RELOCATION MANAGEMENT – CHALLENGES AND SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

Choosing new office spaces and relocating thereto is a process that numerous organisations go through each year. The process is a significant event in the course of an organisation's life as decisions concerning location and office solution determine the future operating environment. From the perspective of a single organization, however, relocation is an infrequent event and therefore very few organisations have the required knowledge to manage the process in-house. Yet organisations in Finland seem to prefer to cope on their own without acquiring assistance from advisors who are experts in relocation management. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to increase the understanding of the management of office relocations in Finnish organisations and the use of external advisory services.

The study uses a sequential mixed method approach. First, the use of relocation-related services, and organisations' perception of the need for the alike, is assessed through a questionnaire which was sent to the people responsible for corporate real estate management in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The data includes 83 responses. Subsequently, service experiences, perceived service needs, and the challenges that organisations face in relocation are studied through thematic interviews with 15 organisations that have recently relocated.

The findings showed that organisations face many challenges when relocating, especially when managing the process themselves. However, most organisations do not acknowledge the complexity of the process until afterwards and are therefore not prepared for all the hurdles that relocation might bring. For example, the vast amount of time that is required repeatedly catches organisational decision-makers off-guard, and the processes often lack change management efforts. Further, organisations in Finland lack knowledge of the availability of relocation-related services and therefore do not seek help when facing relocation. This shows that providers of relocation services need to first educate organisations of the challenges and opportunities of relocation, and successively increase the awareness of the availability of services in order to facilitate the better organisational relocation experiences.

Keywords: Corporate real estate, Finland, Office, Relocation,

INTRODUCTION

Choosing new office spaces and relocating thereto is a process that numerous organisations go through each year. Not only is this relocation process a significant event in the course of an organisation's life because it brings a hiatus to the organisation's operations, the decisions concerning location and office solution determine the future operating environment which can have a significant impact on productivity, efficiency, workforce satisfaction, and meeting the overall business objectives (Attwood, 1996; Christersson and Rothe, 2013; Laframboise et al., 2003; Morgan and Anthony, 2008; Nourse and Roulac, 1993).

Though a common phenomenon, relocation when it is considered in the literature is most often construed as being about location, or site selection rather than the process and the services necessary to successfully complete that process. A significant number of studies, many of these quantitative in nature, have looked at the impact of different internal and external factors on occupiers' location selection. Studies have shown that organizations' choice of property type depends on the type and size of organization and the geographical extent of their market (Leishman and Watkins, 2004), and have indicated that tendency to relocate decreases with the organization's size and possibly also with age (Brouwer et al., 2004). While earlier studies often focused on the importance of various location factors on location decision (for

example, Archer (1981)), Louw (1998) was among the first to point out the role of accommodation factors in the location decision. Since then, attempts to demystify occupiers' relocation have often been approached by assessing the relative importance of different locations, buildings, and space attributes in decision-making. For example, factors such as image and prestige of location (Sing et al., 2006), costs (Adnan and Daud, 2010; Elgar and Miller, 2010; Leishman et al., 2012), and suitability and quality of space (Appel-Meulenbroek, 2008; Elgar and Miller, 2010) have been placed among the most important attributes for occupiers. Recent studies have also unanimously found that, compared to other factors, sustainability is not a driving issue in occupiers' building selection process (Dixon et al., 2009; Leishman et al., 2012; Levy and Peterson, 2013).

All the before mentioned studies address relocation as a location decision, and contribute to the understanding of the type of location, building, and space that different kinds of occupiers are likely to choose, and how they come to that decision. It is safe to say that this knowledge is highly important for several stakeholders in the real estate market, such as developers, investors, and landlords. However, from the occupier's perspective, the relocation process is not a one-decision process that culminates in the final selection of one location. For the occupier, relocation is a management process which, depending on the relocating organisation, might apply different levels of sophistication (Greenhalgh, 2008; Leishman and Watkins, 2004). It is often described as unsystematic and complex, involving several actors, stakeholders, phases, and decisions. The process consists of multiple tasks including, but not limited to:

- Identifying the business need;
- Specifying space requirements;
- Deciding whether a new building is required, or whether an existing real estate product might be suitable as is, or with adaptation;
- Searching for possible premises;
- Evaluating possible premises;
- Negotiating with landlords;
- Designing new buildings and/or workplaces;
- Managing the employees through change;
- Physically moving; and
- Fine-tuning the new workplace and its workplace practices.

Because of the multiple tasks and the infrequency with which relocation occurs from the perspective of a single organisation, it is suggested that relocation is a specialist area of Corporate Real Estate Management (CREM) expertise that is not held by many organisations, especially those organisations lacking a dedicated CREM function.

Yet organisations in Finland seem to prefer to cope on their own without acquiring assistance from advisors who are experts in relocation. For example, the size of the tenant representation market is still relatively small with the amount of mandates being between 50 and 60 per year, and the prevailing practice for local tenants is still to use traditional broker services or to approach the landlords directly. However, as the difference between a tenant representative and a broker is that the former is appointed by, represents, and advises the tenant, while the broker in effect represents the landlord more than the tenant, the tenant should not expect to receive expert advice from a broker that is specifically relevant to their business. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to increase the understanding on the management of office relocations in Finnish organisations with a focus on the use of external advisory service providers. In this study, the relocations are limited to short-distance moves that occur within the same general area and where most of the staff is retained, also defined as urban recommitment by O`Mara (1999).
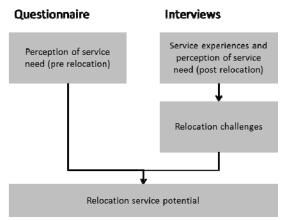
METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed methods approach which combines the use of quantitative and qualitative data. The applied strategy is a sequential mixed methods procedure in which the study started with a quantitative method (questionnaire) and followed by a quantitative method (interviews) in which the phenomenon was explored in more detail (Creswell, 2009) (Figure 1). First, an opportunity to collect survey data arose as a large questionnaire was being conducted as a part of a research project on organisational workplace preferences. At that time, no knowledge was available on the demand for relocation-related services among organisations in Finland, thus the online questionnaire was used to assess organisations' perception of their need for relocation-related services in case they were facing a need to relocate. The findings of the questionnaire showed a relatively small perceived need for services, which called for a more thorough, qualitative assessment in order to identify the underlying reasons for the limited demand of services. Subsequently, 15 organisations that had recently relocated were interviewed in order to better understand why the organisations had or had not used service providers, assess their experiences with the services and their conscious service need, and to

identify challenges that organisations face during the relocation process which might indicate an unconscious demand for relocation services.

Both parts of the study were conducted in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area (HMA) which has a dominant position as the only large city region in Finland, comprising the capital city of Helsinki and neighbouring cities Espoo, Kauniainen and Vantaa, with a total of almost 8 million square meters of office space out of some 10-11 million square meters in Finland in total when the study was initiated in 2009 (KTI, 2009). Still to date, the dominance of the HMA in the Finnish economy and commercial property market is greater than in many other European centres of the same size, and with also nearly all major company headquarters located in the region (KTI, 2013) it is a justified representative of the Finnish market for the purpose of this study. Next, the two phases of the study are presented in more detail.

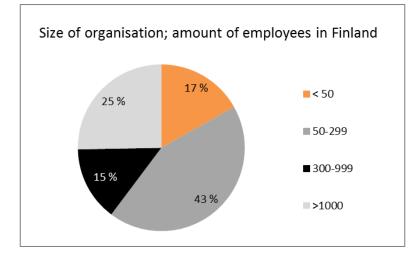## Figure 1. Purpose of questionnaire and interview methods

The questionnaire

The data was collected as a part of a larger questionnaire concerning organisations' work environment preferences. One section of the questionnaire concerned service needs in relocation. In this section, the respondents were asked, from a predefined set of tasks related to relocation, to identify their organisation's use or need to use external service providers. The respondents were asked to choose between four options for each task: In use; have not used but the need exists; no need; cannot say. This was followed by two open-ended questions in which the respondents were asked in which other relocation-related tasks they have used external service providers or have the need for it.

The questionnaire was sent out in two phases during spring-summer 2009. First, an invitation to respond was sent to 126 people in selected occupant organisations in the HMA. The return rate was 28 per cent with 35 responses. Because of the small number of respondents after the first phase, the questionnaire was then sent out to decision-makers in all organisations with more than 50 employees within the HMA. In total, 1,348 invitations were sent out and 60 responses were obtained, resulting in a response rate of 4.5 per cent. Thus, the total amount of responses was 95 with a return rate of 6.4 per cent. Out of the 95 responses, 83 were taken into further analysis after one response was excluded due to insufficient responses and 11 were excluded because there were multiple respondents from the same organisation.
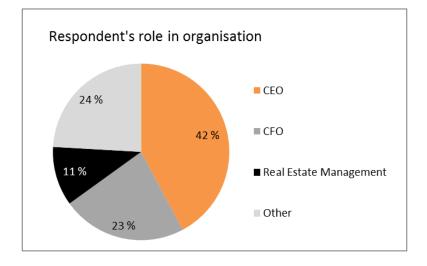
Despite the small response rate, validity of the data is strengthened by the fact that the questionnaire invitation was sent to the entire population (all organisations with over 50 employees in the HMA), and that the organisations included in the analysis (Figure 2) represent the existing organisational demographic in the HMA where the majority of organisations are small or medium sized. Nonetheless, the small number of responses should be taken into consideration when generalising the results.
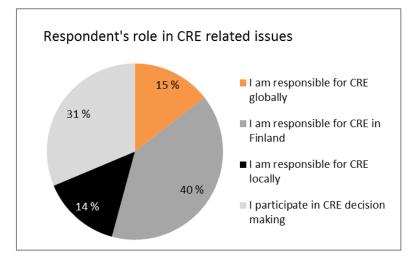
Figure 2. Organisations included in the analysis: Number of employees (n=83)

The target group of the study was managers responsible for corporate real estate (CRE) in their respective organisations. Out of all respondents, 42 per cent were the CEO of their organisation, 23 per cent the CFO, 11 per cent held a real estate management position, while 24 per cent held other positions (Figure 3). In order to confirm that the responses had been received from the appropriate representatives in the organisation, the respondents were asked about their role in CRE issues in their organisation. As shown in Figure 4, all respondents indicated that they participate in, or are responsible for, CRE at some level.

Figure 3. Respondent's role in organisation (n=83)

Figure 4. Respondent's role in CRE related issues (n=83)

Respondent's role in CRE related issues

- 15 %
- 31 %
- 40 %
- 14 %

■ I am responsible for CRE globally

■ I am responsible for CRE in Finland

■ I am responsible for CRE locally

□ I participate in CRE decision making

Interviews

The second part of the study was conducted in 2012 through semi-structured interviews with representatives from 15 companies that had recently relocated within the HMA. The organisations were purposefully selected to help understand the problem in a diversity of settings (Creswell, 2009) and comprised organisations of different size; in 6 organisations the amount of relocating employees was 10-49, in 3 organisation 50-99, in 3 organisations 100-199, and in 3 organisations >200. The interviewees had all been actively involved, making decisions, and executing the relocation of their organisation. They all held different top level roles in their organisation; one partner, one country manager, six CEOs, one CFO, one deputy manager, one communications manager, three corporate real estate managers, and one support function officer were interviewed.

At the start of the interviews the company representatives were asked to describe in their own words how the relocation process started and progressed. Questions concerning the execution of the relocation in general, the organisation involved in the process, communication and employee communication, reflection on the success of the process, and potential need for assistance had been prepared in order to ensure all aspects of the relocation were covered in the interviews.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The analysis was done using qualitative data analysis software (Atlas.ti). The transcripts were read through and coded with a focus on service experiences and perceived service needs, and challenges that the organisations had faced. The codes on relocation challenges were of both descriptive and interpretive nature. The codes were descriptive when the interviewee had already identified a challenge, for example "A challenge was, of course, the fear of how the employees react, 'Do they still consider [company name] as an attractive employer?'". The interpretative codes included more interpretation of what the interviewee said, for example "Sometimes there was a feeling that nobody has control of this entire thing" was interpreted as project management posing a challenge. As suggested by Miles and Huberman, (1994), similar codes were then grouped together and these groups were then give a descriptive name. In total, 66 different challenge codes were divided into 12 groups which were further divided into three themes of relocation challenges.

FINDINGS

Questionnaire results: perceived service needs

The results of the questionnaire show that the majority of the respondents do not consider relocation as an organizational event in which they need assistance from external service advisers. In general, a minority of the respondents reported that they use external providers for different tasks, and a small part indicated that they have not used the services but have identified that a need for it exists.

Some tasks, however, showed to be more prone to using external providers than others (Figure 5). The respondents seemed to most likely use external service providers to help them in the search for available space options as 60% either used or had identified the need to use an external service provider for this task. Also, taking care of practical

arrangements related to the move where 54% frequently externally sourced services for the task. Defining space need (43%), defining required functionality of work environment (45%), and comparing and choosing between available options (46%) were tasks that less than half of the respondents had used service providers or had acknowledged that they needed help. However, only 17% of the respondents had actually used external help when comparing and choosing between available options, making this the task with the biggest unfulfilled demand with 29% of the respondents not having used this kind of service but thinking that they should. The large number of respondents that had used help in searching for options but not in comparing and choosing between options shows that brokers, as opposed to tenant representatives, dominate the market.
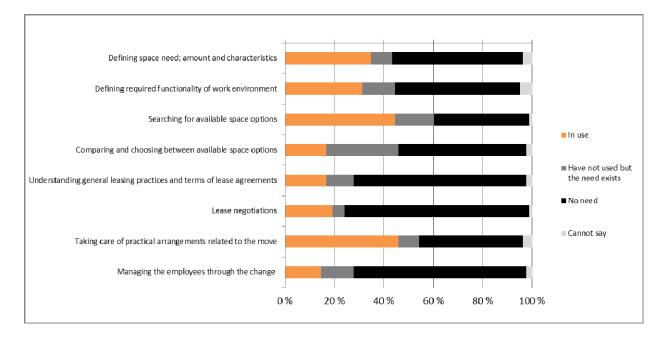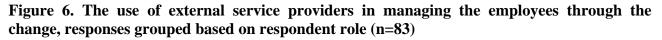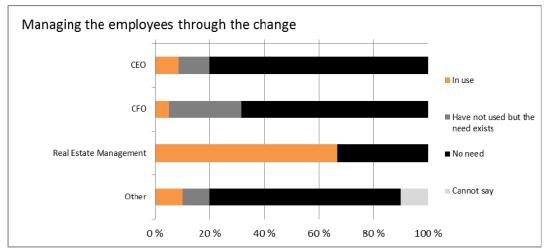
Figure 5. The use of external service providers in different relocation tasks (n=83)

The three tasks where respondents considered they need assistance with the least were perhaps a bit surprising. First, most respondents seemed to perceive themselves sufficiently knowledgeable on leasing practices and terms of lease agreements (28% had used or thought they needed assistance) and being able to take care of lease negotiations themselves (24%). Second, only 28% thought they needed help in managing the employees through the change. The questionnaire does unfortunately not reveal whether the 70% of all respondents who did not see a need for external help with this matter did not consider this an important and challenging task, or whether they simply thought they had the appropriate skills and resources in-house. An interesting aspect to this particular question is, however, that the role of the respondent played an important role in the responses (Figure 6). Despite there being only 9 respondents with a real estate position they were clearly seen to be more prone to use external assistance in managing the employees through the change (6 out of 9; 67%) compared to, for example, the CEOs (3 out of 35; 9%) or the CFOs (1 out of 19; 5%).The difference between the respondents stance towards this service was confirmed by the Chi-Square test (p<0.05). While this finding should not be generalised due to the small amount of respondents with a corporate real estate position, it still gives some indication that the role of relocation and workplace change in employee satisfaction and well-being had been identified as important among corporate real estate professionals while the general top management has not quite identified the link.

Figure 6. The use of external service providers in managing the employees through the change, responses grouped based on respondent role (n=83)

Interview findings: Stance on using advisory services

All of the interviewed organisations had used external service providers at some stage of their relocation process. However, the use ranged from only using a moving company to take care of the physical move to appointing several advisors for a range of different tasks. The most commonly used advisory service was related to designing the new office, although in some cases this task was taken care of by the furniture supplier who simply gave suggestions on different layouts. A more thorough workplace development service was used by only three of the organisations.

Six of the organisations used a tenant representative during the search and negotiations phases of the process, seven organisations had been in contact with brokers, while 2 organisations relied completely on their own knowledge when searching for new spaces. The organisations that appointed a tenant representative had done so based on previous experiences or existing global contracts with tenant advisory providers. What was apparent from the interviews was that the reason for organisations not appointing an advisor to represent them at this stage of the process was a lack of awareness of the existence of this kind of service. The interviewees were either completely unaware of such a service, or they did not quite understand the difference between a tenant representative and a broker. An illustration of this problem is also that an interviewee, who had used a tenant representative, kept talking about their 'broker' even though the service that was described was clearly tenant representation. Only one of the interviewees who had not used tenant representation claimed to have been aware that this kind of service existed but that the organisation was reluctant to appoint external advisors due to costs.

All of the interviewees were satisfied with the advisory services they had used, and none of the interviewees said that they would not use the same services if relocating again. However, many interviewees expressed disappointment with brokers who were often described as having long reaction times and lacking an opinion concerning the suitability of spaces for the organisation. Further, many interviewees were confused about where the broker had disappeared to as soon as the lease negotiations had started. When told about existing tenant representation services, eight of the nine interviewees who had not used tenant advisors claimed they would consider them for the next relocation because it would bring more knowledge to their side of the table, it would save them time and potentially money.

The interviewees were also asked about other potential services that they, based on their relocation experience, think they could need. In addition to tenant representation, the interviewees called for a project management service that would make the process more efficient, ensure that everything is thought of, and that would decrease their own workload. One interviewee also mentioned that he wished there was a management service of the related Information Technology (IT) infrastructure relocation.

Interview findings: Relocation challenges

The previous section illustrated the interviewees' service experiences and conscious needs for relocation-related services. This section looks closer at the challenges that the organisations faced when relocating in order to potentially identify unconscious service needs.

The analysis of the interviews highlighted three themes in which the interviewees experienced challenges. A summary of all challenges are presented in Table 1. The three themes were challenges related to:

1) Managing the process;
2) A lack of substantive knowledge of relocations: and
3) Managing organisational change.

Challenges related to managing the process

Challenges related to managing the relocation process was not an uncommon feature in the relocation experiences of the interviewees. First, assigning the right resources and organisation to carry out the process proved to be challenging for many. The amount of time and effort the process required came as a surprise to many of the interviewees, and it was often reported that taking care of core business tasks during the process had been a challenge. Further, managing the entire project and all subcontractors appeared to be a difficult task for the interviewees, especially those without previous experience in managing similar projects, while other organisations were completely lacking a project manager with responsibility to look after the entire project.

Second, a number of illustrations of time schedule challenges were given by the interviewees. Common for many of the organisations was a late project initiation, and many of the interviewees concluded that the project should have been started earlier. Another reason for problems with scheduling was simply an unrealistic time schedule. As many of the persons involved in the relocations lacked previous relocation experience, they also lacked an understanding of delivery times of, for example, contractors and furniture suppliers. One interviewee, however, admitted that they had simply not assigned enough time for the project because they did not think it was that important and complicated, and therefore some issues were not discussed thoroughly enough.

Finally, many of the interviewees mentioned challenges related to communication. While some found it difficult to ensure that all relevant information reached everyone in the project group, others had challenges with keeping subcontractors up-to-date with the latest decisions.

Lack of substantive knowledge of relocations

Most of the interviewees had no, or very little, previous experience of relocations. As a consequence, many of the organisations faced problems and challenges caused by a lack of knowledge and know-how. Some organisations had discovered at a late stage in the process, that they had not been able to properly determine the organisational needs or list space requirements. For example, one interviewee described how things kept coming up during the process, because they had not been able to think of all technical requirements at the beginning of the process.

Another issue that caused problems to several organisations was to find suitable options for places to relocate to, and to compare and decide which one to choose. The search process was considered challenging for several reasons. Some thought that there simply was not that many options available, others found it difficult to choose between a large number of possibilities. Brokers caused confusion as interviewees did not understand how they operate. The search for premises was described as a "jungle" as all brokers wanted to show the same spaces. Further, interviewees had wasted a lot of time on visiting premises that they, in hindsight, knew that were not suitable at all.

For many, the challenges continued after the premises had been chosen. Interviewees reported on making bad decisions concerning the layout and furniture selection, and planning and building the IT solution was also perceived as difficult. Relocating the organisational IT infrastructure had been identified as a risk, and completing the relocation on schedule was not only seen as a crucial but also a demanding task.

Lastly, a lack of understanding of more specific issues had caused some worries for some organisations. The interviews revealed challenges in understanding and considering taxation, legal, and sustainability issues, and making cost estimates. Further, the interviews revealed that not all organisations had completely understood the real estate market mechanisms and the general practice of the market, and had not, for example, been able to take full advantage of their position when negotiating with possible landlords.

Managing organisational change

The interviewees commonly mentioned facing challenges related to managing the change with the employees, and changing the ways of working and operating. Many interviewees were surprised over employee resistance, and described it difficult to manage both short-term reactions to changes and long-term attitudes towards the organisation. One interviewee mentioned that the relationship between some units within the organisation had suffered as a consequence of moving into an open plan office. Another person raised a concern over whether the organisation still remained an attractive employer after moving into an open plan office solution. Further, it was mentioned that it had

been difficult to communicate the employee resistance to the top management, who apparently remained unaware of the employees' reactions.

Some of the assessed relocations had included some employee participation efforts, such as questionnaires, workshops, and continuous feedback channels. Despite efforts, some interviewees concluded that they had not completely succeeded in listening to everyone, and that employees should be more included in the process next time. On the other hand, one person said that the democratic space planning process had led to chaos, and another interviewee thought that the participatory process had been tough and time consuming and insinuated that it would perhaps not be the method of choice when the next relocation occurs.

Table 1. Summary of relocation challenges

Theme	Challenge	Details
Managing the process	Resources and organisation	The project took a lot of time and had a negative impact on core tasks
		Challenging to manage the entire project
		Challenging to manage the entire chain of subcontractors
		Lack of overall management; nobody given the responsibility of the entire project
	Time schedule	Late project initiation
		Unrealistic time schedule
		Not assigning enough time due to devaluation of project importance
	Communication	Communication within project group
		Communication with subcontractors
Lack of substantive knowledge of relocation	Needs assessment	Lack of / inadequate assessment of organisational needs
		Inadequate listing of space requitements
		Lack of critique of space requirements
	Search and comparison of options	Finding suitable options
		Comparing options and making decision
		Wasting time on site visits
		Broker activities confusing
	Interior design and implementation	Bad decisions concerning layout and furniture
		Lack of / inadequate understanding of technical requirements and solutions
	IT design and implementation	Managing the risks of IT relocation
		Determining IT specifications and requirements
		Managing the IT relocation within time schedule
	Other	Lack of / inadequate understanding of market mechanisms, players, and practices
		Lack of / inadequate understanding of taxation issues
		Lack of / inadequate understanding of legal issues
		Lack of / inadequate understanding of sustainability issues
		Cost estimation

Managing organisational change	Implementing change	Managing employee short term reactions
		Managing employee long term attitudes
		Changing ways of working and operating
		Communicating employee resistance to top management
	Involving employees	No / limited employee involvement
		Unsuccessful employee involvement
		Challenging to manage employee involvement
	Communication	Communication to employees
		Managing rumours and eliminating incorrect information

These challenges in relocation, while a problem for the relocating organisation, provide evidence of the opportunities for service providers to increase their service offering to relocating organisations.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the questionnaire responses showed that many organisations were not considering using advisory services if they were relocating. The questionnaire does not, however, reveal whether the relatively small demand for services is due to, for example, the tasks being considered simple or unimportant, or whether the organisations consider possessing a sufficient amount of knowledge and resources in-house.

The interviews with organisations that had recently relocated enabled a more detailed assessment of office occupiers' thoughts on relocation services. The interviews showed that the lack of use of external advisors was both a knowledge and resource issue. This is, while some organisations had used advisors and other service providers in a range of different tasks, others had not outsourced their tasks to the same degree. The interviews identified two explanations to this: first, many organisations had thought that relocation was not as complicated a process as it turned out to be. However, after relocating these organisations commonly concluded that next time around, they would seek assistance for some of the tasks. Second, the awareness and understanding of relocation-related services showed to be at a fairly low level. Especially the difference between broker and tenant representation services seems confusing, and in many cases there was a complete lack of awareness that tenant representation exists as a useful relocation service.

While the questionnaire showed that the relocation service demand is still relatively small, the interviews showed that many organisations that had gone through relocation did identify several tasks in which external advisors could have been useful. Especially services related to searching and comparing options, carrying out lease negotiations, and overall project management was mentioned by the interviewees.

A more thorough analysis of the challenges and problems the organisations faced helped identify even more tasks in which many organisations might need assistance due to a lack of experience and knowledge, some of which were not that evident to the relocating organisations. For example, managing employee reactions was a frequent challenge among the studied organisations. At the same time, managing the employees through the change was the task in which the organisations in the questionnaire would least frequently use external assistance, and also the interviews suggested that many organisations do not think they require support in managing employees through the changes that relocation poses.

Relocations are not a part of the organisations' day-to-day business, and unless the organisation has a Corporate Real Estate or Facilities unit, one could even argue that they should not be expected to have that knowledge. Just as IT consultants are brought in when larger IT projects are planned, and HR consultants are used when larger organisational changes are implemented, several service providers offer assistance for organisations facing relocation. Based on the study' findings, tasks in which relocating organisations should consider appointing external advisors, and which point towards the development of the relocation-related service industry, are:

- Assessing organisational needs now and in the future;
- Space search:
    - o Determining space requirements;
    - o Searching for available spaces;
    - o Selecting the most appropriate spaces;
    - o Advising in comparison and decision making;
- Lease negotiations;

- Workplace planning and implementation:
  o Space planning and implementation;
  o IT infrastructure planning and implementation;
- Project management:
  o Service procurement and managing sub-contractors;
  o Scheduling;
  o Communication;
  o Cost estimation;
- Change management:
  o Employee participation; and
  o Communication.

The interviews suggested that organisations look positively at using advisory services in relocation when they had recently experienced relocation and understood that the process can, in fact, be quite complex. However, lack of awareness of both the challenges and the service provision are two big obstacles for relocation-related services to develop. As long as organisational decision makers do not recognise challenges related to relocation management until after relocating, and also remain unaware that relocation advisory services are being offered, organisations will continue struggling through relocation on their own.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to increase the understanding on the management of office relocations in Finnish organisations. The focus was on the use of external advisory service providers and their services.

Relocation is an infrequent event for organisations and therefore many organisations lack experience and knowledge on how to manage a successful relocation. However, based on the questionnaire results in this study, few organisations consider, before relocation, that they need support and the demand for relocation-related services in Finland is still limited. The interview findings, on the other hand, suggest that organisations do, post-relocation, identify challenges and would consider outsourcing some or all of the tasks had they known what managing relocation entails. Thus, in order to increase the use of advisory services in relocation, organisational decision makers need to be made more aware of the challenges that relocation can bring, and of the different advisory services that are already offered on the market.

This study used a sequential mixed method approach. The benefit of this approach is that it combines the benefits of both quantitative and qualitative research. However, the two sets of data were not collected one immediately after the other; the questionnaire was conducted in 2009 and the interviews in 2012. However, during this time there has been little development in the relocation-related service market in Finland (for example, the amount of tenant representation projects did not increase significantly) and thus, the time difference is not believed to have impacted the findings. The main limitation of this particular study is the population size of the questionnaire respondents. While the invitation to respond to the questionnaire was sent to the entire population of organisations in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area with over 50 employees, only 95 responses were obtained (of which 83 were taken into further analysis). A larger population would have allowed for more generalisations, while the data as it is should only be used as indications.

Further, it should be pointed out that while this paper focused on challenges that the organisations faced during relocation, some organisations had also carried out relocation tasks successfully. This was, however, not within the scope of this article.

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