

**SELYE E-STUDIES**



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# WELL-KNOWN AND MODERN GROWTH LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT MODELS FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

Horváth András

## Abstract

One of the most important management challenges for the Hungarian micro, small and medium-sized enterprises certainly is how to handle and coordinate decently the general growth in their life. As the result of my experiences from the last years could be determined that the lifecycle analysis models for the businesses are increasingly well-founded and helpful tools by the everyday duels. During my research period I collected the previously published lifecycle models, and I created my own breast-wheel lifecycle model, which eliminates the inelasticity of the earlier models, and as well as implement the typical Hungarian SME's criteria. At the end of the last year within of the framework of my research program more than two hundred enterprises were asked with the help of questionnaires in the Western Transdanubia Region. According to my empirical research period I would like to point out that the so far discovered and published western theoretical lifecycle models – which are mainly based on large corporations characteristics – could interpreted and applied to the Hungarian SME's as well – having regard to some national characteristics. The aim of the paper is to present the well known and modern growth life cycle models and due my breast-wheel model I would like to improve the previous model cycles according to my empirical experiences.

## Key words

Lifecycle. SME Lifecycle models. Growth lifecycle management.

## Introduction

Nowadays the Hungarian micro, small and medium enterprises (henceforward: SME's) face to perhaps one of the most important challenge: how to handle and coordinate the general growth of their life. According to the researches of the last few years it was found that the measuring systems based on growth lifecycle are at helpful and well-founded services for the enterprises for the common-life challenges.

In this publication I present and summarize the latest lifecycle models of noted researchers and I would like to introduce my own breast-wheel lifecycle model. The aim of my model is to combine and join the knowledge of the latest models, to eliminate the disadvantages and collect the advantages of them in one model with the exclusion of the inflexibility of them.

Beyond the continuous processing of the theoretical literatures I made a pilot questionnaire in the last year. The point of my own research was firstly to collect more information from the Hungarian SME business sector for the further research options and secondly to confirm the adaptability of the theoretical models in the Hungarian business life.

In this pilot research were queried on the whole more than two hundred Hungarian companies from the Western Transdanubia Region's SME's sector over personal interviews and over personal questionnaires with the top management of these businesses. The proportion factor between the interviews and the questionnaires was 13,05% and 86,95%.

The survey focused on the one hand on the characteristics of the lifecycle models of the domestic SME's, on the other hand on the background of the future ownership change of the business owners in their companies, in other words: how should the business owners operate with the future alternatives on the field of the generation changes (inheritance and succession) of their businesses.

In connection with the precursive results of my primer surveys await me proof of many interesting correlation. I would like to publicize the final results in the near future only than if the whole processing of the final surveys is already completed.

## **1. Materials and methods**

### **1.1. About the lifecycle models in general**

*“Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it”* were said by George Santayana, an American philosopher and poet.

Most of the lifecycle models introducing the lifecycle of the businesses as the human lifecycles: it begins with the birth (or the idea of birth) of the company, than coming many life periods as the company become ripe, and in the end, closes with the death of the company.

*“As the product lifecycle, lifecycle exists in the business world as well, and makes expressive by the conformation of the lifecycle gear to the time: so it could be plotted a curve which presents the lifecycle of a company”* (Zsupanekné, 2007). This curve represents the lifecycle of a company, which curve could be separate for two massive parts according to almost all of the lifecycle theories: for the growth periods and for the decadent periods.

These two great branches has been studied in theoretical and as well practical mapping researches for a long time and in the consideration of the results these two categories are defined almost as two different disciplines within the field of the lifecycle management science. The management of the growth periods observes the positive slope sections of the company lifecycles, which are incidental to growth, development and evolution, while the declining branch with the negative slope sections are dealing with the failing periods of the company's life more closely.

My research mainly focuses on the growth periods, because the main disappearing questions in connection with the development dilemmas could be answered by the deeper exploring of this lifecycle stages. And in an always changing market to find the solutions as soon as possible are necessary to ensure a constant profit-oriented operation for the SME's.

In the most studies the declining stages belong to another broader topic of the lifecycle management science sector: to the crisis management. In this case, by stepping on a descending period should search the management of the company for the right scenario from the crisis situations storehouse for analyzing and intervening as early as possible to secure the operational sustainability and possibly to restore the growth again.

The investigations of the Hungarian SME's show all lines, that the most of businesses, which are successfully operating in Hungary today, were founded in the late eighties and early nineties. This fact reinforces the reliability of the lifecycle based analysis system because the testing businesses already have enough history to be able to get useful results due the theoretical lifecycle models.

If we are ready to follow the stages of a company thanks to the lifecycle models, we can assign some criteria to the same – and on this way homogenized – lifecycle periods, which could be common by many SME's. Hereby the SME's, which are per se individual but standing in the same lifecycle period, after all could be able to compare with each other. Accordingly the growth lifecycle models give us a not only a theoretical pattern how the businesses are working in the diverse ages but as well give us a measurement instrumental, which are able to locate the exact place of a business in his lifecycle and could give some alternative options, how the company should handle his future opportunities.

### **1.2. The most popular Hungarian and foreign lifecycle models**

The lifecycles of some enterprises develop differently according to the internal and external characteristic features of the businesses. Many researches prove that different lifecycle periods are observed and separated in the case of most of the enterprises. There is problem with

the monitoring of these researches and the monitoring of the enterprises also, because the experts have various standpoints from the borders of the lifecycle periods. Presently do not exist of an acceptable standard model system, which helps to make conclusions for the lifecycle periods of the most of the enterprises with the same filtering criteria.

While different models are widely used, according to my experience in the case of examinations is practical to use and evaluate more models in the same time for one enterprise. The application of the various models and the final results could be give a complete picture from the obtained company and make a basis for the further examinations and suggestions for the future development options. The “multi-model-testing” lead more and more to precision, thanks to the similar methodical approaches of the variety of the models, because of the structure of the models are not independent from each other and in some cases the characteristic features of the different sections of different models are the same.

With the help of Zsupanekné (2007) I would like to present now the previous well-known lifecycle models.

The bases of the lifecycle of enterprises with the theory leaning on three keystones were laid down by Professor Jeffrey Timmons (1990). In his model system the lifecycle curve is divided into five main sections, which were assigned to concrete life-spans by the Professor. However the steps of declining section weren't specified by the excellent corporate expert, who died at the age of sixty on April 2008.

Subsequently, Robert D. Hirsch and Michael P. Peters (1994) in their book “Enterprise” were taken up Timonns' (1990) basic model. The first two section of the previous model was divided into four-four parts by them.

However the real breakthrough was brought by the book of Adizes (1992) called “Corporate Lifecycles: How Organizations Grow and Die and What to Do About It?” in 1988. Compared to the previous models, the author formed a complete lifecycle, which involved the growing and the declining cycles as well. Nowadays this model perhaps can help during the analysis of the enterprises because the model compares the human life milestones to the progress of the enterprises and it makes this model significant, popular and mostly used. The growing stages of Adzes' (1992) lifecycle are made up of six parts, which lead four aging phase before the corporate death.

Larry G. Greiner's (1995) model is also widespread. In this model the phases of revolution and evolution are changed. According to the theory of Greiner (1995), lifecycle of the enterprises characterize with five growing stages, where the evolution stages are the developmental periods. In this model the revolution phases mean that problem, which an enterprise stand between the border of two stages and have to decide between them.

Among the Hungarian researchers, Jávör István (1993) and Szerb László (2000) deals with the legitimacy of the integration of lifecycle curve before the foundation of an enterprise in their theories. The twelve stages of growing lifecycle of Jávör's (1993) model are probably the most diverse and the most differentiated between the well-known Hungarian models. With this theory, Jávör (1993) perhaps made a well-constructed model of the steps of corporate development. The model of Szerb (2000) is based on the theory of Timmons (1990) with the addition of the two essential periods before foundation and just two stages at the end of the lifecycle, which is the sixth lifecycle phase.

Next to Jávör's (1993) and Szerb's (2000) model there is another significant model by Szirmai Péter (2002). The focused model of Szirmai (2002) put the lifecycle stages based on Adizes to three different level, micro, macro and mezo.

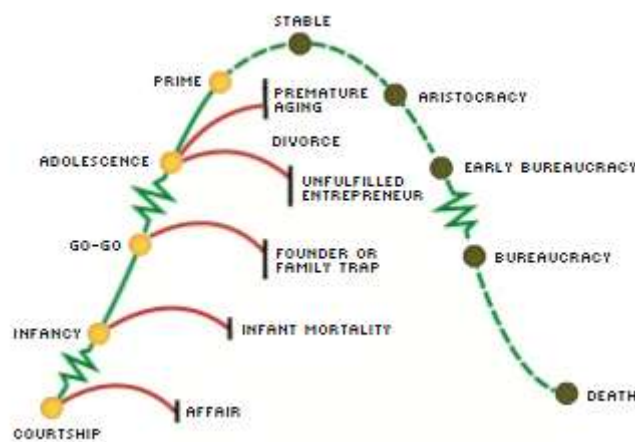
Salamonné Huszty Anna's (2006) lifecycle model gives the essential part of my researches. On my opinion this model is significant, because make a mixture from the advantages of the models of Adizes (1992) and Greiner (1995) added the characteristics of small and medium enterprises and based on the knowledge of the Hungarian and foreign

lifecycle models. In this mixture there are the real assets of the other models in five different stage of the lifecycle. Beyond the creation of this theoretical model Salamonné (2006) is the first beyond the Hungarian researchers, who have published results of empirical researches with reference to the Hungarian SME's sector.

### 1.3. About the Adizes lifecycle model

On the basis of the lifecycle management literature the one of the most mature and most widely used model was set out by Ichak Adizes. Most lifecycle model deals only with the developmental stages of the periods, but in his model the corporate can be traced from the pre-foundation step until the company's death. Perhaps this model has become so popular, because for each period was made a very detailed description, and in the practical application the subjects could be classified with almost one hundred percent certainty in each category (Göblös-Gömöri, 2004).

The following figure shows the Adizes-model lifecycle stages:



1. Figure. The Adizes Lifecycle Model (1992)

Source: Adizes Institute Online, Available at: [http://adizes.com/corporate\\_lifecycle.html](http://adizes.com/corporate_lifecycle.html), Date of Download: 30-11-2013.

In the *courtship* period the company is still nascent and starts looking for the most appropriate strategy for the particular environment. Above all, the "*product-oriented and value added focus*" (Göblös-Gömöri, 2004) are the main features. This period should be treated with more caution, because if the company's management builds up an inadequate strategy after the establishment of the company, it could be easily lead to the early termination of the company, while at the beginning are all of the resources and all the decision-making opportunities usually limited.

Then follows the infancy, which is the most dynamic period in the Adizes-model (1992) for the SME's. This period is about the development, as well as a baby discovers the world around him and gain more experiences thanks to the impulses. The company learns the coordination processes, and could have even more damages, but at the end of this era has its own consciousness and will.

The next stage, the *go-go* period connected again to the era of human development, as a step when the baby becomes a child. Team spirit within the SME's play an increasingly dominant role in the development and the individual successes encouraged the company to continue its growth.

In *adolescence* the rate of development will slow down, and the focus of the management center more on how to change and how the quality could be transferred. The decision-making difficulties increasingly come to the fore, which could lead to dangerous

conflicts. Characteristic features are in this stage, that the human resources, capital and reserves of the companies are set to reorganize and renew.

*Prime* (or manhood) is the "era of the best performing path of growth" (Göblös-Gömöri, 2004). By this time, the ERP systems operate, and the company has an enviable flexibility. Each process is organized and easy to handle, so the company can focus on one main purpose: to increase profitability.

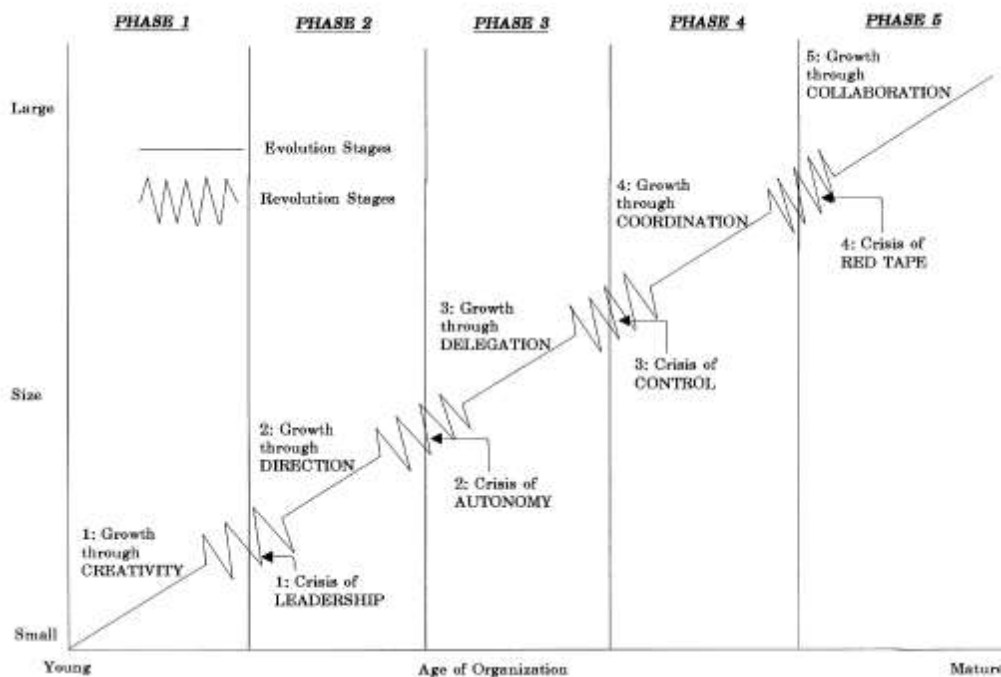
The *stable* stage is the pitch of the life. The company is ready to meet the daily challenges, but the creativity is decreasing and less able to introduce new things, and create. The company trying to find solutions to the increasingly complex management changes with the existing systems and patterns.

As formerly mentioned, the descending periods will handle by the crisis management sciences, so I will not specify this periods in this publication.

#### 1.4. About the Greiner lifecycle model

Larry Greiner (1995) published his lifecycle model in 1972, which became well-known all over the world. The model describe five distinct phases in the lifecycle stages and shows in each alternate periods with evolutionary and revolutionary breaks, which are illustrated with straight and broken lines. The evolutionary periods show a calm and balanced phase, while revolutionary phases are characterized by crises.

In my opinion, the Greiner (1995) model becomes alive by this two alternating stages, as a natural way to approach the changes of each stages by the crisis (revolutionary) periods. In particular, associate on the critical stages of the human life periods: the problems also arise spontaneously, but usually the solution is still pending (Farkas, 2005):



**2. Figure. The Greiner Lifecycle Model**

Source: Greiner, Larry (1995): Evolution and Revolution as Organizations Grow. Harvard Business Review, 1995. jan-feb.

In the first phase plays *creativity* the main role. The company starts his life, and focused on overcoming the initial problems. The exponentially small successes will motivate the company to move forward, so at this stage of development is extremely robust.



This is followed by the *direction* phase, in which the company must affix the management activities to the fore, because to ensure the continuous operation is not enough anymore to rely only on the self-solving protocols. There are introduced the corporate governance policies and systems to help speed up the processes of coordination. This will give a fresh impetus to continue.

The third (middle) period is the *delegation* (transferring) phase. At this stage, the company usually awakens him to become a too bureaucratic organization, so it is time to re-allocate the roles and decentralize the operation. This can best be accomplished by assigning the responsible person for each task, and by removal of the “classic management” from the single control.

In the fourth, *coordination* stage the units, which are dissolved in the previous period, will unite again, and the group as a team take over the planning of the future with the full responsibility by the sensitive areas. The employees could even have a stake in the business successes of the company.

The model will complete with the period of *collaboration*, which aims to improve the quality of team processes in the further cooperation. In order to move on to the misty future the business are ready for all – even for extreme, completely new, creative – ideas to try out, although it is not yet calculable, and could lead moreover uncertain fields.

### 1.5. About the Salamonné Huszty Anna model

This model is such an alloy from the Timmons (1990), the Adizes (1992) and the Greiner (1995) models, which has albeit many similarities, but it captures the sting of the well-known enterprise lifecycle models through a combination of a number of differences. The model from Salamonné (2006) could be mentioned as a method with the first pioneer results of analysis in Hungary, which is very broad and incorporates previous studies on the process of research, especially targeted at Hungarian SME's. She not even collects the earlier theories but through her own researches let test as well the Hungarian SME's.

The way to reach the best view of the lifecycle models when we display them side by side in a chart, because the Salamonné (2006) model hasn't been illustrated in a figure yet:

**1. Table. The most popular lifecycle models**

PHASES	TIMMONS [1990]	ADIZES [1992]	GREINER [1995]	SALAMONNÉ HUSZTY ANNA [2006]
1.	R&D	Courtship	-	-
2.	Starting Phase	Infancy	Creativity	Starting Phase
		Go-Go!		Creativity
3.	Early growth	Adolescence	Direction	Direction
4.	Mature	Prime	Delegation	Delegation
			Coordination	
5.	Stabilize	Stable	Collaboration	Stable

Source: own processing according to the sources of Timmons (1990), Farkas (2005), and Salamonné (2006)

It could be seen that the researchers are in agreement that the procedure can be divided into five major lines of the development. We can see that in the model of Salamonné (2006) the periods of Greiner (1995) and Adizes (1992) are changing.

By the domestic research the phase prior the starting (establishment) is not significant, so the first stage the role played is the starting phase. Business owners will be launching their businesses on the basis of an initial impulsive idea based on her surveys. This period lasts a relatively short period of time, and immediately proceeds to the next cycle.

The *creativity* is the most important way of life when it comes to starting a successful company based on the idea to build the organizational, technological and human resources systems, and improves the company's key products. The company is developing dynamically in this time, and could improve performance in all areas.

After the period of creativity the model of Salamonné (2006) differs from the previously known models, and two routes are assumed into the future: the *direction* and the *delegation*.

The direction phase is aimed at quality improvement, whereas the primary purpose of the delegation period is the reconstruction of an efficient management leadership, which could release additional resources for the cost efficiencies by prioritizing.

At the last stage – as in the Adizes (1992) model – is the *stable* phase in the case of the model of Salamonné (2006). By this time the company acquires those experiences which are given a free hand for the decisions in the operation in an automated atmosphere.

The model of Salamonné Huszty Anna (2006) is currently perhaps the most accurate domestic model for the Hungarian SME's, because her work is based on multi-annual research activity, with personal examinations of company leaders.

## **2. Common experiences based on the described models**

After the examination of the models there are several common and opposite criteria which were proved based on the ideas of the researchers. From these ideas, the two most prominent criterions are the method of transition between life stages, and group of questions of the temporal continuity of lifecycles. Some researchers are at the point of view that the lifecycle phases must only follow each other consecutively, so the business can't skip one cycle to jump to another. However others said that certain steps are disregarded because it helps to increase the elasticity of the models.

In the case of the primary period, the developer of the models generally shares the viewpoint that the progression of the enterprise is the process of maturation, in conclusion the enterprises has to go on straight on the timeline. With the passage of time one question arise: *What would happen after the last stage in the lifecycle of enterprises?*

Because of this the concept and idea of *rejuvenation* was born, which means, that the development could happen not only in forward, but also in backward. The enterprise is rejuvenated as the principle: if there is no way to forward, than to turn to backward. The enterprise could be younger with this strategy, and wander a route many times (Pataki, 2004). Except for some unclear areas we can say generally, that each model can be suitable to test the enterprises independently and help to improve the management in the critical periods.

It is possible to plan the short term and alternative future of the enterprises because of the theoretical ideas which are supported by general practical experiences and surveys. This means that the duration of critical periods and the expected processes could be calculated. It helps to proceed, when the enterprise reach the border of a cycle between the stages of the lifecycle, alternative strategies are able to created and there is also enough time to simulate these strategies. If the solution is still not right, the parameters could be changed again and after it with the next tests the appropriate allocation could be formed and find.

The compatible of the models is also an advantage. This means, that it is practical to use several methods and test with more lifecycle models. In a case of a problematic status after the multi-dimensional testing is easier to choose the right going-on-strategy. We get

information from as different sides, there are as various aspects to analyze and solve the problems.

### 3. Vertical approach vs. on-going process-centric model

„Remember that just the moment you say: I give up, someone else seeing the same situation is saying: My, what a great opportunity” were said by H. Jackson Brown, an American bestseller author.

After studying and analyzing of the models above we might think that construction of a better, new, own model would be inevitable. However the birth of my model does not originate in that, my aspect is not the same as one of the latest models. After the initial examination of the models I’ve been thinking in a vertical direction and vertical effecting method. According to the following chart I imagined the modified model of Salamonné (2006), which is applied during my tests:

**2. Table. Lifecycle model phases adjusted with my own lifecycle periods**

PHASES	TIMMONS [1990]	ADIZES [1992]	GREINER [1995]	SALAMONNÉ HUSZTY ANNA [2006]	MY OWN MODEL
1.	R&D	Courtship	-	-	Cogitative
2.	Starting Phase	Infancy	Creativity	Starting Phase	Infancy
		Go-Go!		Creativity	Go-Go!
3.	Early growth	Adolescence	Direction	Direction	Direction
4.	Mature	Prime	Delegation	Delegation	Delegation
			Coordination		
5.	Stabilize	Stable	Collaboration	Stable	Stable
					Correction

Source: own processing according to the sources of Timmons (1990), Farkas (2005), and Salamonné (2006)

After in the previous section described pro and con arguments were examined I was searching for a possibility of a global solution with the application of a combination of the well-known models, one question occurred to me: *How could I be able to unify the critical parameters (as the continuity and temporality) of the earlier researchers in one single model?*

Aside from all the positions previously known I draw the conclusion, that it is worth to thinking not in a vertical, but a process-centric model, because the vertical models are inflexible and the models can be applied in the practice only with a very narrow cross-section incorporating filters. I would like to rather find such a solution, where not the enterprise should adapt a lifecycle model to his life – so I would not like to find an appropriate enterprise for the theoretical models – but my model should to respond to the lifecycle of the enterprises.

Therefor was born my process-oriented breast-wheel lifecycle model, which provides high degree of freedom of expression of lifecycle periods. My figure model is currently not finished, because I would like to complete it after the results of my empirical researches, but now I could draw it up so:



**3. Figure. Own breast-wheel lifecycle model**  
Source: own processing

Actually this model would be the twin sibling of the model of Salamonné (2006), because except of two installed sections it consists of the same lifecycle elements, only with a special composition. These two new elements are the *cogitative* and *correction* phases.

The *cogitative* phase is an interim period before the foundation of the enterprise or during the lifetime of the enterprise. It plays an important role in the examining of perspectives and measures if the enterprise is founded or wants to discover new directions. According to the surveys the business owners in most cases launched their own company based on an initial and impulsive idea, which could be also dominant in their success in the future. Based on my observations, this period usually lasts only a relatively short period of time.

The *correction* phase is a little bit more complex moment. I think that the enterprise reached the border of a lifecycle period, not always fulfilled all the criteria at the same time to move to the next cycle period simply. A transitional period could help to absolve the changes and to fit them in the daily life of the company. This is the purpose of this phase, and of course, to touch this life stage is not binding, but presumably with the switching among the cycles would be occurs predominantly.

The company is able to move through the life cycle stages, but by an occasion of a major crisis – as stepping on a joker field – could find solutions using the correction phase.

Of course a business may retouch of each earlier period again as well, by which the company could avoid more and more different strategy troubles in connection with their changing management.

With the help of my breast-wheel method the questions of the orders of the lifecycle periods (gradual or jumping) and the questions of the direction of the lifecycles (maturity and rejuvenation) are solved, because thanks to the infinite combinations of the possibilities make the model totally flexible. My model provides beside secure results in wider circles during the testing, because it could minimize the framework conditions of the applicability.

## **Conclusion and about the related empirical survey in the near future**

I would like to soon publish nearly one-year empirical research program steps and results. The processing stage of the current researches approaches the level of 80%, so the results can be expected in spring of next year.

During pre-processing of the empirical research it became to me clear that testing the companies with the reviewed lifecycle models has *raison d'être*, because this methods could serve for the companies as an operational assistance to be able to mapping the alternative pathways. Without knowing about these methods it could be possible, that the managers, executives and independent owners do not even recognize the backgrounds of the causes in the company's management strategies.

In the first step I collected primer empirical data from Hungarian SME's through personal questionnaires. The data collection affected nearly 230 Hungarian SME's and medium and senior leaders were questioned, mostly from the West Transdanubian Region. Participants in the questionnaires mastered the theories and practical application of the lifecycle models before performing the query.

The questionnaire consisted of four main parts. In the first part has been collected the general data of the observed companies. The second phase was used to determine the own lifecycle paths of the businesses, with the help of classification the characteristics of the well-known lifecycle models (e.g. Adizes (1992) model with online tests, Greiner (1995) model). In the third module I would try to justify the *raison d'être* of the well-known theoretical models and confirm the legitimacy of my own breast-wheel development growth lifecycle model, which is based on the theoretical background of my further thesis. The fourth topic was about the future ownership change of the business owners in their companies, and the possible visions of the heritage of his companies.

I am confident that through my empirical research it will soon be demonstrated still unexplored relationships and characteristics in connection with the theoretical lifecycle management models.

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# **THE TIMELY ISSUES OF SHARING AND UTILIZING THE WATER DISCHARGE OF RIVER NILE**

**György Iván Neszmélyi**

## **Abstract**

The conflict and dispute on the issue of distribution and utilization of the water discharge of Nile River has been increasing among ten African riparian countries which are all affected by this issue, however each of them in different extent and way. All of them strive for asserting their own economic and security interest. The impacts of this issue extend far beyond the direct geographical region itself, and of course, it has a predominant influence on the water and food supply of around 300 million people who live in these countries. The sharpest disaccord can be seen between the group of Sub-Saharan riparian countries laying in the upper part of Nile and Egypt. The rapidly growing population and her almost exclusive dependence on the Nile-water makes the Egyptian government insist strongly to her quota, which was set in international agreements long ago. The Sub-Saharan countries would amend the prevailing sharing system to another solution which served their interests more, so they considered it more rightful. The international community has been trying to make efforts to settle the issue the best known of them is the Nile-Basin Initiative (1999) which is backed by international organizations like the World Bank, UNDP, etc. The aim of the research was to analyze this complex situation and draw conclusions and lessons which should be regarded in cases of analogue European situations, for example in case of the co-operation among countries in Danube Basin.

## **Key words**

Nile. Water management. Agriculture. Hydro-energy. Conflict prevention

## **Introduction**

The paper gives an insight to the increasing conflict and dispute on the issue of distribution and utilization of the water discharge of Nile River among ten African countries namely Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Sudan (the latter was split to two independent countries in 2011). This issue has a predominant influence on the water and food supply of around 300 million people who live in these countries but also a way for electric power generation at a sustainable way. The problem is that needs for water, food and energy are all increasing while the resources are limited. The paper tries to focus on the point that this very complicated issue is not just a zero sum game for the riparian states but choosing the way of co-operation instead of conflicts may be beneficial for all stakeholders.

## **Materials and methods**

The paper was based on secondary research founded on the descriptive-analytical exploration of concrete economic, social, political and technological factors, which could be found in the background of the entire complex situation. The examinations were based on the available international and partially Hungarian bibliography, and databases in this field.

Mention should be made about the fact that the author not only visited but and even used to work in several riparian countries, therefore his on-site personal contacts, work experiences and his formerly published papers related to this field (Neszmélyi 2010, 2013) also contributed to the results of this paper.

### About the Nile Basin in nutshell

River Nile is one of the longest rivers of the world, its length is 6,667 km, its catchment area is 3.37 million km<sup>2</sup> (somewhat bigger than the total territory of India). Nowadays Nile has a decisive or at least a very significant role in feeding and supplying 11 countries and their 300 million inhabitants with water. These countries are as follows: Egypt, Sudan (North and South – the latter became independent in July 2011), Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Eritrea. The latter is not riparian country but the catchment area of the Nile extends to Eritrea as well.



**Figure 1. The countries of the Nile River Basin**

Source: [www.pislamonauseacentral.blogspot.hu](http://www.pislamonauseacentral.blogspot.hu). 2013

On the basis of forecasts the population of the river basin of Nile will be doubled between 1995 and 2025. The prevision of the annual flooding periods of the river is cumbersome, the quantity of the surplus-water discharge varies from year to year, and it is also difficult to estimate in advance. From among the eleven countries from the aspect of the Nile the following countries have special importance: Egypt, North and South Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda (these ones are most concerned by this issue) while in the water supply of the other Sub-Saharan countries the Nile plays a lesser decisive role.

Nowadays for 95% of the population of Egypt (around 85 million people) the water of Nile has vital importance. Inhabitants of Sudan and South Sudan are also strongly dependent on the water discharge of Nile. 86% of the water discharge reaching Aswan, the city in South Egypt derives from Ethiopia (Blue Nile) while 14% (White Nile) comes from Uganda and from other Sub-Saharan countries (Shinn D H 2006).

**Table 1. Main statistical figures of Nile Basin countries**

	Territory	Population (Million) 2011	Annual population growth	Annual GDP growth	Per capita GDP	Cereal prod. (Million)



	1000 km <sup>2</sup> ***		(%) 2011	(%) 2011	(USD) 2011	tons) 2011**
<b>Egypt</b>	1,000.0	85.3*	1.88*	2.0*	6,600*	21.8
<b>Sudan</b> (North & South)	2,500.0	34.3	2.1	4.7	1.435	2.9
<b>Ethiopia</b>	1,100.0	84.7	2.1	7.3	357	20.0
<b>Uganda</b>	241.0	34.5	3.2	6.7	487	2.8
<b>D. R. Congo</b>	2,344.0	67.8	2.7	6.9	231	n.a.
<b>Kenya</b>	580.0	41.6	2.7	4.4	808	3.8
<b>Tanzania</b>	946.7	46.2	3.0	6.4	532	7.1
<b>Rwanda</b>	26.3	10.9	3.0	8.3	583	n.a.
<b>Burundi</b>	27.8	8.6	2.3	4.2	271	n.a.
<b>Eritrea</b>	117.6	5.4	3.0	8.7	482	n.a.

Sources: Data of World Bank (\* Published by CIA, estimated data for 2012-2013,  
\*\* FAO data \*\*\* One World - Nations Online Countries and Territories in Africa

### The Background of Conflicts

The possession of natural resources, the externalities appearing closely with them many times could be from the beginning the sources of economic disparity. Series of historic examples prove that for the possession of the existing natural resources, for the dispossession of new ones, numerous wars had already been launched. One of the most fundamental economic challenge of our age is that how could we utilize and divide our limited resources more equitably beside some sort of rational comprehension, how could we minimize the negative externalities in such a way that the possibilities of war conflicts should be avoided. (Lökös L Jr. 2009).

The complexity of the African problems especially the historic inheritances and traditions living deeply in the societies, the modernizing new (nation)state-structures and the global impacts and expectations from the international community are all inter-related with each other therefore multi- and inter-disciplinary approach of research and analytical considerations are needed. (Tarrósy I 2009).

The shortage of water becomes more and more the gravest risk factor from the point of food security of the world. According to pessimistic scenarios 66% of the population of Earth will not have sufficient quantity of drinking water by 2025. Out of the gravest problems to be solved in the 21st century unanimously will be the permanent water pollution and the threatening water shortage (Glied V 2008).

These problems appear especially sharply in this huge region which is strongly heterogeneous both in terms of ethnic and religious characteristics, and also in the level of economic and social development. There not only the impacts of human activities but geographical and climatic factors are also among the reasons why a significant part of the water discharge of the Nile „disappears” and never reaches the Mediterranean Sea. The basis of the emergence of a conflict situation is that the riparian downstream countries (first of all Egypt) are strongly dependent on the water discharge of the Nile and on the other hand they sufficient power in their hands to enforce their interests against the upstream countries (Shinn D H 2006). The forecast of Worldwatch Institute (published in 1988) had already pointed out that a global scarcity of water „would belong to the most decisive ones from the lacks of raw materials which had been underestimated even by now at the eve of the third millenary”.

Concerning the water shortage the following trends can be observed:

- The overall demand for water has tripled since the beginning of the 20th century,
- In global dimensions essentially bigger amount of water is exploited than the precipitation can supply back.
- The level of groundwater is sinking rapidly in every continent.
- The freshwater quantity used by agriculture (around 70%) even at stagnant level of productivity is still the biggest ratio globally (Glied V 2008).

Egypt would require even more water in the future with regard to her rapidly growing population, developing economy and agricultural projects, however the Sub-Saharan (upstream) riparian countries would also need water in a growing extent. Furthermore they consider the present share of Egypt unjust to which Cairo consequently and strongly insists referring to international agreements which were concluded several decades ago in the past. The government of Egypt – as it has previously done during the Mubarak-regime and following to the Arab Spring too she also rigorously insists to her share of water discharge and does not want to renounce from any part of it in favour of the concerned other countries.

The majority of the upstream riparian countries at the same time also wish to utilize more water from the Nile before the river reaches Egypt. Ethiopia – from economic, population and military aspects – in the issue of the Nile the greatest Sub-Saharan „counter-pole” considers no any country can impede that it should utilize the water amount being in her territory. The available amount of water is limited, the water demand arising from the concerned countries is growing. The emergence of conflicts can be considered as a real risk, therefore international efforts being done for prevention are of vital importance for the future of the region.

### **International Agreements**

Egypt and Sudan concluded first agreements on the distribution of water discharge of river Nile. In 1929 an agreement was concluded between Egypt and the United Kingdom according to which Egypt was entitled for an annual water quantity of 48 billion cubic meters while Sudan was eligible for 4 Billion m<sup>3</sup>. In 1959 a new agreement was signed, this time between Egypt and Sudan again which increased the quota of Egypt to 55.5 Billion m<sup>3</sup> while it for Sudan 18.5 Billion m<sup>3</sup> (proportional division of 3:1). The agreement reckons with an annual evaporation loss from the common Lake Nasser (Shinn D H 2006, Havasi E 2010). These agreements divided practically the entire water discharge between two states, therefore none of the other riparian countries signed these agreements. The basis of disagreements existing even today and the impediment of a solution being acceptable for all parties – in the past and even now as well - derives from the different approaches to the issue.

The principle of “just or equitable sharing” is represented by the upstream countries who urge on the repartition while downstream states insist rigorously henceforward to their quotas based on their “historical rights and the international law”. On 14th May 2010 in Entebbe (Uganda) 4 countries (Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Tanzania) concluded a new agreement which intended to assert the standpoint of the upstream riparian states. This agreement was later joined by most of the Sub-Saharan riparian states while Egypt and Sudan kept off, Egypt even declared this agreement illegitimate. The only issue Egypt would be willing to negotiate is the sharing of the surplus water accessible from decreasing the vast evaporation and other losses of the water of the Nile.

## Agricultural Aspects

Agriculture is the most excessive water utilizer in the countries of the region. Irrigation has decisive importance first of all in Egypt and in the northern part of Sudan where the climate is very dry thus without irrigation no agricultural production could be possible. Formerly several dams respectively hydro-power stations were built in the valley of Nile, among which the best known was the Aswan Dam in Egypt. Attempts to regulate the river in order to reserve water and to diminish the harms of floods have already been made at the beginning of the 20th century. The construction of the first dam began in 1899 in the distance of 5 kilometres from Aswan city under the guidance of engineer Sir William Wilcocks. The dam was composed of granite blocks the height of which was about 35 meters in a length of 3 kilometres. However, the dam which was ceremonially inaugurated on 10th December 1902 did not solve the problems even if between 1907 and 1912 there were attempts to raise the height of the dam, its capacity was still insufficient (Az első asszuáni gát... 2007).

The second or the so-called New Aswan Dam was under construction during 11 years with the technological and future financial assistance of the former Soviet Union. The dam, which was completed in 1971 is 111 meter high 3.8 kilometres long, the width of its fundament is 975 meters and going upwards it gets shrunken to 40 meters. The water of Lake Nasser (which is 480 km long and extends to 5,250 km<sup>2</sup>) - beside irrigation – played also important role in drinking water supply as well. It saved millions of Sudanese people of death of thirst during an extremely dry period between 1984 and 1988 (Tarján M T). The water regime of the Nile became more equalized since the dam system decreased the impacts of the significant fluctuation of the water discharge. The annual average of water discharge of the Nile is 84 Billion m<sup>3</sup> the maximum is 150 Billion m<sup>3</sup> while the lowest discharge is only 40 Billion m<sup>3</sup> (45 éve épült... 2005). In spite of all benefits the construction of Aswan dam had numerous negative consequences for the Egyptians, however the arising problems and without an adequate solution they are threatening by ecological disaster already in the 21st century. First of all, by the artificial closure of the water rarified the biosphere of the Nile and this had a negative impact not only on the fishing-villages but even on the coastal area of the Mediterranean Sea. Even worse consequence was that by the regulation of the flood the previous floody areas lost the sludge and silt which was rich in nourishment and refreshed the fertility of the soil every year. This and the extensive irrigation accelerated the sodification and the deterioration which cannot be made up for by artificial way without consequences meanwhile the annual average yield is always decreasing. The damming up of Lake Nasser turned to be harmful from hygienic aspect too as parasitic organisms spreading bilharzias illness multiplied rapidly. The Aswan Dam in spite of all its benefits charged the price of the economic prosperity, and even if there is no doubt about its usefulness it cannot be stated that it solved completely the environmental and economic problems of Egypt (Tarján M T). Egypt launched several new agricultural development projects (e.g. in the northern part of Sinai Peninsula and also in Toshka region of Upper Egypt). But with the connection of the so-called Salaam Canal (transporting water under Suez Canal) Egyptian demand for water might be increased by 4.4 Billion m<sup>3</sup>. Following the completion of the planned New Valley Project (2017) the annual water demand could be increased by further 5 Billion m<sup>3</sup>. The annual use of water in Egypt grows rapidly (see Table 2) while the amount of water discharge can be calculated constant.

**Table 2. Annual water demand and utilization of economic sectors of Egypt**  
(Billion cubic meters)

Year	Irrigation	Households	Industry	Others	Demand total	Available amount of water	Difference

<b>1997</b>	48	4.5	7.5	3.0	63	65	2
<b>2025</b>	64	7.3	9.5	2.2	83	65	-18

Source: Reda M.A. Hassan, Nasr T.H. Hekal, Nader M.S. Mansor (2007)

The rapidly growing Egyptian population is a significant consumer of wheat (136 kg/person). Egypt has been importing between 6 and 11 million tons of wheat annually and in addition to this also other cereals (like 4-7 million tons of corn) for the recent ten years. In comparison to this, Ethiopia - which has similar territory and population to Egypt - imported just 0.3 – 1.3 million tons of wheat during the recent 10 years and almost no corn (Index Mundi 2013). Therefore and also due to the lack of sufficient natural precipitation it is a question of vital importance for Egypt to increase her agricultural activities based on irrigation. Sudan actually irrigates altogether 1% of her arable lands but plans to launch significant development projects. In case of concluding agreement between the two states of Sudan it will be possible in the future to complete the construction of the so-called Jonglei Canal which may transport even 5 Billion m<sup>3</sup> from White Nile to the biggest freshwater marshland of the world. The construction of the 350 km long canal started in 1980, however in 1984 the work halted. It is not a hap hazard event therefore the concerned Sub-Saharan countries generally look at the large-scale irrigation-development projects of Egypt and Sudan with aversion while the efforts for agricultural development of the Sub-Saharan states are considered by the former grave risk factor of national safety from their point of view. Ethiopia proceeds irrigation farming on about 200 thousand hectares (Doran D 2009, Shinn D H 2006). This – in comparison with the number of population and respectively of the dimension of the country - cannot be considered too much.

Just then, by the end of the civilian war then pursuant to the battles with Eritrea the Ethiopian economy started to grow, the booming population caused proportions. Therefore the government in Addis Ababa announced that it has the intention of constructing 200 dams on the Nile by which utilizing 500 million m<sup>3</sup> water from the river for irrigation and for electric power generation. Ethiopia, several times proclaimed her interest to increase agricultural yields which would take 3.7 million hectares of land for irrigation based agriculture with the view of the elimination of starvation concerning nearly 3 million human beings. These projects planned by the government of Addis Ababa would cause in total a decrease in water discharge of 15% (Glied V 2008).

Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania altogether plan to develop agricultural areas of 400 thousand hectares (Shinn D H 2006). Tanzania launched a project of 28 million USD in February 2005 to take more drinking water from Lake Victoria. After completion of this project the water could be delivered to drought-hit parts of the country. Kenya, in lack of water would like to modify the agreements, as they want to utilize the water of Lake Victoria for irrigation and - in case of serious droughts – for supplying drinking water to Nairobi. Rwanda and Burundi are preparing to construct dams on a river having the biggest water discharge from those which flow into Lake Victoria with the view of agricultural irrigation and storing drinking water reserves. Uganda needs hydropower works to comply with her energy problems, and also plans to construct water reservoirs to meet demands for drinking water and irrigation. The number of inhabitants in Uganda might reach 85 million for 2050 (Bartalos A). It can be said that in cases of all the countries diversion or retaining of water discharge would generate various and serious risks. Agricultural, physiologic, environmental, etc. impacts and inter-relationships are still not known well. Therefore international co-operation is needed and a thorough and both preliminary and retrospective survey and analysis would be necessary even in the form of an agricultural information and extension system based on jointly set principles and objectives.

All this could establish the rational and sustainable (farming and water) management and could serve the wealth and security of the inhabitants of the region (Kozári J 2009).

### **Hydraulic Energy of the Nile**

In the Nile valley several dams respectively hydropower stations had been constructed. From about those the best known one is the previously mentioned Aswan Dam in Egypt. The hydropower plant constructed on the impounding dam (Great Dam) which was put into operation on 21st July 1970 reached its total capacity six years later: since that time its Soviet-made turbines generate 10 Billion kilowatts of energy. Their operation in the first decades was of a key importance from the aspect of a supply of the African country. (Tarján M T). However, nowadays – due to the increased consumption of households and the industry, - it can cover only a small part of the demands in Egypt. In Sudan, construction of new dams at cataracts No. 3 and 4 are in process.

Ethiopia plans to double the electric power generation capacity of her hydro-power plants. Led by this intention a new dam will be constructed on Tekeze river and the first stage of the project Grand Renaissance Dam (former name Grand Millennium Dam) would be completed on Blue Nile as well. This giga-project can be expected to be fully completed by 2035 when – being the largest hydropower plant of Africa – will be able to generate 6000 MW of energy during peak hours. Uganda plans to build a new dam close to Lake Victoria. According to experts' opinion dams built exclusively for power generation do not mean significant constraints in forwarding water to the downstream riparian states (Shinn D H 2006), while others say that it is not fully true as the continuous operation of hydropower-stations smaller or bigger dammed reservoirs are needed.

The water reservoir which is to be created for the Grand Renaissance Dam would evaporate on a much larger surface than the narrow Blue Nile river crossing through Ethiopia at present. Therefore after the completion of the dam, in all probabilities, the quantity of water reaching Egypt can be expected to decrease (Visnovitz P 2013).

### **Conflict Prevention, Diminishing Tensions**

The competition for water – as a more and more limited available resource – has brought serious tensions into the relations of the countries of the Nile valley. No need to emphasize that it is a very important question should it be viewed either from the point of drinking water supply, food security and –supply or from the energy security. It is considered an important issue of national security in each of these countries. Egypt, in the past had threatened Ethiopia with armed intervention if Addis Ababa attempted to hinder the flow of the water of the Nile. After having concluded the Peace Treaty with Israel in 1979 President Anwar Sadat claimed that Egypt might launch war only for one reason, namely if there was a threat of the country's water supply. It was reflected in the President's speech as well in 1980, when he pointed out that if Ethiopia implemented her plans of river-regulation, Cairo would need to act by force against Addis Ababa, but would not hesitate to react in a similar way against Khartoum as well (Glied V 2008). During the 1970's and 80's there were several occasions when only the good luck and common sense emerging in the last minute prevented the bursting out of a war which most likely would escalate to a regional conflict.

The region of the Nile respectively its direct environment is charged by numerous conflicts of other character: Darfur-crisis, the Ethiopian-Eritrean relation, the internal situation of Somalia or Congo, however in a wider sense the Egyptian-Israeli relation (which became

cooler since the Revolution of 25 January 2011) the Palestinian issue the risks of forging ahead of the radical Islam and also the endeavours of great powers to get in possession of the oil and natural gas reserves of certain countries of this region can be mentioned. In order to maintain the fragile status quo principally Egypt and Ethiopia need to find a way of reconciliation. Both countries have high responsibility to preserve and strengthen the stability of the region itself and also far beyond its geographical radius. Egypt for instance strives for the stability of the Middle East as well, mediates in the Palestinian – Israeli reconciliation, and also supports the idea of the creation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East (Gyene P, Harangozó D 2011)

The stakeholder countries (the riparian states), as a result of considerable international mediation and pressure, after all recognized that long-lasting solution for this complex issue can be reached only by reducing or eliminating the conflicts instead of heating them further. The first and most important steps have already been taken by them in the right direction.

Co-operation at inter-governmental level started in the recent decade in order to solve the problems around Nile River. In 1992 with the participation of six countries (Zaire /now R. D. Congo/, Egypt, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) the Ministerial Council in charge of Water Issues (Nile-COM) was established, in the work of which governmental delegations of further four countries participated as observers. One year later Nile-COM established the organization TECCONILE (Technical Co-operation Committee for the promotion of the Development and Environmental protection of the Nile Basin) which was specialized in supporting the innovations of activities related to water exploitation and utilization and also in the protection of the environment of the river. During this period the first session of conference series Nile 2002 was held in co-operation with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). In 1995 in the organization of TECCONILE the Nile Basin Action Plan was launched in which from the beginning all the – that time – ten riparian countries were represented. They endeavoured to find a solution together for the arising problems. In 1997 the World Bank the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the CIDA together with TECCONILE and the Nile-COM jointly established a programme which aimed to facilitate dialogues and co-operation of the Nile riparian countries. After all this in 1998 the concerned governments initiated discussions in the hope of fostering regional co-operation and more conscious utilization of the Nile river. Eritrea was the only country which was not represented at the talks. As a result of the negotiations – in May 1999 – the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) was officially established the head office of which is located in Entebbe city in Uganda (Végh D 2008). The riparian countries – with the exception of Eritrea (being in observer status) – became full-fledge members of NBI which aims to establish regional partnership and co-operation. Being supported and coordinated by the World Bank the International Consortium for Co-operation on the Nile (ICCON) was established which grants financial contributions to joint projects of water utilization. The closing up of underdeveloped regions need a centrally-coordinated approach and the planned developments are to be based on arrangements which show beyond regional and sector-oriented contemplation (Tóth T, Goda P, Malomsoki M 2009).

Oil exporters, or those states which are striving for establishing their economies on oil exports (like the two Sudanese states) should be aware and would even soon face two very timely problems which reflect to the fact that on longer run economic development cannot be based on just rising oil prices. On one hand it is the state of food production respectively the case of wheat and other cereals where the level of self sufficiency shows decreasing trends, and on the other hand, the fact that growth rate of population exceeds the growth rate of food production. (Zsarnóczai J S 1997). These difficulties are typical in case of the majority of states

in the Middle-East and in Sub-Sahara. A very important result that it is getting to be recognized by the riparian countries is the fact that utilization of the River Nile is not a so called zero sum game. There are and will be still enough reserves to be exploited and utilized jointly. Therefore instead of a win – lose situation, it can be converted to a win – win model. Relying on this point of view further programs have already been launched such ones which might be advantageous for the riparian states in the fields of water quality improvement, growing plant cultures of lesser water demand, wastewater utilization and the improvement of environmental conditions of catchment area.

In spite of the fact that shortage of foodstuffs can be explained by significant natural reasons it will be necessary to set up a flexible agricultural policy which would create harmony between the abilities of the concerned countries and the global and regional economic environment in both economic and social sense. Such agricultural policy should principally aim and serve the public wealth, respectively that the population – at the given growth rates – should have access to the necessary foodstuffs. All this should be done rather by the better utilization of internal resources than just by increasing the imports (Zsarnóczai J S 1992).

Countries with considerable potential of hydraulic energy may export electric power to Sudan and Egypt or other countries. There are methods under development how to diminish the evaporation loss of Lake Nasser which is estimated to be around 12%. The artificial lake, being located at the border of Egypt and Sudan stores about 150 Billion m<sup>3</sup> water. Therefore a huge amount of water could be saved if the rate of evaporation was reduced. Egyptian experts – already in 2007 – elaborated two different methods for it. The material the fluctuating one set in a frame or the pontoon-solution respectively the application of circular elements made of foam-sponge. Depending on factors of durability and costs the covering layer could be made of various materials like oilcloth, polystyrene, perlite, rubber, plastic, etc. Both methods are based on the decrease of the evaporating surface and on the partial covering of water table. During the development the experts' main findings were as follows:

- The daily evaporation losses of Lake Nasser in a yearly average were 6.3 mm.
- The annual average evaporation losses were 12.5 Billion m<sup>3</sup>. Losses of water of one million m<sup>3</sup> could be prevented by circular foam-sponge plates of at least 90% coverage.
- The circular foam-sponge system had the advantage that it can be regulated thus it did not hinder the solar radiation to the aquatic biosphere.
- This technology did not hinder the navigation.
- By the application of plates in different sizes the extent of evaporation could be regulated (Reda MA Hassan et al. 2007).

According to experts if the amount of water used by Egypt and Sudan was stored in Ethiopia it could be more efficient and economic way as on the Ethiopian highlands the evaporation loss is around 3% only (Shinn D H 2006). All these steps and international efforts could be suitable to prevent or moderate potential conflicts in the Nile Basin. The present, more or less existing status quo is really fragile. It is still typical that politicians of Cairo and Addis Ababa keep on using tough rhetoric to each other if the issue of the discharge of the Nile comes up, however Cairo would hardly risk a military conflict and its consequences. It cannot be seen clearly yet that South Sudan – which gained its independence in 2011 in a relative peaceful way – would follow openly or informally the direction of Cairo (which is backed by Khartoum as well) and joins the agreement of 1959 or would choose another way.

It should also be considered that there are positive international examples even in such countries which do not possess with natural surface water reserves. For instance in the Sultanate of Oman a complex water utilization strategy was elaborated and implemented, in the frames

of which sewage treatment, purification and recycling and also desalination of seawater can provide additional quantities to the natural water reserves (Nadicsán J 2014).

### **Conclusion: Lessons with European Eyes**

The strategic importance of water is getting continuously institutionalized in the economic and security policy doctrines and the governments would elaborate concepts in accordance with this at national and international levels. To face challenges exposed by water like wise and foreseeing management of the possibilities the water means for us needs international co-operation and the consideration of this issue in global and regional context therefore the most adequate allies and partners needed to be found (Tóth J I 2012).

Although at the moment Hungary and the Danube riparian countries do not need to face such grave difficulties of Nile riparians, they have to be fully aware that water resources are limited. In all probability the impacts of climatic changes will be more severe therefore considerable competition for water may emerge in the future in Europe as well. Therefore thorough attention should be paid to the Nile riparians, their example can serve as a lesson for Europeans.

Naturally it would not be easy rather it would be exaggerated to apply the analogy of the situation having been formed along the Nile for the present Europe or only to the valley of the Danube even in theory. Floods during the recent years, even in 2013 happened in Europe, therefore one may think that water is abundant, no risk for chronicle lack of water. But it could also be felt that the periods abundant in precipitation and thus in water discharge do not coincide with those weeks/months when agriculture would need it most.

Hungary – due to her situation – can be considered as a typical downstream country as 95 % of water outflows are arriving from other countries. However water inflows are coming from three different main directions. Therefore the risk of a severe and sudden shortage of freshwater is definitely not really high - *contrary to the case of downstream riparians of the Nile [remarked by the Author]* - however in certain localities temporary shortages can occur. The potential risk for the latter was one of the reason why dispute between Hungary and Slovakia came about on the implementation of Gabčíkovo (Bős) – Nagymaros Dam and Hydropower station project. (Szalkay Cs 2004). Luckily the conflict did not lead to violence. The European Community (EC) intervened initially and later the parties agreed to submit the case to the International Court of Justice in The Hague (ICJ). The ICJ passed its judgment in September 1997. Although the Slovak Side requested an additional ruling in 1998, after the first decision in 1997, the conflict had lost so much of its intensity that it was commonly perceived as having been settled (Fürst H 2003).





**Figure 2. The Danube River basin**

Source: [www.ce.utexas.edu/prof/mckinney/ce397/Topics/Danube/Danube.htm](http://www.ce.utexas.edu/prof/mckinney/ce397/Topics/Danube/Danube.htm)  
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The co-operation of the Danube riparian countries is bound – luckily – with more strict and stable international agreements than those of along the Nile. The Danube and its catchment area today in decisive extent belong to the territory of member states of the European Union. Hungary in accordance with the Water Framework Directive (Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy) prepared her plan of catchment area management plan (VGT) and participated in the strategy – concerning 19 countries – for the entire catchment area of the Danube river (Ruzsin-Tilesch J, G. Tóth L 2013).

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# A MAGÁN ÉS AZ ÁLLAMI SZERVEZETEK HOZZÁÁLLÁSA AZ ATÍPIKUS FOGLALKOZTATÁSHOZ VÁLSÁG IDEJÉN

## ATTITUDES OF PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY OWNED ORGANIZATIONS TOWARDS ATYPICAL EMPLOYMENT IN CRISIS TIME

Imrich Antalík – Tímea Juhász – Imre Madarász – József Poór – Ingrid Szabó

### Abstract

The economic crisis has forced companies to make certain decisions - decisions which affect organisational operation, long-term strategy and corporate culture alike. It is not surprising, of course, that employment is an area most deeply affected by the crisis – in fact, to its very foundation - so foreshadowing new, flexible solutions and a reappraisal of atypical employment. Last year a comprehensive research programme was conducted which allowed people to learn more about atypical employment, whilst, at the same time, enabling empirical studies focusing on paradigms of new employment opportunities. In this way suggestions could be directed towards decision-makers encouraging the use of this tool to alleviate the current labour market situation. This study presents some of the results of this empirical research, and with special regard to the theoretical and practical approaches towards atypical employment from the perspective of state and private organisations. The research showed that, in the current economic climate, neither private nor public companies showed any willingness to adopt atypical forms of employment as flexible tools in their employment strategies or to incorporate such forms into their organisational culture.

### Key words

Atypical employment. State and private organizations. Crisis.

### Absztrakt

A gazdasági válság az utóbbi időben számos lépésreakciót kényszerített ki a cégek részéről, amely döntések és gyakorlatok hatással vannak a szervezeti működésre, a hosszútávú stratégiákra és a vállalati kultúrára is. Nem véletlen, hogy a foglalkoztatás az egyik olyan terület, amelyet struktúrájában is érintett a válság, és az úgynevezett rugalmas megoldások, így az atipikus foglalkoztatás újragondolásának lehetőségét vetítette elő. A múlt évben egy átfogó kutatás kezdeményezésére került sor, amely során egyrészt megismerhetőek és összefoglalhatóak voltak az atipikus megoldások elméleti alapjai, másrészt empirikus kutatás révén e foglalkoztatási lehetőség szemléletváltozásainak feltártására volt mód, illetve javaslatok megfogalmazására nyílt lehetőség a döntéshozó szervek irányában a célból, hogy a munkaerőpiaci helyzet javítása érdekében miképpen célszerű e foglalkoztatási eszköz alkalmazása. Jelen tanulmány e kutatás néhány empirikus eredményét mutatja be az atipikus foglalkoztatás szemléleti és gyakorlati megközelítésével az állami és a magán szervezetek részéről.

### Kulcsszavak

Atipikus foglalkoztatás. Állami és magán szervezetek. Válság.

### Bevezetés

Maga a „klasszikus, normál munka a tizenkilencedik század végén és a huszadik század elején alakult ki Amerikában, majd terjedt el Nyugat-Európában és később Európa keleti

és északi részén (Rifkin, 1995). A huszadik század második felében már általánosan elfogadottá és széleskörűvé vált az a jelenség, hogy a nagy szervezetek a munkaszerződésekbe rögzítve foglalkoztatták a dolgozóikat, akik a munkaköri leírásokba foglalt, végzettségekhez kötött feladatköröket láttak el, előre meghatározott munkaidőben és munkabéért.

A huszadik század utolsó évtizedeiben ugyanakkor újabb megatrendek jelentek meg az iparosodott társadalmakban. A verseny globalizálódása és éleződése miatt a vállalatok minden termelési tényező területén szem előtt kezdték tartani a költséghatékonyságot és a rugalmasságot, így a foglalkoztatásban is. Az 1980-as évektől ismét megjelentek a régen meghaladottnak vélt formák. Például Castel (1998) az atipikus formákat a korábbi évszázadokban megszokott gyakorlatok, jelenségek újraéledésének tekinti.

A munka világának rugalmasabbá tétele azonban nem könnyű folyamat. A foglalkoztatottak ragaszkodnak a régi, bevált, elfogadott formákhoz, amik mellett, bár mindvégig léteztek a „speciális”, vagy „atipikus” foglalkoztatási formák is, de évtizedeken át alacsonyabb rendűnek számítottak, és sokak szemében a biztonság és a jogi védettség korlátozottságát nyújtották. A szabályozások is alapvetően a „normál” munka világához szerveződött és erre a formára koncentrált. Az állam hosszú időn át törekedett a normaviszonyok fenntartására, amiként az érdekvédő szervezetek is (Tóth, 2005).

Tény azonban, hogy az atipikus foglalkoztatás mellett kardoskodók a legfontosabb előnynek a piaci változásokhoz való gyors alkalmazkodást tekintik, amelyek különösen a globalizációval átfűtött világban nem utolsó szempont (Tóthné, 2002, Frey, 2010 és KSH, 2012).

A szakirodalomban a foglalkoztatási forma számos kategorizálása él, amelyek közül Nacsa (1997) kategóriái az egyik legátfogóbbak, aki négy klaszterből álló rendszert állított fel (a napi munkaidő hossza, az alkalmazás időtartama, a munkavégzés helye, valamint a jogviszony kettőnél több alanya miatt atipikus jellegűnek tekintett munkaviszonyok), és ezekbe sorolja be az egyes atipikus formákat. Napjainkban ezek a kategóriák kiegészíthetők a „szociálisan védett” foglalkoztatással, továbbá a munkavégzésre irányuló jogviszonyhoz (de nem a munkaviszonyhoz) tartozó formákkal.

A statisztikákat vizsgálva az egyes minták elterjedtsége különbözik típusonként, és a gyakorisága területenként is változó. Habár a kimutatások szerint az atipikus foglalkoztatás aránya az utóbbi időben a válság hatására jelentősen növekedett Magyarországon, azonban a számok még mindig jóval alacsonyabbak, mint az uniós átlag. Igaz ugyan, hogy a lehetőségek száma növekszik, ám a kínálat még mindig messze elmarad a kereslettől. Így például 2013. 3. negyedévében míg az Unióban a részmunkaidőben dolgozók aránya az EU 28 országának átlagában 19,2% volt, addig hazánkban ez az arány mindösszesen 6,3%. Nem is beszélve az olyan kiugróan magas részmunkaidős foglalkoztatást alkalmazó országokról, mint Hollandia (49,7%), Svédország (23,9%), az Egyesült Királyság (25,3%), avagy Ausztria (25,3%).

Tény, hogy a számok mögé ritkán lehet látni, és sok oka lehet annak, hogy valójában ezek az alkalmazási formák gyakorisága miért is ilyen alacsony. A kérdés többek között az, hogy ezek a foglalkoztatási típusok miképpen felelnek meg a hazai munkakultúrának, mennyire illeszkednek mind a munkáltatók, mind a munkavállalók preferenciáihoz.

Miközben a Sonda Ipsos egy 2011-es felmérése szerint a magyar munkavállalók 37%-a szívesen elfogadott volna távmunka lehetőséget, addig a 2012-es statisztikák szerint, a foglalkoztatottak mindösszesen 3%-a dolgozott távmunkásként, szemben a 17%-os nemzetközi átlaggal. Hasonló a helyzet a részmunkaidős alkalmazás területén ahol, mint ahogy Seres (2009) rámutat, a részmunkaidős foglalkoztatás bővülésének tartalékai között szerepelnek a kisgyermekes nők, a diákok, a fiatalok, valamint a nyugdíjasok. Jól érzékelhető tehát, hogy a téma aktualitásából következően, valamint a válság elhúzódása miatt az atipikus foglalkoztatás problematikájával a magyarországi cégek is szemben találják magukat. A munkaerő ugyanis sokkal összetettebb áru, mint a piacokon mozgó más árucikkek, vagy szolgáltatások, hiszen a

munkaerő esetében a munkaadónak hatékony és lojális munkavégzésre is kell ösztönöznie a munkavállalóját.

Mindezek alapján vélhető, hogy a különböző foglalkoztatási formák elterjedését nagyban befolyásolja a közvéleményben róluk elterjedt felfogás, értékelés. Ez volt az alapvetően koncepciója annak a kérdőíves vizsgálatnak, amely a tipikus és az atipikus alkalmazásra vonatkozó attitűdöket kívánta alapvetően elemezni és feltárni. A vizsgálat során megismerésre került a hazai cégek hozzáállása egy olyan munkaformához, amelynek gyakorlati alkalmazása még nem olyan elterjedt, mint ahogyan azt a munkavállalók megkívnák. A kutatás többek között abban különbözött a már korábban, e témában készült vizsgálatoktól, hogy válság idején történt, így lehetőség nyílt arra, hogy egy speciálisan adott gazdasági helyzetben kerüljön mérésre a szervezetek preferenciája a kérdést illetően.

### **Anyagok és módszerek**

A hazai szervezetekkel végzett vizsgálat a múlt év tavaszától kezdve, az idei év elejéig zajlott le, egy nemzetközi magyar-szlovák határ menti átfogó felmérés keretében, amely projekt alapvető célkitűzése a helyzetfeltárás volt az atipikus foglalkoztatási formák, a nem piaci jellegű foglalkoztatás és a határon átnyúló a (Komarno és Komárom térség) foglalkoztatottság növelése érdekében. Az első minták jellemzően ezekből a régiókból érkeztek, majd a kutatás kibővítésre került a közép-magyarországi régióra, így többek között Budapestre is. A jelen tanulmány kimondottan a magyarországi szervezetekkel végzett vizsgálatok eredményeit mutatja be.

A kvantitatív vizsgálat egy kérdőíves megkérdezéssel alapult, amelyet a kérdőív kitöltői anonim formában tehettek meg. A mintagyűjtési technika során a hólabda módszer került felhasználásra, így a vizsgálat nem tekinthető reprezentatívnak. A Magyarországról beérkező mintaszám 324 db volt, amely mintaszám az értékelhetőség alapján redukálódott. Számos olyan kérdőív érkezett vissza, amely nagyszámú hiányzó elemet, illetve nem értelmezhető adatot tartalmazott. A hiányzó elemek pótlására alkalmazott technikák, így például az átlagpótlás, az esetpótlás módszer, nem voltak célra vezetőek, ezért a kiértékelés során ezek a minták kikerültek a vizsgálatból. Az értékelés végezetül 207 mintaszámra koncentrált.

A vizsgálati kérdőív alapvetően zárt kérdésekre épült, mindösszesen két nyitott kérdést kellett a kitöltőknek megválaszolniuk. A kérdőív logikai felépítését az alábbi táblázat foglalja össze:

**1. Táblázat. A szervezetek által kitöltött kérdőív logikai felépítése**

<b>Szervezeti specifikáció</b>	<b>A begyűrűző gazdasági és pénzügyi események valószínűsíthető hatásai</b>	<b>Jelenlegi atipikus foglalkoztatás a szervezetben</b>
Ágazat	A válság hatásai az inflációra, az árbevételre, a szervezeti növekedésre	Foglalkoztatási formák a szervezeten belül
Szféra	A válság várható időtartama	Az atipikus formák alkalmazása nemek szerint
Létszám	A válság hatásai a foglalkoztatás területén	Az atipikus formák munkakörök szerint
Tulajdonosi szerkezet	A tervezett intézkedések a válság hatásainak kivédése érdekében a foglalkoztatás területén	Az atipikus formákkal kapcsolatos tervek az elkövetkező 2 évben
A szervezeti központ regionális elhelyezkedése	Vélemények az atipikus foglalkoztatással kapcsolatban válság idején	
Éves árbevétel és költségvetés		
Kamarai tagság		
HR részleg megléte		

Forrás: A szerzők saját szerkesztése

Az eredmények kiértékelése egy-és többváltozós statisztikai módszerekkel történt. Az egyváltozós módszerek gyakorisági, átlag és szórás vizsgálatok voltak, a többváltozós módszerek a kereszttábla-elemzés, amely a nominális változók közötti összefüggések feltárását tette lehetővé, míg a nonparametrikus vizsgálatok, a két független, de nem normál eloszlású minta vizsgálatára adott módot. A kiértékelések SPSS program felhasználásával valósultak meg. A 207 darabos minta összefoglaló specifikációját az alábbi táblázat tartalmazza:

## 2. Táblázat. A szervezeti minta specifikálása

Tulajdonosi szerkezet	Működési szféra	A szervezeti központ regionális elhelyezkedése	Árbevétel	Létszám
76,7% Hazai	76,8% Magán	39,7% Budapest	43,3% 100 millió alatt	56,1% 50 főig
19,9% Külföldi	23,2% Köz- vagy állami	38,2% Komárom-Esztergom megye	16,0% 100 és 500 millió között	5,4% 50 és 100 fő között
2,4% Vegyes		22,1% Egyéb	3,6% 500 millió és 1 milliárd között	13,2% 100 és 500 fő között
1,0% Egyéb			26,3% 1 és 100 milliárd között	25,4% 500 fő felett
			9,8% 100 milliárd felett	
			1,0% Egyéb	

Forrás: A szerzők saját szerkesztése

### A kutatási eredmények

A vizsgálat több hipotézis validitásának megvizsgálását tette lehetővé. Jelen tanulmány a következő feltételezést elemzi:

#### *Hipotézis*

*A vizsgálatban szereplő magán és állami szervezetek a válság idejére nem alkalmaznak eltérő protokollt és szemléletet az atipikus megoldásokkal kapcsolatban, és általában továbbra is idegenkednek ezzel a foglalkoztatási gyakorlattal szemben.*

A vizsgálatban 159 magánvállalat és 48 állami<sup>1</sup> szervezet vett részt. A hipotézis érvényességének igazolására a kutatásban szereplő szervezeteknél megvizsgálásra került, hogy működik-e náluk HR részleg. Az eredmények azt mutatták, hogy e tekintetben a magán és az állami szervezetek eltérő gyakorlatot alkalmaztak, miután a magánvállalatok mintegy 32,9%-ban, addig a közszférában 83,0%-ban volt ilyen szervezeti egység és az összefüggést a Khi-négyzet próba is igazolta (Pearson-féle Khi-négyzet próba: 36,608 df: 1 szign.: ,000 p<0,05).

Az infláció várható mértékét 2013-ban a szervezetek többsége 45,7%-a 3-5% közöttire jósolta, míg 28,6%-uk 3% alattinak vélte. Nem véletlen, hogy a cégek 59,1%-a gondolta úgy, hogy a válság csökkenő hatással volt a növekedésre, miközben 32,8%-uk azon az állásponton volt, hogy ez a befolyás nem volt jelentős. A válság hatásának megítélésében eltérő véleményen voltak a különböző szférában működő szervezetek (Pearson-féle Khi-négyzet: 8,040 df: 3 szign.: ,045 p<0,05). Alapvetően az állami szervezetek tűntek optimistábbnak, miután 53,3%-uk gondolta úgy, hogy a válság csökkenést okozott a növekedésre, illetve 35,6%-uk szerint viszont nem volt szembetűnő hatása a válságnak. Ezzel szemben a magán cégek 60,8%-a vélekedett csökkenésről, míg 32,0%-uk azon a véleményen volt, hogy válságnak nem volt jelentős befolyása a növekedésre.

<sup>1</sup> A kutatásban szereplő szervezetek arány nagy vonalakban visszatükrözi a magyar gazdaságban meglévő arányokat.



A válság hosszát a mintában szereplő cégek többsége (41,3%) 3 évnél rövidebb időre gondolta, ugyanakkor minden ötödik szervezet ennél jóval pesszimistább jóslásokba bocsátkozott, mert 5 évnél hosszabbra számoltak a válsággal. Ez utóbbi esetben az állami szféra szervezetei nagyobb arányban gondolkodtak így, közülük majdnem minden 3-dik szervezet ennyi idővel számolt, míg a magáncégek 18,1%-a volt ezen az állásponton. Elgondolkodtató, hogy mindösszesen 8 cég vélekedett úgy, többségében (7) magán, hogy nem lesz a továbbiakban válság.

A válság befolyással lehet arra, hogy a cégek milyen bérpolitikát és terveket valósítanak meg, így a vizsgálat is rákérdezett erre. Az eredmények azt mutatják, hogy közel hasonló a cégek vélekedése arról, hogy a különböző pozíciókban nem terveznek bérfeljesztést. Így minden második cégnek (47,1%) nem állt szándékában a minden dolgozóra kiterjedő emelés, míg a fizikai dolgozók esetében a szervezetek 45,3%-a, addig például a cégek 54,8%-a nem gondolkodott a közép vezetőket érintő bérjuttatás növelésében.

A kérdőív logikai felosztásában látható volt, hogy a kutatás külön részben foglalkozott a válság hatására a cégen belüli foglalkoztatásra. 5 fokozatú Likert-skálán kellett a válaszadóknak a hatásokat értékelniük, hogy mennyire jellemző az adott hatás a válság következtében az ő cégüknél. Az állítások során kapott eredményeket a teljesség igénye nélkül az alábbi táblázat tartalmazza:

**3.Táblázat. A válság hatása a foglalkoztatás területén**

Hatások	Nem jellemző %	Kis mértékben jellemző %	Közepes mértékben jellemző %	Nagy mértékben jellemző %	Igen nagy mértékben jellemző %	Átlag	Szórás
Létszámcsökkentés	43,8	26,3	13,9	13,9	9,3	2,11	1,295
Szerződéses dolgozók leépítése	58,2	18,5	12,0	6,5	4,9	1,82	1,173
Műszak szám csökkentése	71,9	15,7	5,4	5,9	1,1	1,49	,921
Heti munkanapok számának csökkentése	79,9	10,1	5,8	1,6	2,6	1,37	,875
Bércsökkentés	63,7	19,2	7,8	6,2	3,1	1,66	1,064

Forrás: A szerzők saját szerkesztése

Az eredmények azt mutatják, hogy a szervezeteknél alapvetően a dolgozók számára legfájdalmasabb hatások jelentkeznek, így a foglalkoztatási szám csökkentése mind az állandó, mind a szerződéses munkatársakat tekintve, valamint a bércsökkentés az a módszer, amely leggyakrabban jelentkezik. Jól látható, hogy az azonnal költségcsökkentő hatások mutatkoznak meg a szervezeteknél, amelyek alapvetően azonban rövid távú megoldásokként szolgálhatnak.

A kutatás során megvizsgálásra került, hogy a különböző szférában működő cégek az adott hatásokat figyelembe véve különböznek-e egymástól. A vizsgálat a nem normál eloszlás minta miatt nonparametrikus eljárással történt.

Az eredmények azt mutatták, hogy három hatás tekintetében különböznek a szervezetek, azaz a létszámleépítés, a szerződéses dolgozók elküldése, illetve a bércsökkentést tekintve. A vizsgálat azt is igazolta, hogy mindhárom esetben a állami szervezeteknél jellemzőbb, hogy ezek a jelenségek megjelennek, mint válsághatás.

A vizsgálat nemcsak a szervezeti válsághatást, de azok kivédésére kidolgozott vállalati gyakorlatokat is elemezte. Az adott intézkedési lehetőségeket is, mint a hatások esetében, 5

fokozatú Likert-skálán értékelhették a szervezetek, attól függően, hogy mennyire jellemző az adott válaszreakció a cégnél.

A válaszok összefoglalása a 4. táblázatban történt.

A táblázat eredményei azt mutatják, hogy megoldásként nem a rövidtávú eszközökben látják a szervezetek a megoldást. Így olyan intézkedések, mint a szervezeti hatékonyság növelése, a termékfejlesztés, új termékek előállítása, avagy műszakfejlesztés kerültek leginkább megfontolandó eszközök közé, amelyek hosszú távra kijelölik az utat a vállalati stratégiában és működésben. Az atipikus foglalkoztatás növelésének lehetőségében a cégek, mint egy kétharmada jellemzően nem gondolkodik, ami azt jelzi, hogy ennek az eszköznek a széleskörű bővítése ezeknél a szervezeteknél még várat magára. Az is látható az adatokból, hogy a szervezetek nagy többsége 84,2%-a úgy ítéli meg, hogy valamilyen intézkedésre mindenképpen szükség van a válság kezelésére.

**4.Táblázat. A válság hatásainak kivédésére szolgáló intézkedések a foglalkoztatás területén a szervezeteknél**

Intézkedések	Nem jellemző %	Kis mértékben jellemző %	Közepes mértékben jellemző %	Nagy mértékben jellemző %	Igen nagy mértékben jellemző %	Átlag	Szórás
Nem szükséges semmit tenni	72,8	11,4	8,2	4,4	3,2	1,54	1,032
Atipikus foglalkoztatás növelése	43,8	25,4	14,2	12,4	4,1	2,08	1,205
Korábban olcsóbb munkaerő foglalkoztatása	45,1	21,4	20,2	8,7	4,6	2,06	1,192
Kiszervezés	56,1	15,2	15,9	7,3	5,5	1,91	1,228
Bérfelfüggetlés megszüntetése	63,5	18,2	8,2	6,3	3,8	1,69	1,103
Létszámleépítés	48,6	26,3	12,0	5,7	7,4	1,97	1,229
Műszaki fejlesztés, gépvásárlás	36,1	21,7	21,1	10,2	10,8	2,38	1,351
Termékfejlesztés, új termék előállítása	34,9	13,9	15,1	24,1	12,0	2,64	1,465
Szervezeti hatékonyság növelése	8,0	12,5	24,4	31,3	23,9	3,51	1,209

Forrás: A szerzők saját szerkesztése

A kutatás kitért arra is, hogy a magán és a közszférában dolgozó cégek különböznek-e az adott intézkedések tekintetében. A vizsgálati módszer a nonparametrikus eljárás volt. 4 intézkedésben nem különböztek szignifikánsan a szervezetek válaszmegoldásai, így az atipikus foglalkoztatás növelésében, a szervezeti hatékonyság erősítésében, a termékfejlesztésben, illetve abban, hogy kell valamilyen lépést kidolgozni a válság hatásainak a kompenzálására. Igaz, míg az atipikus megoldások bővítése az állami vállalatoknál volt jellemzőbb, addig a másik három intézkedés a magánszférában működő szervezetekre volt jellemzőbb.

Azoknál az intézkedéseknél, amelyek esetében szignifikánsan eltérő gyakorlatot alkalmaztak a vizsgált vállalatok, a korábban olcsóbb munkaerő foglalkoztatása, a kiszervezési lehetőségek bővítése, a bérfelfüggetlés és a létszámleépítés volt a jellemzőbb megoldási lehetőség az állami vállalatoknál, mint a magánszférában, míg a műszakfejlesztésben történő gondolkodás inkább a magáncégeknél volt elfogadottabb, mint a közszférában.

Habár az adatok azt mutatják, hogy a szervezetek többsége nem gondolkodik az atipikus foglalkoztatás növelésében, a kutatás külön része is foglalkozott azzal, hogy milyen a cégek ismerete és beállítódása ezzel a rugalmas foglalkoztatással szemben. Öt fokozatú Likert-

skálán kellett értékelniük a válaszadóknak a megfogalmazott állításokat, amelyek eredményét az 5. táblázat mutatja.

A vélemények azt mutatják, hogy habár a szervezetek kétharmada ismeri az atipikus formákat, és nem is volt velük kapcsolatban rossz tapasztalta, ám a hagyományos megoldások erőteljesebben vannak preferálva a vállalati vezetők között, és a szervezeti tevékenységi kör és a szervezeti működés inkább a hagyományos munkaformákra épül és ezek változtatása nem is célja cégeknek. Annak ellenére nem célja a szervezeteknek az atipikusok használata, illetve szélesebb körben történő alkalmazása, hogy az eredmények szerint mintegy negyede a vizsgált vállalatoknak tisztában van azzal, hogy a dolgozóik szívesen dolgoznának ilyen foglalkoztatási megoldásban.

**5.Táblázat. Vélemények és tapasztalatok az atipikus foglalkoztatásról**

Vélemények és tapasztalatok az atipikus foglalkoztatásról	Nem jellemző %	Kis mértékben jellemző %	Közepes mértékben jellemző %	Nagy mértékben jellemző %	Igen nagy mértékben jellemző %	Átlag	Szórás
Nem ismerem az atipikus foglalkoztatási módokat és most nem is tudunk foglalkozni vele.	44,8	24,1	17,2	5,2	8,6	2,09	1,267
Alkalmaztuk, de nem volt jó a tapasztalatunk.	43,0	24,2	25,5	5,5	1,8	1,99	1,036
Ismerem, de nem akarjuk megváltoztatni a jelenleg kialakult foglalkoztatási rendszerünket.	18,8	14,8	17,6	29,5	19,3	3,16	1,397
Hallottam róla, de nálunk nincs olyan foglalkoztatási eset, amit atipikus foglalkoztatással lehetne megoldani.	32,8	26,0	9,0	15,3	16,9	2,58	1,495
A vezetők alapvetően jobban elfogadják a hagyományos foglalkoztatási modellt, mint az atipikus foglalkoztatás bármely formáját.	19,3	17,0	15,8	30,4	17,5	3,10	1,396
Úgy látom, hogy alkalmazottaim szívesen dolgoznának atipikus foglalkoztatási forma keretében.	19,4	25,9	27,6	17,1	10,0	2,72	1,240

Forrás: A szerzők saját szerkesztése

A nonparametrikus vizsgálatok arra is rávilágítottak, hogy az adott állítások tekintetében egyben különböztek szignifikánsan az állami és a versenyszféra vállalati, azaz szignifikánsan jellemzőbb, hogy a dolgozók szívesen dolgoznának atipikus formában az állami szférában, mint a versenyben.

Végezetül kérdésünk volt, hogy mely atipikus foglalkoztatási formák a leggyakoribbak a hazai szervezeteknél. Azt tapasztaltuk, hogy jellemzően a rugalmas munkaidőt, a részmunkaidőt, és a konkrét feladatra és időszakra szóló megbízási szerződést alkalmazták legtöbben, míg legritkábban a sűrített munkaidő, a megváltozott munkaképesség szerinti atipikus munkabeosztás, a munkakörmegosztás, avagy a távmunka jelent meg a kutatásban szereplő cégek esetében.

## Befejezés

A tanulmány a magyar szervezetek válság idején történő válasz-intézkedéseit vizsgálta, különös tekintettel a rugalmas foglalkoztatásra, így az atipikus megoldásokra. A kutatásban vizsgált hipotézis elfogadottnak tekinthető az eredmények alapján. A vizsgálat rávilágított arra, hogy a válság jellemző hatásai igen drasztikusak különösen a munkavállalók számára. A kialakult gazdasági kihívások a szervezetek többségét arra kényszerítik, hogy valamilyen válaszlépést kidolgozzanak a hatások enyhítésére és kompenzálására.

A vizsgált cégek és szervezetek esetében az látható, hogy hosszútávban gondolkodnak a szervezetek, így a vállalati hatékonyság növelése az egyik legjellemzőbb megoldásként jöhet szóba. A kutatás ugyanakkor azt is igazolta, hogy ennek a hatékonyságnak a növelésében a vállalatok jellemzően nem gondolkodnak, mint megvalósítási eszközként a rugalmas foglalkoztatási megoldásokban, és alapvetően sem a szervezeti működés, sem pedig a vezetői hozzáállás nem támogatja, és nincs arra felkészülve, hogy ezek a lehetőségek széleskörűen működő megoldásokká váljanak.

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# OBSTACLES TO DEVELOPMENT IN THE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES SECTOR IN HUNGARY

Zoltan Varga

## Abstract

The objective of the study is to shed light upon the strategic points of managerial work, and to reveal the potentialities for sector growth through the analysis of small and medium-sized enterprises, taking the market participants' reaction into consideration. My essential reason for choosing the subject-matter is that the manager, his conception and inclination towards the new plays a more and more important role in the daily activity of domestic enterprises (e.g. information, marketing, etc.), and in gaining a competitive advantage on the global market. I have examined the management problems of small and medium-sized enterprises by means of questionnaire sampling. The present study is a summary based on answers received regarding the individual questions of the questionnaire, summarizing the first results of a continuous research. Part of the company directors running enterprises in Hungary are both owners and managers at the same time. It can be concluded from the study that a significant part of the managers have deficiencies in managerial knowledge, which influences the direction of companies, their profitable and efficient operation considerably.

## Key words

Communication. Information. Constraints on adaptation. Lack of capital. Liquidity.

## Introduction

When deciding on the scope of the study I did not set limits to the companies' function, therefore I have managed to collect material in a very wide range. It is increasingly challenging for the members of Hungarian micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to retain their competitiveness, and it is more and more difficult for them to survive. The relative technological backwardness, and the response to challenges differ company by company. (Badinszky, 2009.) The processing of individual answers given by the respondent enterprises during my research indicates the differences regarding the companies' various strategies and structural features very well. It is also a fact in Hungary that part of the companies in the SMEs sector are run by necessity entrepreneurs to provide livelihood for their families. (Hoványi, 1999.) The broadening export opportunities and the increasingly frequent cooperation with multinational companies prove that a certain level of internationalisation has started, the seeds of which are more and more prominent. (Süveges-Szabó, 2009.) The environment of the SMEs sector is significantly influenced by the inconstant professional and economical requirements and their continual changing. A considerable segment of the SMEs sector consists of small, technologically backward enterprises, which try to increase their efficiency by investments. They do not measure up to the effectiveness of medium-sized enterprises, even with this improvement in their performance, because the backwardness in technology is so significant. Coupled with it, the innovative activity of the Hungarian SMEs sector is on a low level. As the participants in the Hungarian SMEs sector try to satisfy the altering needs of multinational firms mainly, the ever-changing competition on the market poses increasing challenge. Company strategies are supervised by the managers who influence and handle the competitors' challenges on a daily basis. Strategic leadership is not limited only to the management, regarding the sustenance of possible competitive advantage. (Chikán, 2003.) It provides direction during daily work. Forming the strategy is inseparable from managing enterprises. The managers of companies must also monitor the new opportunities on the market, the emerging prospectives

favourable for the enterprises. (Székely, 2005.) There is a constant constraint on adaptation that evolves via competition because of the continual willingness to meet the requirements and accepting work, which in many cases lead to the introduction of new technologies and their application. Not seeing clearly the tasks in front of them, managers often put all their eggs in one basket. In certain cases it entails the long-term progress of the enterprise, while in other cases it leads to the failure of companies. A great majority of prosperous enterprises obtain information from various channels, which is essential for their survival.(Badinszky, 2009.) Strategic leaders can get acquainted with the developmental courses and ideas of their partners through communication with the participants of the market. However, the proper interpretation of the information, its application for the company, the timely recognition of the external environmental factors and trends are not always coincidental. It makes recognizing the alteration of strategy and existing measures difficult. In many cases the strategy rather evolves due to the interaction of different forces than is worked up. (Salamonné, 2000.) Increasing technological development leads to growing competition. The strategies of competitors are essentially based on the achievements of the technological revolution these days (e.g. the Internet, electronic banking, network-economy, etc.). Therefore new strategies must be developed, which can ensure profitability and long-term existence. Innovation development harbours great potential for the SMEs sector. It is only true if they recognise its significance and utilize it. Small and medium-sized enterprises generate changes and development with their various economic activities on the market in their fields of production and service. (Parragh, 2011.) In this way they foster economic growth and by this means their own and their employees' subsistence. Enterprises satisfy demands, through which they create values not only for themselves, but for the other participants of the economy. Enterprises mean continual changes that necessitate more and more innovation. If there is no change on the market, in the market environment, even the enterprise is unable to develop. The alteration of the market also has an effect on enterprises. New resources facilitate the company's activity and by this means they create new opportunities for the participants of the market. In the globalised world, especially nowadays innovation and cooperation are amongst the most important factors, since they contribute to creating higher added value and along with it to the increase in competitiveness.(Csath, 2004.) Enterprises not participating in different forms of cooperation or unable to grow increasingly lag behind others in development, become backward in the field of production, and their efficiency decreases, which leads to the decline of the companies. Only those enterprises can survive, which are able to change and produce some growth and economic development. It follows from this that there is a tight correlation between innovation and economic development, which is well demonstrable. It induces processes that take place within the society, and increases competitiveness. The role of research in processes is unquestionable even if the activity requires a significant amount of work, experiment, new knowledge, and of course, remarkable cost and expenditure. The greatest problems of the SMEs sector are its earning capacity and productivity, which, according to statistical data, considerably lag behind the standards of surrounding countries. It does not only mean the backwardness in technology – although one of its reasons is the lack of information and the other one is the lack of funds – but also the high labour costs coupled with backwardness in production and the lack of marketing approach.(Porter.M. 2006.) The former is increased by the late recognition of information and its utilisation. The pursuit of the small and medium-sized enterprises is obvious: to succeed in remaining on the global market, or gaining ground there respectively. Competitive advantages must be obtained, and for that adequate competitiveness must be built up. It is possible only if the information for the SMEs sector arrives in time and the alteration of communication can be enforced.(Szerb-Márkus, 2008.) Several enterprises do not have strategies or there are pseudo strategies with the aim to acquire easily obtainable state resources (Varga, 2006). For defining each variable I have taken into consideration Van der Veen's (2004)

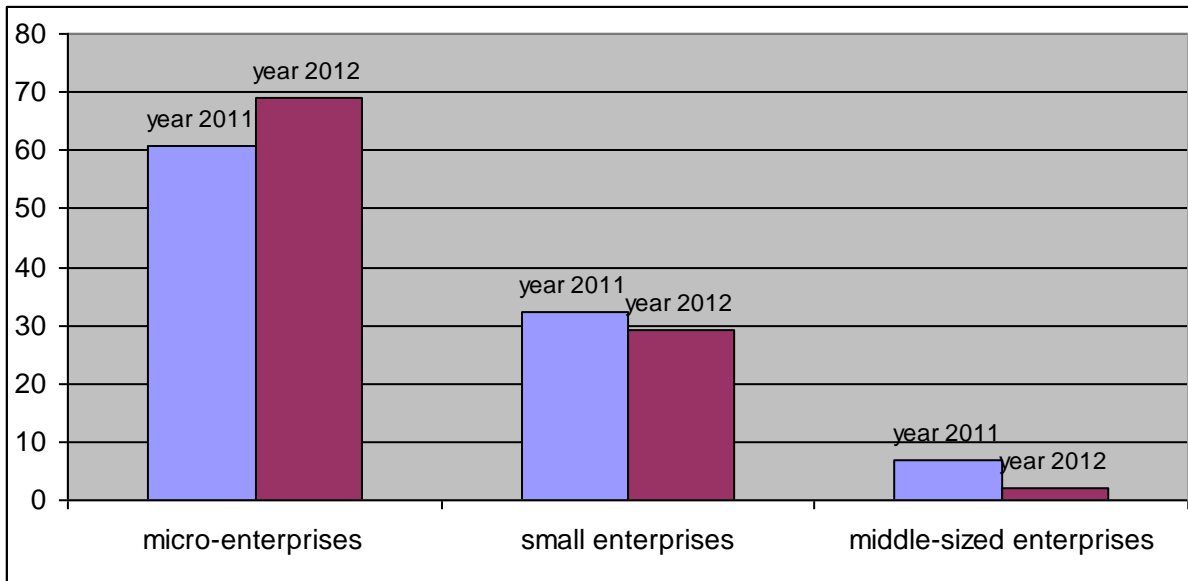
approach who divided his examined indices into variables that explain general and specific characteristics. General factors were: the level of generic qualifications, the level of customer and competitor-orientedness, availability of environmental resources, and competitive attitude.

### **Materials and methods**

The aim of my research was to put together a list of questions to compile questionnaires suitable for the analysis of previously formulated assumptions as well as findings of researches already in progress, and to which the answers given are characteristic to the representation of the Hungarian small and medium-sized enterprises sector in the West- Hungarian region. I carried out a cross-section study that contained both quantitative and qualitative elements between 2011. and 2012. The method of data collection was based on literature research, survey and structured personal interviews. The samples come from small and medium-sized enterprises operating in the West-Hungarian region. When deciding on the scope of the study I did not set limits to the companies' function, therefore I have managed to collect material in a very wide range. The sampling was not random but snowball sampling (NARESH), therefore further managers can be involved in the scope of respondents. By means of people responding to the questionnaire, the small and medium-sized companies can be classified under certain categories of the SMEs sector. Based on the sampling I made the necessary generalizations and statistical statements regarding only groups of respondents. The questionnaire used as a method of data collection was compiled according to my information needs. The questionnaire contains both closed and open questions. Respondents answered open questions independently and anonymously. I formed separate groups of questions and studied the small and medium-sized enterprises on that basis. I have created an opportunity regarding responses to be able to form new groups in certain cases after the return of the samples. The questionnaire is well-measurable, which I intend to analyse with statistical and mathematical methods. My aim is a clear and concise wording and drawing expert conclusions from it. For the analysis I employ computerised data processing with the aid of EXCEL and SPSS 19.0 for Windows version. The methods of statistical analysis are: descriptive and mathematical statistics. Within the descriptive statistical method I calculate average and ratio distribution, whilst in the further parts of the study I count standard deviation, frequency and correlation, and in order to prove hypotheses I employ  $\chi^2$  test, t-test, analysis of variance, factor analysis, logistic and linear regression analysis as mathematical statistics methods. I consider differences significant if  $p < 0.05$ .

600 questionnaires had been sent out to the small and medium-sized enterprises sector in Western Transdanubia, from which the number of responses was 342 and the appraisable answers amounted to 274. The distribution of enterprises that provided evaluable responses are the following: trade 12%, construction industry 8%, food industry 5%, agriculture 16%, chemical industry 2%, financial sector 11%, tourism 8%, machinery 8%, information technology 9%, other services 16%.





**1. Figure. Distribution of SMEs in year 2011 and 2012 based on sampling**

Source: Questionnaire 2011, 2012, Own edition

The distribution of the small and medium-sized enterprises sector responding in the sample in accordance with companies in 2011 was the following: 60.7% micro-enterprises, 32.4% small enterprises, 6.9% medium-sized enterprises. It is noticeable that the SMEs sector participating in the sample realigned by 2012 since the number of small enterprises decreased by 9.9% whilst the number of medium-sized enterprises by 72.5% compared to the previous year data. At the same time a realignment is also noticeable towards micro-enterprises. In companies belonging to the SMEs sector the shareholding of the state or local government cannot exceed 1%. During sampling I received written response mainly from companies (97%), which had been on the market for at least 5 years and the majority of the managers had been leading the enterprises for at least 2 or 3 years. Therefore, it is assumable that they are aware of the operation of the enterprises. When establishing the categories of variables I intended to put the majority of them in a single category and to avoid overlapping, since it is practical to form as clear categories as possible. During sampling I selected characteristics, which could have an essential effect on the phenomenon examined during the research. I aimed at incorporating such enterprise and manager characteristics into the survey sample, which were regarded as significant for my study. As the causes of behaviour types and characteristics of conduct are suitable for exploration, qualitative methods are also included in my research.

### **Interconnection of communication, command of foreign languages, and knowledge**

The participants in the economy are interconnected with each other by several means in mutual interdependence, and their decisions and behaviour are determined mainly by that. Knowledge always plays a role in the operation of the economy and the enterprises. Information generated by knowledge may become the process of production and service. The application of innovations accelerate in that way, which leads to the infiltration of knowledge. If there is more information, better decisions can be made theoretically. However, information can also pose dangers in case its source is not examined. In possession of information it is easier to change or retain partners. Information and theoretical knowledge can be transferred to practice by means of diffusion as a function of time. Knowledge enables one to adapt to challenges flexibly. Diffusion essentially means the transmission from knowledge to practice. This gap must be bridged. It can be done by recognizing the factors, which foster or hinder its inclusion. It has a great importance, because out of a hundred innovation there are only about ten, which are

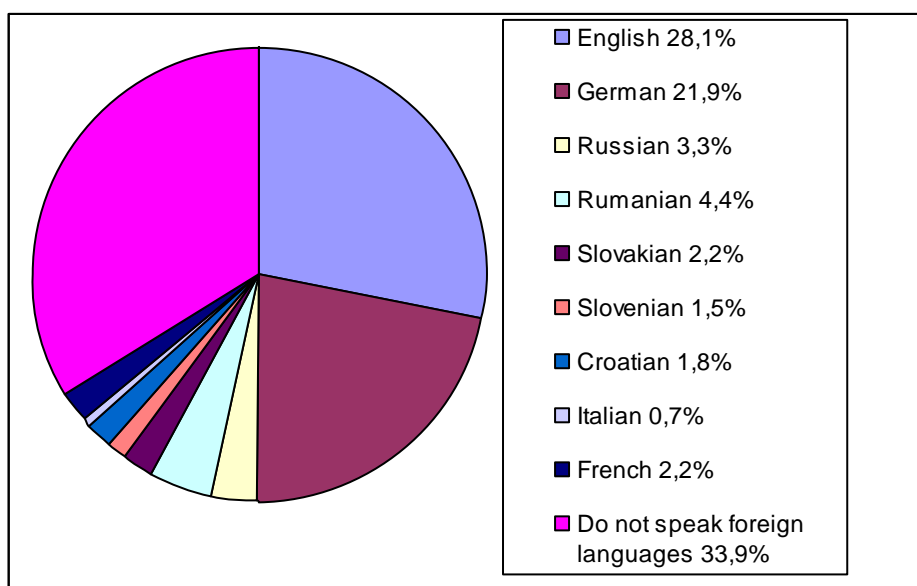
utilized, and ninety are forgotten permanently according to observations (Rogers, 2005). The four components of the diffusion process are innovation, communication channels, the dimension of time, as well as the social system in which the given process takes place. The aim of communication in accordance with the sender's intention is to make the recipient change his behaviour or his already established attitude towards a certain matter as the result of the message. Up to this point diffusion is the same as communication. Diffusion occurs if the recipient alters his behaviour towards everyone, and it is also apparent regarding his decisions. Alteration of knowledge or conviction regarding a certain thing is not necessarily entails change in behaviour. Even if someone is aware of a phenomenon, it is not sure that he will change his methods and practice. Will everything remain unchanged? No, it will not. It must be ascertained which factors affect these changes in behaviour, which ones elicit them. I have examined the distribution of the managers of enterprises included in the sample by age, education, and command of foreign languages. The results are included in the following charts.

**1. Table. The distribution of managers of the SMEs by age, gender and qualification (person)**

Designation	College, university			Higher-level courses			High School Diploma			Total:		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Below 30 years	31	21	52	2	3	5	1	0	1	34	24	58
Between 30-40 years	17	4	21	8	7	15	1	1	2	26	12	38
Between 40-50 years	66	19	85	15	5	20	2	0	2	83	24	107
Above 50 years	41	17	58	5	2	7	4	2	6	50	21	71
Total:	155	61	216	30	17	47	8	3	11	193	81	274

Source: Questionnaire 2011, 2012, Own edition

It is apparent from the chart that 78.8% of the managers in the SMEs sector have college or university degree, and 17.2% of them have some kind of higher-level qualification. According to the distribution of managers of the small and medium-sized enterprises by age, 39.1% of them is between 40-50 years old, 25.9% is above 50, and the number of those who are under 30 is relatively high (21.2%). Comparing the two years there were no changes in the composition of the number of participants.



**2. Figure. Foreign language knowledge of SMEs managers based on the sample**

Source: own edition, based on questionnaires

The results of the questionnaire are appalling, especially if it is also taken into consideration that there are company leaders who do not speak only one, but two or three languages, which does not appear on the chart. The knowledge of foreign languages would be important primarily because of the European integration and the international tenders. As it is well-known that proportionally the foreign language knowledge of Hungarian inhabitants is the lowest in Central Europe, it would be important if company leaders could speak at least one foreign language. The low level of foreign language skills influences the economic performance of enterprises, the establishment of international connections and their development. (The survey referred only to company managers.) Speaking at least one foreign language is an essential demand regarding managers.

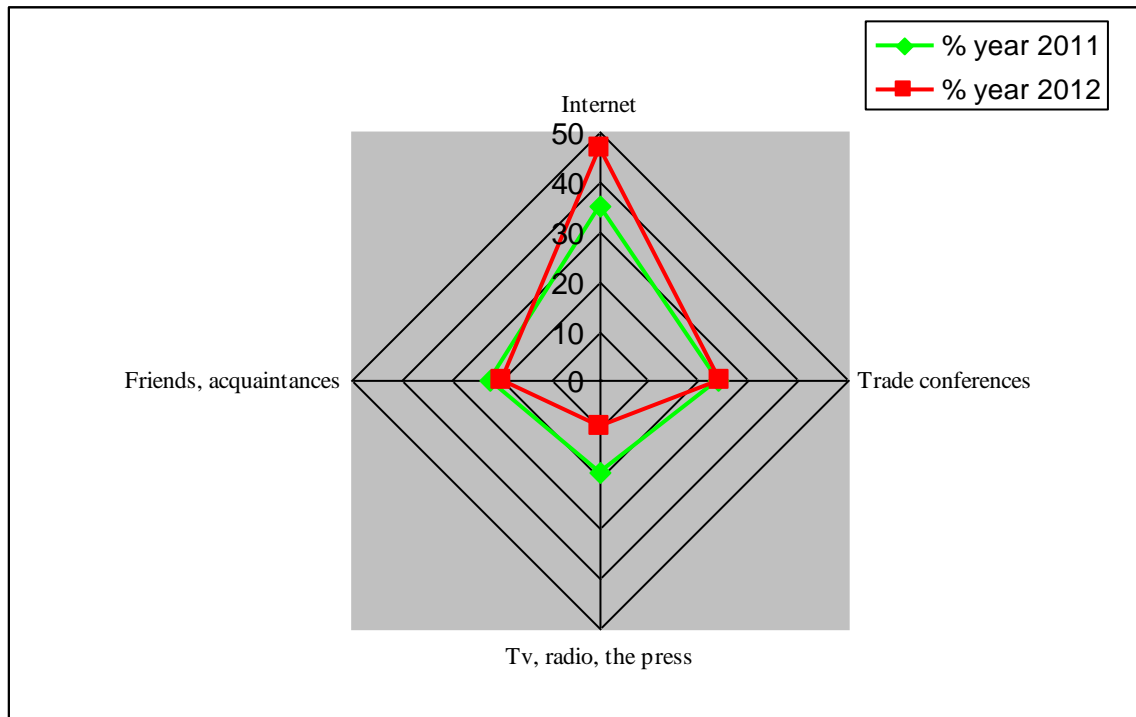
**2. Table. Is it important to learn business and enterprise subjects in organised forms or participate in further education trainings according to company leaders? (%)**

Designation	Micro-enterprises	Small enterprises	Medium-sized enterprises
Yes	20,9	23,6	41,1
No	79,1	76,4	58,9
Total:	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Based on questionnaire, own edition

The results indicate a problem, which is typical of the managers in the sector i.e. they do not want to acquire knowledge on leadership and business by organised educational means, in the form of further education training. It has multiple reasons. Partially they do not wish to spend time on organised education as by doing so they would absent themselves from the daily direct command, and also these forms of training provide them only with general information, which is difficult to apply or utilise in everyday actions. It is apparent that they want to obtain the information necessary for the operation from other sources, which facilitate practice or practical realization.

On the basis of the questionnaire, company leaders are decisively in possession of up-to-date information. It means that managers gather information about domestic and international economic affairs and changes in the market via multiple channels.



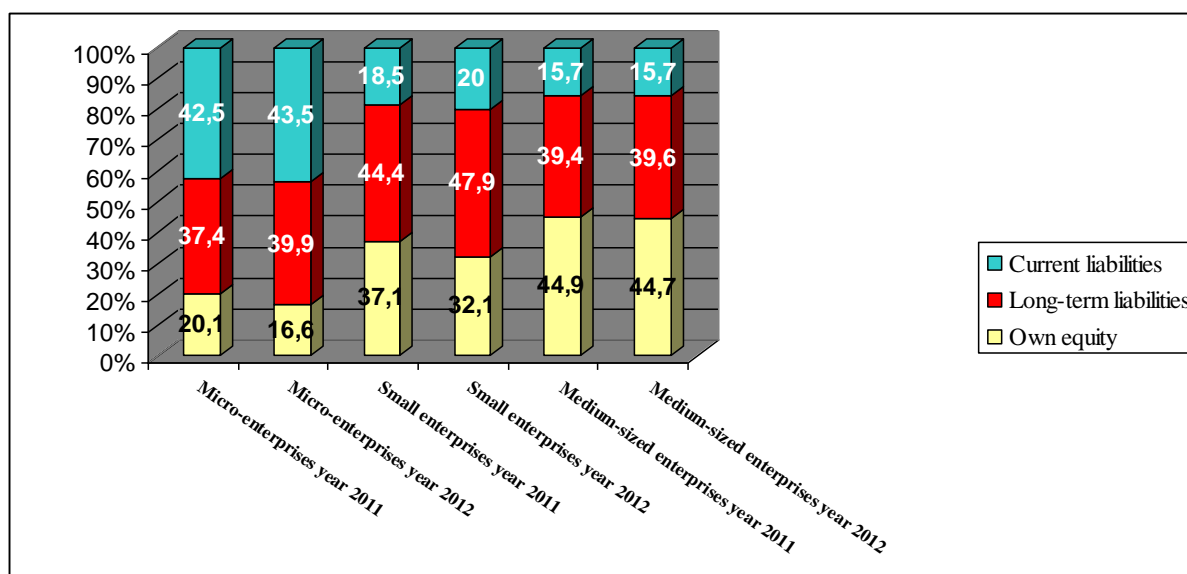
**3. Figure. Information obtaining channels of company leaders**  
Source: Questionnaire, own edition

Company leaders must possess up-to-date information in order to be able to intervene in the operation and management of the enterprise in time. With the spread of the Internet managers can obtain information quickly. According to the survey, however, the self-assertion of managers carries deficiency in self-recognition. There is a contradiction between participation in trainings and the means of obtaining information. This is significant, because it follows that how much attention managers pay to gathering information personally and to the acquisition of knowledge. Here it is evident that nearly half of the managers do not participate in any training or further education, they do not regard it important. However, company leaders are aware that they need information in the competition, because they can obtain a competitive edge only on that basis. 33% of the responding managers have not been participating in any training or further education in the last three years. It was ascertainable that only managers under 40 monitor news portals daily and learn about changes in technology and the market. Few managers speak foreign languages. It is noticeable that up to the age of 40 mainly the Internet provides a considerable part of the information. The age-group above 40 primarily acquire information by means of trade conferences or via friends, acquaintances and personal attachments. The orientation towards personal channels is better observable in this age group who give preference to trustworthy companionship. Through friends a significant part of the respondents receive information, which might help company development and further networking. It must also be remarked here that these connections can ensure the chances of participating in tenders and meeting the requirements of them. At the same time the lack of information is also apparent in the fact that company managers are unable to utilise positive changes. It can be explained by confusions in the leading and directing system; there is no consonance and as its consequence the information is lost in many cases. It also points to the problem that the managers receive the appropriate information but it is not processed, forwarded

or recorded in time. Therefore, the corrections needed are not defined accurately and actions are not taken. European Union information sources are scarcely utilised by the managers. Several scientific studies and dissertations have dealt with the fact that although governmental pieces of information are useful, only a few enterprises can make use of them. It shows a considerable contradiction, which can be the subject-matter of a separate study, since government information is necessary, but entrepreneurs do not demand related services (Badinsky, 2009). A significant part of the managers responding to the questionnaire obtained business leadership skills from the practice of their own enterprises. It is coupled with the routine that the sources of information come from the families and the circle of friends. It occurs in many cases that a leader of a company learns from the 'activity' of another manager. Practice of planning is peripheral, they are not convinced of its benefits. In many instances the realization of their own ideas comes before searching for a market. Now they rush themselves into impracticable undertakings, now they do not make progress even with a lot of work. Understanding the trade is not always enough. Marketing maneuvers must also be known. They should be integrated into the daily course of business. Marketing is missing from some of the entrepreneurs' awareness to such extent that it endangers future adaptability. The staff members usually participate in trainings only in the fields of trade, taxation, accountancy, and perhaps marketing. Company leaders do not attend courses themselves, they send their staff to trainings, and as its consequence they receive only filtered information, which is then uncertain to contribute to the strategy of the enterprise in the right way. It is also coupled with the late recognition of the benefits originating from changes in technics, which may result in further backwardness of the enterprise. Relatively few enterprises have a corporate governance system that could help company development with its information and analysis. On the basis of feedback, only few managers read prognoses by economics researchers, which is indispensable for developing a broader view on entrepreneurial level, too.

### **Capital Structure**

The questionnaire based survey illustrates the capital structure problems of Hungarian small and medium-sized enterprises well. It is an essential problem that a remarkable segment of the sector possesses low level of owner's equity. It bears a part in this that most of the small and medium-sized enterprises have domestic ownership, and foreign capital has found its way to the sector only to a small degree. Another problem is that there are a lot of necessity entrepreneurs in the small and medium-sized enterprises sector. Most of the small and medium-sized enterprises have not been able to take part in the process of international division of labour so far because of the strict professional, economical, and environmental protection standards, therefore their production goes for the domestic market.



**4. Figure. Distribution of capital structure in the sample examined**  
Source: Questionnaire, own edition

Micro and small enterprises are unable to produce business plans, therefore exclude themselves from the opportunity of obtaining funds. With decreasing demand on the domestic market marketing difficulties emerge. It can be explained by the fact that there has been no expansion in consumption for years, on the contrary, in recent years a decrease in it can be noticed, especially in the case of micro-enterprises.

### Liquidity

A considerable defencelessness is characteristic of the small enterprise sector. In many instances they satisfy only their partners' demands. According to the questionnaire sampling 20% of the sector is supplier for large firms, whilst 67% of the respondents exploit gaps in the market, and 3% run franchises. Based on other classification it can be said that 14% of the enterprises are suppliers for a single firm, 42% of them are suppliers for multiple companies, whilst 44% of them exploit gaps in the market. Generally it is true, regarding the members of the SMEs sector that their competitive disadvantage is growing gradually in relation to large companies; weak payment discipline and chains of debts make concentration on work difficult. Slow information flow also adds to it. Further liquidity problem is caused by the more and more frequently occurring chain of debts, which is reaching significant proportions in certain economic sectors. Financial costs are growing and several enterprises in more and more sectors reach near closing down status. It increases the short-term resource requirements of the sector. Losing liquidity, redundancy, and changing strategies have become an everyday phenomenon (Parragh, 2011).

**3. Table. The distribution of average course of debts of the examined enterprises by clients (data: M HUF)**

Denomination	Subcontractor			Main contractor			Local government/State		
	90 days	180 days	360 days	90 days	180 days	360 days	90 days	180 days	360 days
Micro-enterprises	0	10	95	0	15	80	0	10	170
Small enterprises	4	69	71	8	52	70	5	21	57
Medium-sized enterprises	26	12	3	98	54	23	45	17	6

Source: Questionnaire, own edition

It can also be seen from the chart that micro and small enterprises are hit the hardest by the numerous unpaid bills. It is also relevant that accounts receivable overdue by more than 360 days add up to the most significant magnitude. It is important that apart from main contractors the number of unpaid bills of local governments and the state is considerable. The number of accounts receivable is inversely proportional to the size of the enterprise.

### Services used

In making use of services by micro and small enterprises or by medium-size enterprises an inverse proportion can be observed.

**4. Table. The prevalence of the services bought in the studied SMEs sector ( in %)**

Denomination (proportion of mentioning%)	Micro-enterprises 0-10 people	Small enterprises 11-50 people	Medium-sized enterprises above 50 people
Taxation and accounting	58,6	40,1	10,7
Legal services	13,6	14,7	23,2
Advertising, marketing	10,2	15,7	12,1
Market research, market surveys	1,6	3,7	10,7
Computing	11,4	16,0	23,0
Business plan preparation	3,0	6,1	9,6
Tender preparation	1,6	3,7	10,7

Source: Questionnaire, own edition

Micro and small enterprises show a need mainly for taxation and accounting services besides using legal, computing, advertising, and marketing services, whilst medium-sized enterprises decisively use legal and computing services. Besides that the expenditure on advertising, marketing, market research, and market exploration is also considerable, which obviously offer a possibility for progress. It is also remarkable that medium-sized enterprises spend a significant amount of money on tender preparation services, whilst micro-enterprises either do not have or have only very limited resources for that purpose.

### Conclusions

According to the data of the questionnaires, a great proportion of company directors in the SMEs sector personally formulate the regulations of their operation on a daily basis because of the challenges posed by the market, therefore their companies are shaping up in a way that reflects the personality of the manager himself. It is ascertainable that the attention of the managers is concentrated on managing and carrying out daily operational activities rather than forming strategies. It is due to the stagnation of the Hungarian economy, its downturn, the payment moral that has evolved in the country, all of which highlight the problems of economic viability. Accounts receivable from customers are generally much higher than accounts payable to suppliers.

Part of the micro-enterprises do not actually do business like real companies, they only create workplaces for themselves. The finding mentioned earlier is in connection with this, i.e. first comes the realisation of own ideas and searching for a market only follows it. Enterprises do not make or get made reliable market surveys, the cause of which is not only the economic recession and the crisis of Europe, but it also indicates that companies lack financial resources. It is also attributable to the lack of market surveys that in many cases enterprises overestimate

the expected sales results, therefore they make wrong decisions; now they rush themselves into impracticable undertakings, now they do not make progress even with a lot of work.

Leaders of the studied sector have not prepared for the elimination and prevention of negative effects, which is caused by satisfying the needs of one or two firms only, and as a result there is a great vulnerability, whilst the level of competitiveness is low.

The struggle for survival of the companies has become an everyday phenomenon. Partial loss of the market significantly influences the workforce needs of each enterprise and this change brings along the possibility of altering strategies. The research proves that a considerable proportion of micro and small enterprises do not have written strategies.

Part of the managers at the same time can see a narrow widening market and within that an extending market proportion, which they have not been able to cover with their products, yet. They are continually searching for competitive edges, which could be obtained in order to sustain development. The effects of government programmes launched by the European Union are not perceptible.

Lack of strategy, short-term approach, and the quality of contracting behaviour are the obstacles, which weaken or hinder the cooperation of the enterprises. There are legal deficiencies in the regulation of the economy. Managers, regardless of corporate categories, expressed appreciably different opinions. The differences are the following: lack of established business culture, lack of interest of companies, lack of qualification of managements, and unidentified necessities.

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