology, several models of stress and strain exist with somewhat different focus. There is the transactional model, imbalance between demands and resources, by Lazarus and Folkman (1984); the demands-control model by Karasek and Theorell (1990); and the effort/reward imbalance model by Siegrist (1996). These are discussed below.

The status associated with a position can be said to be related to access to resources and opportunities to influence events in the organization (Martin, Jones & Callan, 2006). Transitioning to a lower level in the organization, for example by no longer being a manager, would likely mean having less autonomy and less discretion in how to best cope with reorganization (Mishra & Spreitzer, 1998). These changes tie in with the very influential transactional model of stress, where stress is described as the result of pressures exceeding the individual's ability to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The degree to which a situation is perceived as stressful depends on the individual's judgments about perceived controllability and efficacy expectations; that is, if the individual thinks they have the capacity to eliminate or modify the stressor and their confidence in their ability to do so (Martin et al., 2006). A stressor does not automatically lead to strain according to the transactional model, but it may do so depending on the interaction of person and environment.

While the transactional model places a lot of weight on the individual's perception of situation, the demands-control model by Karasek and Theorell (1990) is somewhat more structural. The imbalance of demands and possible courses of action is what may cause significant strain for the individual both psychologically (e.g., Dalgard et al., 2009; Landsbergis, 1988) and physiologically (e.g., Canivet et al., 2012; Karasek et al., 1988). If there is a perception of autonomy and control over one's own situation, it has been shown over and over again in research studies, even great challenges pose less of a risk to the individual. It is likely, then, that feeling in charge of one's destiny within an organization may affect psychological factors such as satisfaction, and physiological factors such as health. Choosing a path for oneself and then getting what one has chosen is likely to foster such feelings of control.

While the aforementioned models of stress focus mostly on capability to meet demands or exert influence over the environment/situation, in Siegrist's (1996) model the imbalance of effort and *reward* is central, and thus, one might say, a sense of being unfairly treated. One's efforts depend on the external environment – such as work – and on one's own ambitions. The rewards can for example be social status, career opportunities, money, or appreciation from others. According to Siegrist (1996), job loss and job instability have been associated with perceived lack of rewards, or insufficient rewards, as have forced occupational changes and downward transitions. It is plausible then that managers who feel that they did not obtain their desired positions after restructuring would also feel inadequately rewarded, in line with the effort/reward imbalance model.

An organizational change can be stressful in and of itself, especially as new demands are introduced and personal control over the change may be small. For the displaced managers in this study, a new position means a loss of the position as manager. As they acquire a new work role, they may feel incongruence with the professional role as manager that they have held for some time. Professional role refers to behaviors and values associated with a particular occupational career, and may be different from the work role an individual is currently in (Schlenker & Gutek, 1987). The contents of their jobs change, their social network at work may change; they lose the privileges and autonomy of the management position as well as the status connected with being a manager. Even though the autonomy – and thus the control part of Karasek and Theorell's model – is likely to decrease as one is no longer a manager, the demands of the new role may also be lesser and thus still match. However, it is plausible that adapting to change is itself a strain, as previously learned situated behaviors and skills may no longer be valid. The bigger the change the greater the effort needed to learn and master the new role (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

The negative outcomes of restructuring are also often highly interrelated. Job satisfaction has long been suggested to play an important role in shaping turnover intentions and leading to actual turnover. For example, several meta-analyses have shown the negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention, while turnover intention has been shown to be the most powerful predictor of *actual* turnover behavior (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000).

Turnover intention has also been connected to poorer performance and fewer organizational citizenship behaviors (Cropanzano, Rupp & Byrne, 2003; Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff & Blume, 2009). While it is the stated intention of management that all employees stay in the organization after the restructuring – it could still turn out to be problematic if everybody stays. If the people with high turnover intention feel trapped and do not leave, they might engage in other negative behaviors such as increased voice, decreased loyalty and increased neglect (Turnley & Feldman, 1999). A study by Ambrose and Cropanzano (2003) showed that promotion decisions had a rather large effect on turnover intention in a sample of management professors closely after the decisions were made, but no significant effect approximately one year after.

On top of the strain of change in itself there will be, for some managers, frustrated aspirations when they do not get to continue as managers even though it is their expressed will to do so. Years of effort spent in order to obtain a promotion, but resulting in failed aspirations has long been known to be a frequent risk among victims of premature myocardial infarction (Siegrist, Dittman, Rittner & Weber, 1982). In light of this, managers who are demoted as a result of restructuring will likely experience the organizational change more negatively than others, something that may manifest itself in impaired health as well as lower job satisfaction and higher turnover intention.

Preferences – Person-Environment fit

The element of control plays into not only changing to a less influential position, but whether or not the individual get the position they have chosen or at least wished for.

In this context of employee selection, when managers apply for certain positions that they wish to have after the change but it is the organization that finally decides who is hired for which job position, the concept of Person-Environment (P-E) fit becomes highly relevant. According to the P-E fit approach to stress (Edwards & Cooper, 1990), a mismatch between characteristics of the person such as abilities or values, and the environment in terms of demands or supplies, can generate negative psychological, physiological and behavioral outcomes. The P-E fit approach can be further broken down into a Demands – Abilities (D-A) fit, comparable to the demands-control model in which stress occurs when high demands are paired with low ability to influence or control the situation; and a Supplies – Values (S-V) fit which is concerned with to what degree the environment presents opportunity to satisfy a person's motives, goals and values (Edwards, 1996).

In the organizational change in the present study, all managerial positions were included in the reorganization and entirely new positions were created which could all be applied for. The position an employee applied for as their first choice, is considered to be the preferred one in this context, thus the position a person applied for should be the one with best value fit, and for which the applicant also perceived a fit of their own abilities as compared to what the position demanded. If, however, the organization in the recruitment process decided not to give an applicant employment in a specific job, this could be taken as evidence that the employer did not deem the candidate's ability or expressed values to fit to the job. Hence, although the recruitment process from the organization's perspective may be successful in resulting in a high person-environment fit, this may not necessarily be a perception shared by the individual employee who were not employed. A number of people may feel that there is little fit for them personally, if they have not gotten into the position they applied for. These employees are displaced in the organization in that they still have permanent employment but are not in their preferred occupation.

While some studies show that losing one's role through forced job transition is associated with lower job satisfaction and higher intention to leave, even months after the change and as the emotional shock has subsided (Allen, Freeman, Russell, Reizenstein & Rentz, 2001; Schlenker & Gutek, 1987), others show that these effects depend on how the organizational change is conducted and there is evidence that the negative effect may be rather short lived (Allen et al, 2001; Datta, Guthrie, Basuil & Pandey, 2010).

About a decade ago, an often-cited study from Sweden (Aronsson & Göransson, 1999) showed that individuals who do have permanent employment, but who are *not* in their preferred occupation, are almost twice as likely as permanent employees *in* their preferred occupation to report that they do not have the opportunity to be involved in and decide on work arrangements, that they do not get support and encouragement from superiors, to report health symptoms such as headaches, fatigue and mild depression, and *more* than twice as likely to report that they seldom or never get to learn anything new in their work and that they do not get support or encouragement from co-workers (Aronsson & Göransson, 1999).

Not getting one's preferred position is thus likely to result in a poor S-V fit as motives, goals and expectations of the individual are not met by the organizational situation.

The interaction of downward transition and choice of position

In an organizational restructuring, employees often have the possibility to express their interest in different positions, and may transition in any direction. This gives rise to different combinations of outcomes for the employees. They may still be at the same hierarchical level, e.g. a certain manager position, after the change – or they may not. They may move into the position they wished for themselves or they may have to settle for the one they were offered.

Matters of status, available resources, demands as well as personal preferences and controlling one's career all come into play, and the interaction of transition and choice is likely to be important to consider when examining the effects of the change on the individual. Ending up in a position with similar status, at a similar organizational hierarchy level to the one held previously, even if it is not the first choice, is likely more beneficial than being demoted and moved into a subordinate position against one's will. From a manager position, aiming higher but not getting there is a "non gain" rather than a loss and thus may have less impact for the individual, especially since there is less of a change to adapt to.

Edwards and Cooper (1990) suggest D-A and S-V fit interact in a way that situations where demands exceed abilities (D-A misfit) are only perceived as stressful if handling the situation has bearing on resolving or preventing a S-V misfit. Transitioning to a non-managerial position from a more autonomous job as a manager may not be felt as a loss of control *if* it is in line with the individual's values and choices. Or, choosing to step down may be a way of resolving a previous D-A misfit if it was considered too demanding to continue to be a manager, as a way to balance demands and control is to lower demands. It could also be the case that being a manager is considered more effort than it is rewarding, and choosing to step down is a way to lower effort.

To conclude the application of Edwards and Cooper's model (1990) to the situation in this study, voluntarily stepping down may not be perceived unfavourably by the one choosing to do it. In fact this group is likely to be content, having been managers but deciding it is not for them anymore and letting go of responsibility.

Combining position transitions with the choices for them leads to a framework of four groups with different transition patterns. A first group contains those who do get their first choice of position, and for whom this means staying at the same level of management or moving up, which in short can be called "same - first choice" (SF). Second, there are those who do *not* get their first choice of position but nonetheless do not transition to a non-managerial position, called "same – not first choice" (SN). Third, there are those who transition down by their own volition, "down - first choice" (DF) and fourth, those who have to transition to non-management positions that they have not chosen for themselves, "down - not first choice" (DN).

The combination of possible transitions and choices is visualised in Figure 1.

Choice	
Transition	Same position or up, Not 1 st choice (SN)
	Same position or up, 1 st choice (SF)
Transition	Transition down, Not 1 st choice (DN)
	Transition down, 1 st choice (DF)

Figure 1. Transition/choice pattern matrix

It seems reasonable that the *least* content, least healthy and most intended on leaving group will be the downward movers who did not choose it (DN), followed by those who have not moved down but did not get their first choice in position (SN). The people on the right side of Figure 1 (SF, DF) will likely be the most content and thereby have higher job satisfaction, lower turnover intention and better health.

The present study aims to examine the effects of choice and transition during organizational change on employees' job satisfaction, turnover intention and general health. Based on the presented theoretical reasoning, it was hypothesized that

H1: Managers who transition to non-managerial positions express lower job satisfaction, higher turnover intention and lower general health at T2 than those who stay in managerial positions.

H2: Employees not in their first choice position after the change report lower job satisfaction, higher turnover intention and lower health at T2 than employees in their first choice position.

H3: The combination of transitioning down and not getting your first choice of position is related to a larger drop in job satisfaction, a higher increase in turnover intention and a larger drop in general health than other combinations.

Method

Organizational background

The study was conducted among employees at a Swedish government agency that underwent a restructuring of management in 2011. In this restructuring process, the organization's intention

was to decrease the number of lower level managers so that each manager would be responsible for a larger group of employees and have a clearer mandate to be a manager. There were no layoffs; instead “ex-managers” were supposed to find other positions still within the organization. A thorough effort was made to match the right person with the right position, and everyone in the organization (managers and other employees) was allowed to apply for the positions in the new organization. All applicants for a position who fulfilled the educational requirement for that particular position were subject to psychometric tests of ability and personality. These tests were administered by an external recruitment consultant agency. This agency also provided the organization with a list of candidates who, based on their test results, were seen as most suitable for the particular position. In a next step, these candidates were interviewed by HR managers and higher level managers, who finally decided how positions were filled. The whole procedure was carried out top-down, that is, highest management positions were filled first so that higher level managers could be involved in the interview and decision process for the lower level managers.

Design

The study was conducted using two web based surveys, one in June 2011 when the restructuring had recently been announced but not yet started, and the second one in March 2012, about two months after the recruitment and selection procedure was finalized.

Before the first survey was sent out, all employees working as managers in the organization at Time 1 ($N = 201$) received information about the purpose and process of the study in the form of two informational letters, one from their employer and one from the researchers, sent together in one envelope to their home address. The letter from the researchers also included information on confidentiality: that the data would be collected on the university’s secure servers; that results would be presented back to the organization on group level only; that participation was optional and that the ID keys of participants would be kept in a safe. Information about the study was also posted on the organizational intranet. About one week later, all managers received an e-mail sent to their organizational e-mail account. The mail contained a link to the web survey and instructions on how to fill out the survey online. After up to three reminders, $N = 172$ managers participated in the study at Time 1, for a response rate of 85.6 %.

At Time 2, a letter from the researchers was sent to all included individuals in the Time 1 sample as well as those who were not managers and thus not included at Time 1, but had become managers during the restructuring. This latter group was excluded from analysis in the present study, as they did not qualify for the longitudinal design. The final sample included only those who answered surveys at both Time 1 and Time 2 ($N = 131$).

Sample description

As can be seen in Table 1, mean age of the participants was 48.5 years ($SD = 9$ years, range 25-65), and mean tenure was 18 years ($SD = 11.9$ years). Participants were grouped based on the combination of transition and choice as explained in Figure 1. Despite the groups’ difference in size, they significantly differed only in geographical location. It was most common to live in a large city in the group that did not transition down and did get their first choice of position (SF), and least common for the group that transitioned down but did not want to do so (DN). The

number of participants actually transitioning “up” were too few to make a separate group, and so have been collapsed into “same or up”, that is, into groups SF or SN.

Table 1. Sample characteristics and differences between groups

	All	SN	SF	DN	DF	Differences between groups
<i>N</i> (%)	129	32 (24.8)	61 (47.3)	18 (14.0)	18 (14.0)	
Age	48.5 yrs	46.3 yrs	48.2 yrs	49.2 yrs	51.8 yrs	$F(3,126) = 1.55, p = .21$
Tenure	18 yrs	14.3 yrs	19.4 yrs	17.3 yrs	21 yrs	$F(3,129) = 1.72, p = .17$
Female	54.7 %	71 %	45.8 %	55.6 %	55.6 %	$\chi^2(3,126) = 5.22, p = .16$
Higher education	63.8 %	75 %	58.4 %	61.1 %	66.6 %	$\chi^2(3,128) = 2.64, p = .45$
Higher level manager T1 n (%)	27 (20.6)	6 (18.7)	10 (16.4)	8 (44.4)	3 (16.7)	$\chi^2(6,129) = 8.55, p = .20$
Higher level manager T2	15 (11.5)	3 (9.4)	10 (16.4)	2 (11.1)	0 (0.0)	$\chi^2(6,129) = 70.0, p < .001$
Geographical region, large city	51 (38.9)	12 (37.5)	27 (44.3)	5 (27.8)	6 (33.3)	$\chi^2(6,129) = 16.0, p < .05$
Organization specific management training (yes)	81 (61.8)	23 (71.9)	36 (59.0)	10 (55.6)	11 (61.1)	$\chi^2(3,129) = 1.88, p = .60$

Note: SN, Same pos. or up, not 1st choice; SF, same pos. or up, 1st choice; DN, transition down, not 1st choice; DF, transition down, 1st choice

Measures

Patterns of transitions and choices.

Transitioning down was constructed from questions concerning current position that participants held at Time 1 and Time 2, based on information from the organization about what positions were relevant for the group. Those no longer in management at Time 2 were asked to indicate “other” and specify what position they were currently in. Non-management positions were coded numerically with the lowest value. Higher values corresponded in ascending order to higher level manager positions. Direction of transition was calculated by $Position_{T2} - Position_{T1}$ and then recoded so that a downward transition got the value 1 and same or higher position got the value 0. First choice position was measured at Time 2, as participants indicated with “yes” or “no” whether the position they had, at Time 2, corresponded to their first choice. Four groups were then constructed based on transition (down or not) and first choice (yes/no), creating the groups SN, SF, DN and DF as seen in Table 1.

Job Satisfaction.

Job satisfaction was measured with a 3 item scale (Hellgren, Sjöberg, & Sverke, 1997). An exemplary item was: “*I am content with my job.*” Answers could be provided on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely). Reliability tests of this scale showed that Cronbach’s α was .77 at T1 and .94 at T2.

Turnover Intention.

Turnover intention was measured with a 3 item scale (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000). An exemplary item was: “*I am actively looking for other jobs.*” Answers could be provided on a Five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely). Reliability tests of this scale showed that Cronbach’s α was .86 at T1 and .90 at T2.

General Health.

General Health was measured with the commonly used GHQ-12 (Goldberg, 1978). An exemplary item was: “*How often in the past weeks have you been able to concentrate on what*

you are doing?” Answers were provided on a scale of 0 (never) to 3 (always). Reliability tests of this scale showed that Cronbach’s α was .83 at T1 and T2.

Control variables.

All control variables were gathered at Time 1 only. Age and tenure was indicated in years. Gender was coded as female = 1, man = 2. Education was coded 1-6 with 1 being the lowest and 6 as the highest level of education, with 5 and 6 considered here to be “higher education” (university). Geographical region was indicated as larger city (Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmö), Other (Northern Sweden) or Other (Southern Sweden) and coded 1-3. In the analysis, the “other” categories were collapsed. Whether one had participated in organization specific management training was indicated in a yes/no item, coded no = 0, yes = 1.

Results

All variables, their means, *SD* and, if applicable, their reliability coefficients are presented in Table 2. In order to test the hypotheses of this repeated measures ANOVA was used with time as the within-group variable and transition pattern (switching to a lower level position at Time 2 or not) and first choice (if the participants position at Time 2 was their first choice or not) as between-groups variables (i.e. the independent variables). Gender and age were put in as covariates but did not affect the results and so the results of the simpler ANOVA are presented here.

Values of the outcome variables at Time 1 and Time 2 per group and for the whole sample are shown in Table 3. Inspecting Table 3 reveals that the biggest changes from Time 1 to Time 2 are reported in the DN group. In this group, mean job satisfaction decreased from 4.37 to 3.13 (scale 1-5), turnover intention increased from 1.78 to 3.02 (scale 1-5) while general health decreased from 2.49 to 2.18 (scale 0-3). Whether these tendencies represented significant changes over time, according to the hypotheses of this study, was tested by means of variance analyses, for which the results are presented in Table 4.

Main effect of time

There was a significant relationship between time and job satisfaction ($F(1,124) = 13.52, p < .001$), meaning that job satisfaction decreased in the sample as a whole from Time 1 to Time 2. There was no such relationship between time and turnover intention ($F(1,124) = 2.76, p = .10$) or general health ($F(1,124) = 1.81, p = .18$). This shows that over time, the sample as a whole did not change in turnover intention or health.

Main effects of transition patterns and preference over time

Table 4 shows that there was a significant effect of transitioning down over time on turnover intention ($F(1,124) = 10.12, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$) which supports part of hypothesis 1. For job satisfaction the trend was similar but did not reach significance ($F(1,124) = 3.62, p = .06$) and for general health there was no significance of transition over time ($F(1,123) = 1.12, p = .29$), leading to the rejection of those parts of hypothesis 1. This means that transitioning down does not in itself lead to worse job satisfaction or health, but it is associated with somewhat increased turnover intention.

Table 2. Bivariate correlation matrix of all variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	α	M	SD
1. Age	1																					
2. Tenure	.74***	1																				
3. Gender (2 = man)	.10	.06	1																			
4. Higher education	-.23**	-.48***	.15	1																		
5. Geographical location	-.21*	-.11	.08	.02	1																	
6. Org. specific leadership training	-.02	.17	.04	-.14	.15	1																
7. Higher lvl manager T1	.08	-.01	.21*	.13	-.05	-.08	1															
8. Higher lvl manager T2	-.13	-.02	.20*	.09	.26**	.05	.12	1														
9. Transitioned down at T2	.16	.07	-.02	-.04	.05	-.04	.17	-.60***	1													
10. 1st hand choice of position	.10	.18*	.18*	-.16	.02	-.07	-.14	.12	-.14	1												
11. Job satisfaction T1	.20*	.15	-.02	-.09	.00	-.01	.08	-.02	.04	-.06	1									.77	12.40	2.18
12. Job satisfaction T2	.11	.29**	.17	-.09	.15	.08	.01	.29**	-.18*	.31***	.24**	1								.94	11.65	3.06
13. Turnover intention T1	-.36***	-.35***	-.01	.24**	-.01	-.04	.06	.07	-.12	-.10	-.59***	-.27**	1							.86	6.65	3.70
14. Turnover intention T2	-.30**	-.39***	-.08	.19*	-.15	-.05	.04	-.15	.15	-.26**	-.20*	-.70***	.42***	1						.90	6.81	3.85
15. General health T1	.13	.07	.13	.07	.10	-.07	.17	.12	-.02	-.04	.35***	.26**	-.31***	-.24**	1					.83	28.37	4.62
16. General Health T2	.07	.15	.16	-.07	.12	.03	.15	.22*	-.12	.17	.20*	.65***	-.23**	-.50***	.42***	1				.83	27.91	4.91
17. Δ Job satisfaction T2	-.04	.16	.17	-.03	.14	.08	-.04	.28**	-.19*	.33***	-.44***	.77***	.14	-.52***	.01	.47***	1					
18. Δ Turnover intention T2	.04	-.05	-.07	-.03	-.13	-.01	-.02	-.21*	.25**	-.16	.35***	-.42***	-.51***	.56***	.06	-.26**	-.62***	1				
19. Δ General health T2	-.05	.08	.04	-.13	.03	.10	-.01	.11	-.09	.20*	-.13	.39***	.06	-.26**	-.50***	.58***	.44***	-.30**	1			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of the outcome variables

	Job satisfaction		Turnover intention		General health	
	Time 1 <i>M (SD)</i>	Time 2 <i>M (SD)</i>	Time 1 <i>M (SD)</i>	Time 2 <i>M (SD)</i>	Time 1 <i>M (SD)</i>	Time 2 <i>M (SD)</i>
SF	4.13 (0.71)	4.16 (0.90)	2.11 (1.18)	1.96 (1.10)	2.39 (0.34)	2.40 (0.40)
SN	4.08 (0.77)	3.69 (0.82)	2.70 (1.32)	2.49 (1.23)	2.32 (0.44)	2.29 (0.39)
DF	3.94 (0.93)	4.03 (0.82)	2.20 (1.13)	2.20 (1.12)	2.22 (0.39)	2.34 (0.44)
DN	4.37 (0.41)	3.13 (1.46)	1.78 (1.18)	3.02 (1.74)	2.49 (0.36)	2.18 (0.39)
All	4.13 (0.72)	3.89 (1.02)	2.22 (1.23)	2.25 (1.28)	2.36 (0.38)	2.34 (0.40)

Note: SF, same pos. or up, 1st hand choice; SN, Same pos. or up, not 1st hand choice; DF, transition down, 1st hand choice; DN, transition down, not 1st hand choice

Table 4. Summary of repeated measures ANOVA and post-hoc test for group differences

	Job satisfaction	Turnover intention	General health
Main effect time	$F(1,124) = 13.52, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .10$	$F(1,124) = 2.76, p = .10$	$F(1,123) = 1.81, p = .18$
Main effect transition	$F(1,124) = 1.10, p = .30$	$F(1,124) = .01, p = .92$	$F(1,123) = .42, p = .52$
Main effect 1st choice	$F(1,124) = 3.26, p = .07$	$F(1,124) = 3.38, p = .07$	$F(1,123) = .05, p = .83$
Interaction Time x Transition	$F(1,124) = 3.62, p = .06$	$F(1,124) = 10.12, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .08$	$F(1,123) = 1.12, p = .29$
Interaction Time x 1st choice	$F(1,124) = 18.37, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .13$	$F(1,124) = 5.20, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$	$F(1,123) = 8.34, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .06$
Interaction Time x Transition x 1st choice	$F(1,124) = 4.81, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$	$F(1,124) = 6.57, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$	$F(1,123) = 5.45, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$
Post-hoc test (LSD) of group mean differences at T2	DN < DF < SF, $p < .05$; SN < SF, $p < .05$	DN > SF, $p < .05$	DN < SF, $p < .05$
Post-hoc test (LSD) of group change differences	DN < SN, SF, DF, $p < .01$	DN > SN, SF, DF, $p < .01$	DN < SN, SF, DF, $p < .05$

Note: SF, same pos. or up, 1st hand choice; SN, Same pos. or up, not 1st hand choice; DF, transition down, 1st hand choice; DN, transition down, not 1st hand choice

In regards to preferences, there were significant effects of First choice x Time, on job satisfaction ($F(1,124) = 18.37, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$), on turnover intention ($F(1,124) = 5.20, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$) and on general health ($F(1,123) = 8.34, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$). This means that those not in their first choice position reported less job satisfaction, higher turnover intention and worse general health at Time 2 than those in their first choice of position, which lends support to the whole of hypothesis 2.

Combined effect of transition patterns and preference over time

Finally the interaction of transition *and* preference was examined, with time as the within subjects variable. A significant effect was found for Transition x First choice on job satisfaction over time ($F(1,124) = 4.81, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$) which is visualized in Figure 2. The figure shows that not getting the first choice gives a downward slope compared to those who did get their first choice. However, in combination with actually moving down the effect is bigger. In other words, the DN group – those forced to transition down – had a markedly bigger drop in job satisfaction compared to every other group.

Figure 2. Illustrating the interaction effect between transition pattern and getting 1st choice of position on job satisfaction (scale 1-5)

There was also a significant effect of the interaction of transition and choice on turnover intention over time ($F(1,124) = 6.57, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$) as is illustrated in Figure 3. As shown, only the group that transitioned down but not to their first choice position (DN) had increased turnover intention at Time 2.

Finally, a significant effect of choice and transition was also found on general health over time ($F(1,123) = 5.45, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$), illustrated in Figure 4. The pattern is similar to that of job satisfaction (Figure 2) but compressed, with much smaller differences. Using the *LSD* post-

hoc test, the DN group was shown to have both the lowest mean value at T2 as well as the biggest decrease over time in self-reported health.

Figure 3. Illustrating the interaction effect between transition pattern and getting 1st choice of position on turnover intention (scale 1-5)

Figure 4. Illustrating the interaction effect between transition pattern and getting 1st choice of position on general health (scale 0-3)

To conclude, hypothesis 3 was supported in its entirety meaning that there was an interaction effect of choice and transition over time for job satisfaction, turnover intention and health. The group of employees who had to transfer to non-managerial positions but not by their own choice

(DN group), had bigger changes in job satisfaction, turnover intention and health than all other groups. Not getting one's first hand choice of position was bad for job satisfaction, but much more so if one also had to transfer down. Turnover intention increased only for this DN group at T2. And only the DN group had significantly lower health at T2.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how employees' job satisfaction, turnover intention and health are affected by an organizational restructuring including work role changes that do or do not correspond to their own choices, as measured by getting one's position of first choice or not. The results indicated that first choice and the interaction of choice and transition were influential on all the outcome variables: job satisfaction, turnover intention and general health, which supported most of the hypotheses.

Of hypothesis 1, it was only supported that transitioning down had an effect on turnover intention, meaning that transitioning to a non-managerial position at Time 2 was significantly related to increased turnover intention but not to any changes in job satisfaction or general health. This is similar to the effect of promotion decisions on turnover intention found by Ambrose and Cropanzano (2003).

When it comes to first choice of position, the whole of hypothesis 2 was supported by the results. Not getting one's first choice of position was significantly related to lower job satisfaction, increased turnover intention and poorer health. Again, this is similar to Ambrose and Cropanzano's (2003) findings on not getting your preferred outcome (which in their study was tenure as a professor). Not getting your preferred position may be felt as having less control over one's own career, and moreover low decision latitude has been associated with lower job satisfaction (Landsbergis, 1988). Earlier research has also shown that wanting but not getting a promotion can have adverse health effects (Siegrist, 1996) and that those having permanent employment but not in their preferred occupation report more health symptoms such as headaches and mild depression than those with permanent employment in their preferred occupation (Aronsson & Göransson, 1999).

Finally the interaction of transition and choice was analysed. The results lend support to hypothesis 3, meaning that the interaction of transitioning down and not getting your first choice contributed uniquely to variance in the outcome variables. Being in the group of people who transitioned to a non-managerial position but not by choice meant having a bigger drop in job satisfaction, a larger increase in turnover intention and a bigger decrease in health than all other groups. These results are in line with earlier research showing that losing one's role through forced job transfer is associated with worse job satisfaction and higher intention to leave (Allen et al., 2001; Schlenker & Gutek, 1987).

The present results overall indicate that satisfaction, turnover intention and health are influenced *both* by the status of the position the individual is in – congruent with Siegrist's (1996) model of stress – and by the individual's opportunity to feel their volition and agency or control has mattered for their career, as predicted by Karasek and Theorell's (1990) demands – control model.

Examining Figures 2, 3 and 4 it is very clear that it is the downward transition – not first choice group, that is the worst off after the change. Their job satisfaction dropped the most; they were the only group with higher turnover intention at Time 2 and the group for which reported health declined the most between Time 1 and Time 2. Not only losing out on a favoured position but being demoted against one's will resulted in the worst overall outcomes. This conforms to Lazarus and Folkman's transactional model of stress (1984) as these employees would likely feel they have the biggest change to cope with, while resources (for example in terms of status) are taken away from them as they lose their manager positions.

The results of this study provide some practical implications for HR management and for managing organizational changes in general. Even though the examined organization stated that it was their intention to keep all employees in the organization through and after the restructuring, it may require some extra work on their part to make that a reality. The people who transitioned down but not as their first choice, are the only ones whose turnover intention is increased, as a group, at Time 2. Reported turnover intention has been shown to predict actual turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000). Effects of forced work role changes or not getting the position one wanted (and this group is affected by both of those things) can be felt for a long time after a change, at least up to a year (Ambrose & Cropanzano, 2003; Schlenker & Gutek, 1987). Seeing as how everyone in the down – not first choice group still has continued employment and income, however, their actual departure is probably mainly dependent on managing to be offered better jobs elsewhere. It would probably be wise to attend especially to this group to see how one might be able to help them adapt to their new situation. It has been shown that favorability of outcomes affects perceptions of distributive justice (Wade-Benzoni, Tenbrunsel & Bazerman, 1996), which in turn affects turnover intention (Ambrose & Cropanzano, 2003), and so it might be necessary to somehow compensate those in the down – not first choice group to alleviate aggrieved feelings.

During the change process, employees have had access to career coaching. To save itself from severely disgruntled ex-managers, it may be a good idea for an organization in a similar situation to prolong access to such career coaching meetings for employees or even to give a (small) incentive to leave; just enough to give those who are not very happy anyway a little push out the door. Still, the DN group is not very big, only 18 individuals out of 131, which in itself is perhaps a sign that the restructuring was successful from an employee point of view. After all, most people got what they wanted.

Limitations and future research

The present study had some limitations which should be noted. The studied number of individuals was rather small and respondents from only one organization were sampled. This limits the possibility to generalize outside of this population. Included in this study were only those who responded to the survey at both Time 1 and Time 2. The data in this study was collected using self-report questionnaires, a method which may inflate correlations between variables due to common method variance (CMV) and thus threatening validity (see for example Spector, 2006). However, in this study the independent variables (current position and position which one applied to as "first choice") are factual questions rather than measures of attitude, feelings or opinions. CMV should therefore not be a major threat in the current study.

Another caveat to be noted is the small effect sizes. The interaction effect of transition and choice explains only 4 % of the variance in job satisfaction, 5 % of variance in turnover intention and 4 % of variance in general health. At the most, 27 % of the variance over time in job satisfaction is accounted for by variables in this study (time, choice, and the interaction of transition and choice). This means that more than 70 % of the variance in job satisfaction is explained by other factors, not accounted for in this study. A benefit of this study was that the circumstances of the change are such that there is no threat of losing employment and income for the individual. That means there has been no risk of contamination of the results by employees' fear of losing employment or income.

Chen et al (2011) show that *change* in job satisfaction over time (measured 3 times) relates negatively to change in turnover intention, even when average job satisfaction over the same period of time, and initial levels of turnover intention, are held constant. A similar approach could be taken in a follow-up study. A measurement at "time 3" in this same organization would be of interest, examining especially the down – not first choice group. Do they stay with the organization? Will they still measure apart from the other groups on job satisfaction, turnover intention and health or will they become more harmonized with the rest of staff? Measuring a third time could also give more interesting patterns of change for analysis. For example, Chen, Ployhart, Cooper Thomas, Anderson and Bliese (2011) have attempted to synthesize theories of job satisfaction and turnover intention, to better explain "*why, how, and when*" changes in the former have a unique influence on the latter, above and beyond that of absolute levels of job satisfaction. Paying closer attention to patterns over time and dynamic processes will probably do better at predicting successful organizational change (Piderit, 2000) and yield deepened insights into the mechanisms of turnover intention and job satisfaction.

Moreover, widening the net and examining more levels of the organization is an important future approach. Further, Fugate (2012), for instance, have suggested research on effects of organizational change is lacking in for example team cohesiveness and collaboration as well as work unit productivity and output quality. Future research could also focus on trying to find factors that would buffer the consequences of being in situations similar to that of those here who had to transition down but did not get their first hand choice of position. It is not possible to avoid them altogether, in similar restructurings there will always be some employees who do not get what they want. The question would be if there are ways to help them successfully adapt to their new circumstances, before exit (leaving the organization) is considered as the best possible solution.

Concluding remarks

To summarize, the results of this study indicate that choice of position and the interaction of transition and choice of position impacted job satisfaction, turnover intention, and general health in a Swedish governmental agency in a process of restructuring of management, while job transition to a subordinate position alone significantly impacted only turnover intention. The present results give tentative evidence that the combination of the status of one's position, and getting what one wanted or not, appears to have a unique influence on the well-being of employees and their will to stay with the organization. If the organization wants these employees to stay with the organization, they probably need to give some special attention to helping them adapt to their new circumstances and dealing with status loss. If the organization or the

individual considers leaving as the best possible solution the organization may need to provide support, for example by offering extended career counseling or monetary incentives to facilitate successful job transitions into other organizations.

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