



Human Resource Management Practice in Lithuania: Evidences and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

As human resources have been already recognized as the most valuable factor for organizational success, HRM in order to cope with new challenges has to focus more and more attention to the choice and application of up-to-date practices that would allow the most efficient use of the human resources of organizations. The purpose of this article is to define the level of usage of different HRM practices in business companies in Lithuania and to assess the perception of their effectiveness by HR specialists and professionals. The methodology is based on cross-sectional analysis of HRM practices in great variety of business sectors and included the survey of more than 500 respondents responsible for HRM. Research findings revealed that in recruitment field old fashioned peer recommendations are competing with application of newest internet-based technologies as the most effective practices for finding the best candidates. Job interviews have almost total application in the businesses as selection practice and it is seen as the most effective tool by specialists and professionals. The most common formal employees appraisal practices seem do not have big support between specialists and professionals. Here, more specific, custom-tailored solutions are preferred by the companies. Both, on-the-job training and off-the-job training are very highly valued by respondents. Research results let to outline some major trends and regularities important for understanding of HRM in contemporary business environment in Lithuania.

INTRODUCTION

Changing external conditions such as globalization processes, increased competition, digital technologies, worsening demographic situation have led to changes in the attitude toward the role of human resources. Now HR is already seen as one of the most important assets to the success of any organization. That create new challenges for HRM which needs to be strategic, innovative, par-

ticipative, and responsive to the unstable organizational and business environments (Arbatani et al., 2016).

In recent years, a good deal of attention has been focused on the changing nature of the activities that HR managers undertake in response to major transformations in the workplace (Cohen, 2015; Ulrich and Dulebohan, 2015; Mura et al., 2019; Radjenovic et al., 2018). Though HRM still performs the traditional functions of staffing, compensation, performance appraisal, training, new directions in HRM appear. New trends are related to strategic HRM, competency - oriented HRM (Cohen, 2015), green HRM (Renwick et al., 2013), talent management strategy (Al Ariss et al., 2014) digitalization link with HRM (Kaur, 2018). These trends indicate about enrichment of the HR-processes and the rise of their importance in organization management. Therefore, one of the main HRM tasks is choice and application of such technologies and methods that would allow the most efficient use of the intellectual resources of the organization.

The aim of the article is to find out which HRM tools are commonly used by Lithuanian business companies and to provide the subjective evaluations of the effectiveness of those tools. Seeking to reveal the current HRM practices in Lithuania the survey of HR specialists and professionals in different business organizations has been carried out. The sampling included all type and all sizes of business organizations. Statistical methods and statistical analysis software IBM SPSS was used for the respondents' answers analysis and the research findings formulation.

1. HRM FUNCTIONS: LITERATURE REVIEW

Even if new concepts and new directions of analysis appear in the field of HRM, the traditional functional approach to the practices of the management of employees still remains an important part of the academic research. HRM functions are analyzed in their interactions, describing new directions in the development of HRM, or by developing new concepts. Yet the bulk of the research is in the field of analysis of separate HRM functions and their impact on different organizational dimensions.

Recruitment. Recruitment expresses the firm-specific capabilities to identify and access individual expert competencies developed in external firms and institutions, and the processes of selecting and integrating these into the cognitive domains of the organization (Jøranli, 2018). Responsibility and priorities in recruiting policies are traditional issues analyzed in the field of recruiting employees. The interests of researchers have changed significantly. The importance of recruitment in assuring quality and competitiveness has been proven by Soheli Ahmad and Roger G. Schroeder. Fostering appropriate behavioural traits among employees can help an organization to achieve superior competitiveness by better use of total quality management tools (Ahmad and Schroeder, 2002). Higher competitiveness of the company also requires alignment between vertical and horizontal strategic recruitment, where vertical strategic recruitment refers to the vertical alignment of recruiting input factors, processes, and outcomes across organizational levels and horizontal strategic recruitment refers to within-level congruence between HRM systems and practices (e.g., compensation, training, succession planning) and recruitment systems and practices (Phillips and Gully, 2015). The role of intuition is also important. It is seen as being useful or effective in situations where there was an absence of hard data and when the hard data itself was felt to be inadequate, but it is less useful or effective when quantification or competence-based assessment is required, when used in a wholly unstructured way, and when it reinforced stereotyping of candidates (Miles and Sadler-Smith, 2014).

The most recent trend in analyzing recruitment issues is very much focused on knowledge acquisition and innovations support due to application of relevant recruitment policies (Singh and Agrawal, 2011; Herstad et.al., 2015; Jøranli, 2018). By hiring innovators companies benefit from recruits' prior ideas (Singh and Agrawal, 2011), recruitment from universities, research institutes and higher education institutions can increase the capacity of firms to generate technical inven-

tions, but only by the recruitment that has occurred from related industries (Herstad et.al, 2015). The creation of organizational labour market is the way to solve an issue of challenging tension between the need to create stable individual knowledge linkages internally in consultancy-based businesses and the common practice of developing careers through external labour market mobility (Jøranli, 2018). These are some important conclusions made by researchers analyzing the link between recruitment and knowledge in the organization.

Selection. Selection is the process of choosing a person from the pool of candidates to fill the position that is in need (Prince and Kabst, 2019). Many researchers analyze this HRM function alongside recruitment as the part of staffing policy of a company (Ahmad and Schroeder, 2002; Miles and Sadler-Smith, 2014; Zide et al., 2014). Earlier researches indicated the popularity of the traditionally used selection techniques such as the interviews, the application forms and the references, despite their reported lack of reliability and validity, while only a small number of organizations reported they use of more sophisticated selection tools such as assessment centres and psychological testing (Lockyer and Scholarios, 2004). National culture characteristics is one of the factor playing some role in frequency of the use of different selection tools (Prince and Kabst, 2019). Concept of fit has been developed as the criteria to facilitate decision making in employees' selection. Person-Job (PJ) fit was defined as the compatibility between a person's characteristics and those of the job or tasks that are performed at work. Person-Organization (PO) fit was defined as the compatibility between people and entire organizations (Sekiguchi, 2007). More sophisticated multilevel selection concept also was elaborated (Anderson et al., 2004).

Important focus in analysis of selection practices nowadays is the application of IT technologies. A decision making tool to a manager for solving a multi-criteria selection problem that can accommodate the qualitative details in relation to the task requirements and candidates' competences have been proposed (Raoudha et al., 2012). Special software and algorithms can be used to improve the quality of selection decisions, but the particular emphasis in research is made on using internet and social media providing additional information to base decisions upon. Using social media (e.g. Facebook and LinkedIn) can help to predict outcomes, such as candidate' future performance, but also prone to some possible negative effects, like pure structured, therefore misleading information, subgroup differentiation potentially leading to discrimination, or negative reaction by applicants (Roth et al., 2016). LinkedIn as a selection tool is a rapidly burgeoning practice, but it is apparent that it has not yet replaced the traditional resume (Zide et al., 2014).

Fairness is another important issue recently discussed in relation to selection practices. Justice in the context of employee selection refers to applicants' perceptions concerning the fairness of the systems used to select people for jobs, arising from the operational selection procedures used and the decisions arising from them (Wang et al., 2019). Personal characteristics, like Confucian values, neuroticism, conscientiousness and test experience can predict applicants' procedural fairness expectations, but only test experience has effects on procedural justice perceptions (Wang et al., 2019).

Appraisal. Performance appraisal is considered as a formal annual interview that generates social interactions between managers and employees to formulate action plans through a discussion of the individual's previous job performance and future developmental needs (Chen and Eldridge, 2010). Performance appraisal is seen as one of the major issues in HRM. The analysis of performance appraisal practices in UK quality driven companies revealed that HR performance evaluation in the majority of the TQM-based organizations was locked into a vicious circle of individual performance, control approach, HR dissatisfaction, and a low degree of success for TQM programmes, barely supporting companies thrives for exclusive quality (Soltani et al., 2004). Low quality of performance appraisal experience likely incurs a penalty for a company in terms of lower job satisfaction, organizational commitment and higher intentions to quit (Brown et. al., 2010), while high quality could lead to improved organizational citizenship behavior (Zheng et.al., 2012).

Some conceptual frameworks have been elaborated recently to suggest the way to improve the effectiveness of performance appraisal practices in the companies. To develop relevant performance appraisal practices leading to better employees' performance, organizational context factors, both structural and process, should be taken into account (Rusu et al, 2016; (Rusu et al, 2016; Raisienė et al., 2019). Performance appraisal system should integrate four broad areas, described by four models – internal process model, human relations model, open system model and rational goal model (Ikramullah et al., 2016). Effectiveness of performance appraisal can be improved by adding to the purposes of appraisal not just the aim of reaching immediate outcomes by applying it for administrative and development purposes, but the aim of reaching the ultimate outcomes as well, by adding role-definition and strategic purposes to the system (Iqbal et al., 2019). Integrating management by objectives tools, like setting clear objectives, defining the results, controlling standards, participation in setting objectives, continuous communication, appropriate systems of rewarding, individual performance evaluation can improve performance appraisal systems leading to increase in employees satisfaction and productivity (Islami et al., 2018).

One of the major issues is ensuring justice in applying appraisal procedures. Four justice dimensions (procedural, distributive, interpersonal, informational) are important to employees to consider the performance appraisal system being fair (Thurston and McNall, 2010). But fairness itself is very complex construct and can be subject to cultural differences (Selvarajan et al., 2018). Cultural differences should be taken into account when standardized performance appraisal system are used in multinational companies (Chen and Eldridge, 2010).

Training and development. When analysing training and development many researchers take them as one integral human resource development practice (Otoo et al., 2019, Otoo and Mishra, 2018). Others (Ensour and Kharabsheh, 2015; Bilan et al., 2017; Susomrith et al., 2019) have pointed out to the differences. Training refers to the activities that aim to equip the person with specific skills and knowledge targeted to adequately perform a particular job, whereas development refers to a broader landscape. It relates to future and longer term development of people throughout their career (Ensour and Kharabsheh, 2015). Training and development are seen as the areas where cultural features could play very important role. This led to a number of comparative researches or analyses of specific countries. So, comparing India with Britain, the conclusion was made that more training is done in Britain, more delegating responsibilities or involving line managers in T&D is also occurring in Britain and, in general, there seems to be more focus on and involvement of individual employees in T&D in Britain then in India (Yadapadithaya and Stewart, 2003). Another research found that non-Asian owned MNCs tend to spend more moneys on employees training and development than Asian (Zheng, Hyland and Soosay, 2007). But the differences were quite marginal, so the general conclusion was that the study supported the possibility of adopting some uniform HRM practices, such as similar emphasis on training, across different regions, despite different institutional settings and cultural norms between the Asian and non-Asian firms. On the other hand, Australian MNEs were less likely to use management development or talent management programmes for senior management or high performing staff relative to US MNEs (Sablok et al., 2017), what refer to important cultural differences between companies from those two countries. The importance of institutional context is emphasized by researches done in Australia (Sablok et al., 2017) and Taiwan (Chuang, 2013). Taiwanese T&D practice is different from the Western world (Chuang, 2013). It is training-oriented and heavily subsidized by the government. And this is not the case in the majority of Western countries.

The study carried out in multiple call centres in several European countries revealed, that T&D is determined by a complex interplay of environmental, institutional, internal, corporate and skill characteristics (Garavan et al., 2008). Nature of business in call centres and customers' segment orientations were the most important factors defining differences in T&D. Several analyses using Structural Equation Modelling made by Otoo and his associates showed the importance of HRM practices, including training and development on organizational performance and its effectiveness. Their research findings suggest that HRM practices, notably training and development interven-

tions affect organizational performance through the mediating effect of employees' performance and their competencies (Otoo et al., 2019; Otoo and Mishra, 2018).

Research carried out in Eastern European countries indicated the existence of relationship between the usage of HR development practices and the level of innovativeness of organizations (Berber and Lekovic, 2018). T&D can improve innovative employees' behaviour, but the relation is mediated by employee's affective commitment (Susomrith et al., 2019). So, to have positive effect on innovativeness, companies should find the way how to increase long-term motivation of their employees. The recent advances in the usage of IT technologies in the field of training and development can pave the way to the usage of Artificial intelligence in T&D practices. AI should help to cope with three major needs in recent learning environment: to have intuitive e-learning interfaces, on-the-go learning and personalized learning (Maity, 2019). Present study is focused on analyzing the spread of different HRM practices in Lithuania and the understanding of their effectiveness by HR specialists and professionals. Generally, it should provide broad picture what is happening with HRM in Lithuania and how the situation is justified by people directly involved in this area.

Literature analysis revealed that there are very few researches focused on providing broad picture of current situation (Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Chuang, 2013; Aladwan et al., 2014). The majority of researchers are interested in finding causal relations. This helps to understand how different elements are linked together. Practitioners based on those concepts can develop their priorities. But those researches leave aside the issue, how popular are advices formulated by scientific community. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to close this gap and on the example of Lithuanian business community to demonstrate propensity of different HRM practices, broadly discussed in academic literature, and to develop some understanding why they are appropriate or rejected by local community.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESULTS

The aim of the research is to find out which human resource management tools are commonly used by Lithuanian business companies and to provide the subjective evaluations of effectiveness of those tools.

2.1 Sample, data collection tool and statistical analysis

To reveal the current HRM practices and issues in Lithuania the survey of managers and employees responsible for human resource management activities in different business organizations has been carried out. Convenience sampling was applied and included all type and all sizes of business organizations. As long as majority of Lithuanian companies are comparatively small and do not provide information about their organizational structures and employees positions in open sources, the majority of them were called by phone and asked if they had employees responsible for HRM. After receiving positive answers, the contacts of that employee or employees were asked. Those employees were contacted directly via phones, e-mails or face-to-face with the demand to fill in the questionnaire. In total 535 HRM specialists and professionals have responded to the demand and filled in the questionnaire. Such large sample can be considered satisfactory to provide the picture of the use of different HRM practices in Lithuanian business companies.

The questionnaire focus was to measure the propensity of different HRM practices and their effectiveness. HRM practices have been grouped into four clusters based on separate HRM functions: recruiting, selection, appraisal and training. Each cluster included several methods or practices taken as the most important and the most common, what was defined by literature analysis.

Data analysis was based on the use of descriptive statistics and tests of significance. The frequencies were used to analyze the propensity of HRM practices. To find out relationships Pearson Chi-Square test was applied. To define the effect of demographic characteristics on the respond-

ents' judgments, measures of association for nominal data – Phi and Cramer's V – were applied. 2x2 measure of association Phi was applied to measure the impact of gender on the HRM practices, and Cramer's V for the impact of the age, education, position in the organization of respondents and organizational characteristics – business sector and size of the company. The next rule was applied when judging about the strength of association: 0 to 0,15 – very weak relationship, 0,15 to 0,20 – weak, 0,20 to 0,25 – moderate, 0,25 to 0,30 – moderately strong, 0,30 to 0,35 strong, 0,35 to 0,40 – very strong, 0,40 to 0,50 worryingly strong, more than 0,50 – redundantly strong, what should mean that analysis is not reliable.

Likert scale was applied to measure the effectiveness of different HRM practices. To analyze those data, mean values and standard deviations were calculated. To evaluate the effect of demographic characteristics on evaluations received, nonparametric Mann-Whitney U-test and Kruskal-Wallis H-test were applied. The significance level 0,05 was chosen to decide about the acceptance or rejection of null hypothesis. Significance value have been adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests. All analysis was done using IBM SPSS statistics version 25.

The majority of respondents came from service business sector – 221 respondents or 41,3% of total number. The second largest group came from trade sector – 116 or 21,7% of all respondents, the third largest group came from manufacturing – 102 or 19,1%. 91 or 17% of respondents referred their activities as being of mix business nature, while 5 respondents failed to provide necessary information (0,9 %). Majority of respondents comes from middle size (50 to 249 employees) or bigger (more than 250 employees) companies – 40,7% and 32,3% respectively. Small companies with 11 – 49 employees were represented by 17,8% of respondents, while microcompanies by 8,1% of respondents. This should reflect the real state of matters when HRM officers are employed mainly by bigger companies, while smaller companies mainly rely on linear managers in solving different HRM issues. Participation of micro companies in survey could be linked to HRM professionals who create specialized companies to provide different HRM services to other companies. This also can explain the fact that great part of respondents (more than 30%) failed to evaluate the propensity of HRM practices in their companies.

The majority of respondents take the bottom-line position in HR management hierarchy. They referred to themselves as being HR officers without management powers (32,5%). Chief HR officers, still without management powers, but with more advanced status in the company, made the second biggest group of respondents (25,2%). The managers with smallest management powers like heads of HR sections or groups made a bulk of HR managers – 22,8 % from the total number of respondents-managers, while heads of full-fledged HR departments made 5,4% of respondents. HR managers taking the top positions in the organizational hierarchy like vice-presidents or, so called, directors included 15 persons or 2,8% from the total number of respondents.

Personal characteristics of respondents revealed a staggering prevalence of female employees over males in this area of organizational activities, with 87,6% and 12,4% respectively. Age structure includes middle age and younger generation groups as prevailing, with 38,8% of respondents falling into the age group between 31 and 40 years old, and 24,3% into the group between 26 and 30 years old. 41 – 50 years old made 15,6 % of sample, 25-year-old and younger 11,9%, 51 – 60 years old – 8,7% and older than 60 years just 0,8%. For the later analysis, due to the low number of respondents in the last two groups they were merged into one making a group of respondents of 51 years old and older.

Educational characteristics of respondents revealed that only 11,5% of respondents had education in HRM, while the majority had education in economics and finance (28,1%) or general business management (27,4%). Law and psychology also were presented as the options, but their impact on the career in this area was much smaller, just 7,4% and 4,2% of all respondents referred to those options. Education in poorly related to HRM sciences, like engineering (8,7%) or other forms (9,4%) also characterized some respondents. In addition, 3,4% of respondents referred to more than one area of education.

2.2 The usage of Human Resource Management practices in Lithuanian companies

Recruitment. Answers were provided by 60,6 to 62,8% of respondents. *The word of mouth, that is recommendations* still is the most widespread practice to find new employees. 84 % of respondents referred to this practice as applied in their companies. Alongside with the most traditional way of recruitment, *the new IT technologies of internet* showed the same importance to recruitment with 83,9% of respondents referring to application of internet technologies for finding new employees. Advertising in professional journals is the least presented practice with only 14,3% of respondents referring to this practice.

Table 1. Application of recruitment practices in analyzed companies

<i>Recruitment</i>	<i>Frequency of application %</i>
Advertising job vacancies on the Internet	83,9
Advertising in newspapers	35,2
Advertising in professional journals	14,3
Contacting employment agencies	56
Searching through labor exchanges	64,2
“Head hunting”	46,3
Recommendations	84
Participation incareer days	38,1
Other	53,2

Area of activity is important in using advertising in newspapers ($\chi^2 = 18,274$, $df=3$, $p=0,000$) and “head hunting” ($\chi^2 = 8.391$, $df=3$, $p=0.039$). Association is moderate in the case of advertising in newspapers (Cramer's $V = 0,235$) and weak in the case of “head hunting” (Cramer's $V=0,161$), but in both cases its statistically significant. Old fashioned way of recruitment, that is *newspapers are the most broadly used by manufacturing companies* (51,2 %), then by service (38,2%), trade (30,6%) and the least by mixed businesses companies (18,5%). “*Head hunting*” is the most applied practice by manufacturing companies (57,6%), then by diversified (48,3%) and trade companies (45,2%). The least applied are by service companies (36,8 %).

Companies' size has one clear link to recruitment practices – the way companies interact with universities and professional schools. *The bigger the company is, the more likely it is inclined to participate in career days of schools* ($\chi^2 = 32,715$, $df=3$, $p=0.000$). 60,2 % of the biggest companies (more than 250 employees) participate in those events, comparing with 30,5% of middle-sized companies (50-249 employees), with 27% of small companies and 11,1% of microcompanies (up to 10 employees). The association is strong, with Cramer's V equals to 0,317.

Selection. The most widespread selection practices between analyzed companies are job interviews (99,7 %), analysis of CVs and applications (73,7%) and health examination (70,7%).

Table 2. Application of selection practices in analyzed companies

	<i>Frequency of application %</i>
Job interview	99,7
General aptitude tests	59
Checking of CV's and applications (recommendations)	73,7
Assessment centers	15,6
Group discussion	29,7

On-the-site tasks	65
Health examination	70,7
Other	33,3

Sector of activities plays some role in applying group discussions techniques in selection process ($\chi^2=10,369$, $df=3$, $p=0,016$) and candidate's health examination ($\chi^2=9,058$, $df=3$, $p=0,029$). The strength of relation is weak, with Cramer's $V=0,178$ ($p=0,016$) and $V=0,167$ ($p=0,029$) respectively. Group discussions are more broadly used in service (39,8%) than in manufacturing (28,2%), trade (22,5%) or mixed businesses (19,4%) companies. *Checking candidates' health is important in manufacturing* (80,7%) and mixed businesses companies (77,4%), but less for service (64,8%) and trade companies (63,4%). The size of the company is important for CVs, applications checking ($\chi^2 =16,582$, $df=3$, $p=0,001$) and health testing ($\chi^2=12,153$, $df=3$, $p=0,007$). The size plays moderate effect on CVs and applications checking (Cramer's $V=0,227$) and weak effect on health testing (Cramer's $V=0,193$). *Work with CVs and applications increases with the size of a company*. If only 41,2% of micro companies applies those practices, then already 68,6% of all small companies, 70,8% of middle-size companies, and 84,3% of the biggest companies are involved in those practices. *The same trend can be uncovered in using candidate's health tests*. Percentage is increasing from 42,1% to 62,9% to 71,1% and to 79,0% with the increase of the size of the company.

Appraisal. Companies adopt diverse practices in appraising their employees. *No single practice has reached 50% threshold*. Preparing of achievement reports (46,2%) and paired comparison (35,8%) are two the most widespread employees' appraisal methods out of the list proposed by researchers, but it is worthy to mention that the option "other" (76,5%) has been the most popular between respondents. It could mean that companies tend to apply more specific employees' evaluation methods developed on the basis of their own experience and better suited for their particular purposes.

Table 3. Application of employees' performance appraisal methods practices in analyzed companies

	Frequency of application %
Achievements reports	46,2
Critical incident method	17,3
Graphic rating scale method	20,4
Behaviour ratings	31
Paired comparison method	35,8
360 degrees performance appraisal method	20,9
Other	76,5

The application of achievement reports depends on the sector ($\chi^2=18,028$, $df=3$, $p<0, 01$) with Cramer's $V=0,240$ showing moderate effect. Reports are broadly applied in service companies (59,2%). More than half of trade companies (51,4 %) also use this method, with other sectors showing less interest in the method (manufacturing – 36,6% and mixed businesses companies – 28,8%). Another method depending on business sector is critical incident method ($\chi^2=9,822$, $df=3$, $p<0,020$). In general, this method is not broadly used, only 17,3% applies it. But there are statistically significant differences in its application. One quarter (25,5%) of service companies apply this method. On the other hand, only 8,3 % manufacturing companies apply it, with mixed business companies (16,9%) and trade companies (15,7%) in between. The strength of relationship is weak (Cramer's $V=0,175$), but statistically significant.

Companies size have weak effect (Cramer's $V=0,171$) only on using reports for employees' evaluation ($\chi^2=9,256$, $df=3$, $p<0,026$). The relation is not straightforward. Written reports are broadly used by small companies having 10 to 49 employees (58,8 %) and largest companies with over 250 employees (54,9%). Companies in between show large decrease in the usage of this method (39,3 %). Lowest interest is shown by micro companies (35,3 %).

Training. Both, off-the-job (93,7%) and on-the-job (92,4%) training are used by absolute majority of the companies. Among specific training methods conferences or seminars with employees (78%), case analyses (69,9%), analysis of advanced experiences (57,8%) are the most widespread.

Table 4. Application of training methods in analyzed companies

	Frequency of application %
Off-the-job-training	93,7
On-the-job-training	92,4
Internships abroad	48,1
Studies at universities	50,8
Conferences	78
Analysis of advanced experience	57,8
Audiovisual techniques	40,7
Case analysis	69,9
Other	51,6

Business sector does not play important role in applying different training methods except for case analysis ($\chi^2=10,573$, $df=3$, $p<0,014$). Case analysis is less used by trade companies (54,3%), then by manufacturing (76,8%), mixed businesses (74,1%) or service (71,7%) companies. This dependence is weak with Cramer's V equals to 0,183. Companies size is related to using conferences, seminars, as training method ($\chi^2=13,676$, $df=3$, $p<0,003$). Companies increase the use of this method with the increase of the size of a company from 63,3% to 73,1% to 86,9%. It shows moderate relationship (Cramer's $V=0,208$). The exception is for the micro companies, which showed the result of 94,1%. But the last figure should be taken with great caution. Just 17 answers were received from those very small companies. One of the ways to explain such high percentage could be linked to the work nature of small companies and perception of meaning of the conferences and seminars in the context of such small company. With very low level of formalization of work, widespread joint discussions about work issues, conference method could be seen by respondents as method when manager and employees just discuss different job-related issues what is happening all the time in very small companies.

2.3 The effectiveness of HRM practices according to HRM specialists and professionals

Recruitment. Recommendations ($\bar{X}=4,15$) and using the internet technologies ($\bar{X}=4,14$) are seen as the most important channels for recruiting employees. Working with employment agencies ($\bar{X}=3,52$), "head hunting" ($\bar{X}=3,33$), dealing with professional schools/ universities ($\bar{X}=3,14$) and using services of labour exchange ($\bar{X}=3,05$) are seen as next best options. And as the least effective ways are seen advertising in professional journals ($\bar{X}=2,60$) and newspapers ($\bar{X}=2,53$). The agreement between respondents also was highest concerning the importance of recommendations ($\sigma=0,908$) and internet technologies ($\sigma=1,000$), while highest disagreement was shown concerning labour exchange ($\sigma=1,358$) and newspapers ($\sigma=1,327$).

Table 5. The evaluation of effectiveness of recruitment methods

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Advertising job vacancies on the Internet	4.14	1.000
Advertising in newspapers	2.53	1.327
Advertising in professional journals	2.60	1.185
Contacting employment agencies	3.52	1.159
Searching through labour exchanges	3.05	1.358
“Head hunting”	3.33	1.244
Recommendations	4.15	.908
Participation in career days	3.14	1.246
Other	3.15	1.542

Analysis did not detect any important differences in evaluation recruitment practices by gender and position in a company. Null hypotheses retained in checking statistically important differences. In turn, age plays important role in defining importance of internet search ($H=26,799$, $df=4$, $p=0,000$), newspapers ($H=16,571$, $df=4$, $p=0,002$) and employment agencies ($H=12,609$, $df=4$, $p=0,013$). Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p-value showed that there were significant differences in assessing internet importance between younger and older respondents, more precisely between up to 25 years old ($\bar{X}=4,54$) and 51 year old and older ($\bar{X}=3,88$, $p=0,001$), between up to 25 and 41-50 ($\bar{X}=3,88$, $p=0,000$), and between 26-30 ($\bar{X}=4,22$) and 41-50 ($p=0,020$). Younger respondents see internet technologies as more effective way to recruit necessary employees. Opposite trend is seen in evaluation importance of newspapers. First two age groups (up to 25 ($\bar{X}=2,27$) and 26-30 ($\bar{X}=2,26$)) assess their importance considerably lower than the last one (51 and more ($\bar{X}=3,02$)). Pairwise comparison gives p-values equal to 0,037 and 0,005 respectively. The oldest HRM specialists ($\bar{X}=3,07$) are the most critical about the usage of external employment agencies for the recruitment purposes. Their evaluations are significantly different from other groups of specialists – 26-30 ($\bar{X}=3,62$, $p=0,022$), 31-40 ($\bar{X}=3,57$, $p=0,032$) 41-50 years old ($\bar{X}=3,70$, $p=0,015$) – except from youngest ones ($\bar{X}=3,34$).

Education has some impact on understanding of effectiveness of the use of internet technologies in recruiting new employees ($H=19,591$, $df=7$, $p=0,007$). Respondents with engineering educational background see those technologies as being less effective ($\bar{X}=3,80$) than respondents with background in HRM ($\bar{X}=4,41$, $p=0,035$) or psychology ($\bar{X}=4,62$, $p=0,026$). Another area where differences can be found is the understanding of effectiveness of participation in educational institutions' open days ($H=23,261$, $df=7$, $p=0,002$). Here respondents with HRM background again are more optimistic ($\bar{X}=3,65$), than engineers ($\bar{X}=2,79$, $p=0,007$) and economists ($\bar{X}=3,07$, $p=0,045$).

Business sector has an impact on understanding of effectiveness of internet ($H=18,724$, $df=3$, $p=0,000$) and newspapers ($H=17,789$ $df=3$, $p=0,000$) usage in recruiting employees. Internet search is the most appreciated by trading ($\bar{X}=4,34$) and service ($\bar{X}=4,26$) companies, less by manufacturing ($\bar{X}=3,91$) and mixed business ($\bar{X}=3,87$) companies. Pairwise comparisons with adjusted p-value show significant differences between trade and manufacturing ($p=0,014$), trade and diversified ($p=0,011$), service and manufacturing ($p=0,017$) and service and mixed business ($p=0,013$) companies. Traditional way of recruiting employees through advertising in newspapers, generally is not seen as very effective method. But important differences exist. This method is seen the most favourably by manufacturing ($\bar{X}=2,93$), less by trade ($\bar{X}=2,69$), service ($\bar{X}=2,41$) and mixed business ($\bar{X}=2,22$) companies. Significant differences exist between manufacturing and mixed business ($p=0,002$), manufacturing and service ($p=0,009$), trade and mixed business ($p=0,036$) companies.

Companies size effects the evaluations of effectiveness of labour exchange services ($H=13,326$, $df=3$, $p=0,004$), “head hunting” ($H=23,682$, $df=3$, $p=0,000$) and participation in career days of educational institutions ($H=19,597$, $df=3$, $p=0,000$). Respondents from micro companies see labour exchange services being less efficient ($\bar{X}=2,37$) to compare with small ($\bar{X}=3,11$, $p=0,020$), middle-size ($\bar{X}=3,20$, $p=0,002$) and the biggest ($\bar{X}=3,03$, $p=0,035$) companies’ representatives. “Head hunting” is considered less effective by micro ($\bar{X}=2,55$) and small ($\bar{X}=2,92$) companies’ representatives then by those working in middle-size ($\bar{X}=3,51$) and big ($\bar{X}=3,49$) companies. Differences are significant between micro and middle-size ($p=0,003$) plus big ($p=0,005$) companies and between small and middle-size ($p=0,002$) plus big ($p=0,007$) companies as well. Participation in career days as employees’ recruitment method again is seen being less effective by respondents from micro ($\bar{X}=2,43$) companies and more favourable by those coming from middle-size ($\bar{X}=3,17$, $p=0,010$) and big ($\bar{X}=3,40$, $p=0,000$) companies.

Selection. Job interviews ($\bar{X}=4,63$) and on-the-site tasks ($\bar{X}=4,09$) as selection tools received the highest evaluations scores from HRM specialists. Skills tests ($\bar{X}=3,84$), checking CVs and recommendations ($\bar{X}=3,73$), medical checks ($\bar{X}=3,36$), group discussions ($\bar{X}=3,18$) follow. Assessment centres were seen as the least preferable option with the lowest evaluation score ($\bar{X}=2,88$). Highest agreement between the respondents reached on the use of job interviews ($\sigma=0,610$), lowest about the usefulness of medical assessment ($\sigma=1,436$).

Table 6. The evaluation of effectiveness of selection methods

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job interview	4.63	.610
General aptitude tests	3.84	1.011
Checking of CV's and applications (recommendations)	3.73	1.028
Assessment centers	2.88	1.138
Group discussion	3.18	1.090
On-the-site tasks	4.09	1.065
Health examination	3.36	1.436
Other	3.06	1.713

Gender plays an important role in giving evaluations of effectiveness of testing ($U=15885,5$; $p=0,047$), using assessment centres ($U=13654$; $p=0,010$) and health checking ($U=15903,5$; $p=0,008$). In all three cases females see those methods being more effective than males ($\bar{X}=3,87$ vs. $\bar{X}=3,62$; $\bar{X}=2,93$ vs. $\bar{X}=2,51$; $\bar{X}=3,42$ vs. $\bar{X}=2,90$).

Age plays role in assessing effectiveness of testing ($H=13,045$, $df=5$, $p=0,023$), using tasks on site ($H=22,218$, $df=5$, $p=0,000$) and applying health examination ($H=18,733$, $df=5$, $p=0,002$). But patterns here are not clear. In assessing testing, statistically important difference ($p=0,009$) exists between age groups of 31-40 ($\bar{X}=3,94$) and 51-60 ($\bar{X}=3,39$). In using tasks on-site important differences have been found between youngest respondents (up to 25 years) ($\bar{X}=3,77$) and 26-30 ($\bar{X}=4,25$, $p=0,019$) and 31-40 ($\bar{X}=4,23$, $p=0,026$) years old. Those last two groups had important differences with 51-60 ($\bar{X}=3,64$) years old as well, with $p=0,020$ and $p=0,029$ respectively. Younger, 26-30-year-old respondents, had more negative attitude towards application of health examination ($\bar{X}=2,98$) to compare with older ones of age range of 41-50 ($\bar{X}=3,75$, $p=0,006$) and 51-60 ($\bar{X}=3,82$, $p=0,016$).

Education plays a role of providing assessments of application of *general aptitude tests* ($H=19,470$, $df=7$, $p=0,007$) and *group discussions* ($H=15,786$, $df=7$, $p=0,027$). In both cases, *respondents with educational background in psychology have expressed the biggest scepticism toward the effectiveness of the methods*. Their mean evaluation of effectiveness of tests was 3,43, while respondents with HRM background gave the evaluation of 4,19 ($p=0,017$). By analogy, group discussions were evaluated by the mean score of 2,55, while received the evaluation of 3,50 by respondents educated in HRM ($p=0,029$).

Employees' position plays important role in assessing effectiveness of CV analysis and applications ($H=17,653$, $df=5$, $p=0,003$), using assessment centres ($H=17,890$, $df=5$, $p=0,003$) and health examination ($H=18,407$, $df=5$, $p=0,002$). Independent samples Kruskal-Wallis test also refer to important differences in assessing job interviews ($H=13,230$, $df=5$, $p=0,021$) and testing ($H=11,496$, $df=5$, $p=0,042$), but pairwise comparisons asymptotic significances adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests gives values higher than 0,05 significance level. Therefore, differences in evaluations of those two selection methods will not be discussed here. CVs and applications analysis' evaluations differ between heads of HR offices ($\bar{X}=4,05$) and HR specialists ($\bar{X}=3,64$, $p=0,007$) and chief specialists ($\bar{X}=3,66$, $p=0,044$). Those *HR managers who takes highest management positions at the top of the companies* ($\bar{X}=2,13$) have more negative understanding of the usefulness of external assessment centres in comparison to *HR managers playing less important roles* in their organization, like heads of HR departments ($\bar{X}=3,27$, $p=0,020$) and lower level officers ($\bar{X}=3,15$, $p=0,016$). In assessing the effectiveness of health examination there is just one statistically important difference. Heads of HR offices ($\bar{X}=3,75$) see health examination as more important employees' selection tool than HR specialists ($\bar{X}=3,18$, $p=0,011$).

Companies size plays some role in assessment of effectiveness of the use of assessment centers ($H=10,131$, $df=3$, $p=0,017$), group discussions ($H=14,238$, $df=3$, $p=0,003$) and health examinations ($H=24,365$, $df=3$, $p=0,000$). Micro companies see assessment centers ($\bar{X}=2,38$) and group discussions ($\bar{X}=2,64$) in less favorable light to compare with middle-size ($\bar{X}=3,00$, $p=0,026$ and $\bar{X}=3,29$, $p=0,004$) and big ($\bar{X}=2,97$, $p=0,049$ and $\bar{X}=3,25$, $p=0,006$) companies.

Health examination as selection tool is more valued by big companies ($\bar{X}=3,59$) than by micro ($\bar{X}=2,88$, $p=0,024$) and small ($\bar{X}=2,80$, $p=0,000$) companies. Significant difference exists and between small and middle-size ($\bar{X}=3,50$, $p=0,001$) companies as well.

Business sector do not play important role in considerations about effectiveness of different selection tools except for using *health examination* ($H=18,058$, $df=3$, $p=0,000$). *In manufacturing sector this method is seen more important* ($\bar{X}=3,88$) than in trade ($\bar{X}=3,37$, $p=0,042$) service ($\bar{X}=3,18$, $p=0,000$) or mixed business activities ($\bar{X}=3,19$, $p=0,009$) sectors.

Appraisal. There are no clear priorities in evaluating the effectiveness of different employees' appraisal methods between HR specialists and professionals. The difference between "behavior ratings" with the highest score ($\bar{X}=3,43$) and "Graphic rating scale method" with the lowest score ($\bar{X}=3,05$) is too small to judge about substantial differences in understanding the value of different methods. But high score given to "other" appraisal methods ($\bar{X}=3,90$) leads to the idea that companies prefer some unique or customized methods to accommodate their needs over standard set of appraisal methods. Valuation do not show the important differences in the spread of opinions in evaluating particular methods with standard deviations ranging from 0,954 (Graphic rating scale method) to 1,094 (written reports).

Table 7. The evaluation of effectiveness of employees' performance appraisal methods

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Written reports	3.39	1.094
Critical incident method	3.23	1.023
Graphic rating scale method	3.05	.988
Behaviour ratings	3.43	1.015
Paired comparison method	3.30	1.014
360 degrees performance appraisal method	3.22	1.107
Other	3.90	1.316

The youngest specialists (up to 25 years) have more favourable attitude toward the use of Critical incident method ($H=20,669$, $df=4$, $p=0,000$) and Behaviour ratings ($H=20,199$, $df=4$, $p=0,000$) to compare with other age groups. For the first method they give the mean score 3,66, while those of the age 41-50 give the mean score 2,99 ($p=0,001$), of the age 50 plus the score 3,00 ($p=0,004$) and of the age 31-40 the mean score 3,19 ($p=0,016$). For the second method their mean score is 3,75 and it smoothly declines with the increase in respondents age - 3,60 ($p>0,05$) to 3,34 ($p=0,015$) to 3,28 ($p=0,022$) to 3,15 ($p=0,006$).

Gender and respondents' positions in the companies do not show any important effect on evaluations of appraisal methods. But this is not the case with respondents' education. *Those who received education in HRM show much higher trust in application of formal appraisal methods to compare with respondents having other educational background.* The exception is only with evaluation of written reports, where no statistically important differences were detected. All the other methods have received higher mean scores from the part of educated in HRM to compare with other respondents' groups. So Critical incident method ($H=29,164$, $df=7$, $p=0,000$) has received mean score of 3,69 by Educated in HRM, but only 2,75 by educated in psychology ($p=0,009$) and 2,80 educated in engineering ($p=0,000$), graphic rating scale ($H=19,879$, $df=7$, $p=0,006$) - 3,40 by those in HRM, but only 2,53 in psychology ($p=0,012$), behaviour rating ($H=20,182$, $df=7$, $p=0,005$) - 3,79 against 3,07 educated in engineering ($p=0,009$), paired comparison method ($H=14,202$, $df=7$, $p=0,048$) - 3,73 against 3,15 educated in economics and finance ($p=0,018$), 360 degrees method ($H=19,050$, $df=7$, $p=0,008$) - 3,58 against 2,82 educated in engineering ($p=0,007$) and 3,06 in finance ($p=0,042$). All those differences were found statistically significant.

Business sector has not revealed any important differences in evaluation effectiveness of different employees' appraisal methods, but the size of organizations showed some statistically significant differences between those respondents representing the micro companies and those representing larger ones. In general, *respondents from micro companies were more pessimistic about the usefulness of some appraisal methods.* So, critical incident method ($H=14,052$, $df=3$, $p=0,003$) received mean score just 2,76 by those representing micro companies, while it received the mean of 3,53 by representatives of small companies ($p=0,003$), graphic rating scale ($H=15,110$, $df=3$, $p=0,002$) - 2,57 vs. 3,19 by big companies ($p=0,001$), 360 degrees method ($H=13,909$, $df=3$, $p=0,003$) - 2,58 vs. 3,34 by big companies ($p=0,004$) and 3,38 by small ($p=0,005$) companies.

Training and development. All the employees' training methods have received comparatively high scores on their effectiveness. *Both, on-the-job ($\bar{X}=4,52$, $\sigma=0,706$) and off-the-job ($\bar{X}=4,56$, $\sigma=0,662$) training methods were seen as being effective by majority of HRM specialists.* In evaluating specific training methods, learning from case analysis have received the highest score of 4,14, while using audio-visual content was evaluated as the least effective with the mean score equal to 3,55. The analysis of standard deviations did not suggest any important differences in assessment of different training methods ranging from $\sigma=0,898$ for case analysis to $\sigma=1,078$ for internship abroad.

Table 8. The evaluation of effectiveness of training methods

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Off-the-job-training	4,49	0,731
On-the-job-training	4,50	0,715
Internships abroad	4,00	1,076
Studies at universities	3,98	0,972
Conferences	4,05	0,969
Analysis of advanced experience	3,87	1,035
Audiovisual techniques	3,59	1,024
Case analysis	4,17	0,905
Other	3,52	1,595

Age characteristics of respondents revealed that HRM specialists with mature or rising career (31 – 40 years old) are more enthusiastic about different training methods to compare with those who already have their career at the zenith or even passed it over (50 years and older). Differences are not huge, but statistically significant. This is true for evaluating effectiveness of both, on-the-job ($H=11.438$, $df=4$, $p=0,022$) and off-the-job training ($H=11,760$, $df=4$, $p=0,019$) with mean values 4,55 vs. 4,26($p=0,010$) for on-the-job training and 4,60 vs.4,30($p=0,029$) for on-the-job training. The same applies to evaluation of seminars and conferences ($H=10,784$, $df=4$, $p=0,029$) as specific training method (4,15 vs. 3,66, $p=0,025$).

Gender analysis shows that female respondents are more valuing methods based on learning from analysis of experiences of others than their male counterparts. Analysis of advanced experience received mean score of 3,93 by female respondents and 3,45 by males ($U=17,495$, $p=0,001$), while case analysis 4,20 vs. 3,95 for female and male respondents respectively ($U=16,412$, $p=0,021$).

Education had the clear effect only on the assessment of off-the-job training ($H=26,254$, $df=7$, $p=0,000$). Again, as in the case with appraisal methods, those respondents who had their background in HRM have seen this kind of training more valuable ($\bar{X}=4,75$) to compare with those having background in psychology ($\bar{X}=4,10$, $p=0,001$), general business administration ($\bar{X}=4,46$, $p=0,024$) or “other” ($\bar{X}=4,30$, $p=0,022$) educational background.

HR specialists’ position in their companies has the impact only in assessing employees training using analysis of advanced experience ($H=21,575$, $df=5$, $p=0,001$). Here it seems that HR specialists taken the lowest position (HR specialists) disagree ($\bar{X}=3,64$) with those having just one (chief HR specialist; $\bar{X}=4,07$, $p=0,009$) or two levels higher (head of HR section; $\bar{X}=4,08$, $p=0,015$) positions.

Business sector and companies size caused just very slight differences in valuations. So, off-the-job training has been seen more favorable by service companies ($\bar{X}=4,57$) to compare with manufacturing ($\bar{X}=4,30$, $p=0,007$) companies ($H=11,616$, $df=3$, $p=0,009$) and internship abroad has been seen as more valuable training method by mixed businesses companies ($\bar{X}=4,21$) then by manufacturing ($\bar{X}=3,79$, $p=0,016$) ones ($H=10,084$, $df=3$, $p=0,018$).

Size has been affecting only valuation of conferences as employees’ training method ($H=9,575$, $df=3$, $p=0,023$) where the biggest companies had slightly more positive attitude ($\bar{X}=4,18$) to compare with middle-size ($\bar{X}=3,89$, $p=0,040$) companies.

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The survey carried out to get the assessment of current state of HRM in Lithuanian business companies and analysis of data let us outline some major trends and regularities important for understanding of HRM in contemporary business environment.

In recruiting activities, the most traditional way of finding new employees by asking peers to recommend someone for the job (84%) is still the most prevailing course of actions. But it competes with application of newest internet technologies in finding potential candidates, with almost perfect draw (83,9%). Those options do not depend on the organizational characteristics what should mean their universal character, sustainable nature and mainstream usage. Their importance is also emphasized by HRM specialists and professionals who gave the highest values for their effectiveness. It seems that all the other channels of recruitment just play the role of additional, supporting aid to deal with some specific recruitment issues, like "head hunting" to find exceptionally skilled employees. The value of internet technologies probably is going further to increase with younger employees showing more devotion to those technologies than older ones. On the other hand, the traditional approaches to recruitment, like publishing information on printed media probably is going to decrease further with young generation not seeing big value in using this approach. Advertisements were the most commonly recognised recruitment method at the end of last century (Heraty and Morley, 1998), but not now. This research does not examine particular internet related practices applied in recruitment and selection, but the importance of LinkedIn and other social platforms going to increase with new generations joining labour market as it is suggested by Zide and others (2014).

A little bit surprisingly, but it looks that better understanding of the internal mechanism of IT technologies do not create optimism about their usage. It can be concluded from the fact that people with education in engineering see the usage of IT technologies in recruiting employees as less efficient than those who are educated in HRM or psychology.

It appears that manufacturing companies are more conservative in application recruitment practices. Still more than a half of them look for employees by using advertisements in newspapers, while other type companies use this method much less. Again, those who are using this method more often, not surprisingly, are considering it more positively. But it is worthy to notice, that even if manufacturing companies are using this method more often than other kind of companies the measurement of effectiveness by employees working in such companies is still comparatively low and it is even a little bit below the average of the measurement scale. So, it can be supposed that the usage of printed media in recruiting employees is more the matter of traditions and long-term agreements with publishers, than perceived need.

Partnership with universities and other teaching institutions is linked heavily to the size of business organizations. The bigger the company is, the more likely it will participate in career-days of educational institutions, what should mean that bigger companies should be more willing to accept people who are just working on acquiring their initial professional skills. This idea is also supported by evaluation of effectiveness, when specialists working in bigger companies put more value on partnership with teaching and training institutions.

Research also suggests that labour exchange services and "head hunting" are worthier for bigger companies than for smaller ones.

Not surprisingly, job interviews are the most common employees' selection practice, applied in all sizes and all kinds of businesses, in almost every single organization (99,7%). It is not just the most common practice, it is also considered by HRM specialists and professionals as being the most effective way to select the employee.

Bureaucratic approach, like collecting CV's and applications and working hard to look through all of them is also very popular employees' selection practice, but it has clear dependence on the

size of the organization. Bigger the company is, the more likely it is going to be involved in this bureaucratic process.

Health checking can be required by the law and it can be crucial for the safety of the business. So, this practice also is very common between business organizations. It is the most widespread in manufacturing companies and depends on the size of the company. Not surprisingly specialists and professionals working in manufacturing sector have attributed to this method higher effectiveness than their counterparts working in other businesses. For the size, it seems that with the increase of the size, companies tend to apply this method more often. Comparatively low evaluation of this method in comparison with others, means that it is applied by the companies more as safeguard method, then real selection tool. Ambiguous nature of this tool is also seen by the largest dispersion of opinions in evaluating effectiveness of this method.

Alongside with job interviews, tasks on-the-site is seen as very effective way to choose the right candidate for the job. Two third of companies applies this approach.

Interestingly enough, the research shows that females HRM specialists and professionals demonstrate higher trust in many employees' selection tools (candidates testing, using external assessment centres, applying health checking) than their male counterparts. But this conclusion should be taken with large part of precaution, due to the fact that the sample could be biased toward the females making 87,6% of all respondents. So, in this sample, comparatively small number of male respondents had more negative attitude toward some employees' selection tools than majority female respondents. Why this attitude was more negative, probably the answer requires more researches to be done.

Another interesting finding, which probably requires additional checking and research is the fact that HRM specialists and professionals having educational background in psychology gave the lowest scores of effectiveness for two heavily psychologically based selection methods – aptitude tests and group discussions. The situation here is similar to the evaluation of the importance of IT technologies for employees' recruitment by educated in engineering. In both cases, those who understand better the “black-box” inside of the method demonstrate more scepticism toward the method.

One more interesting finding, which again should be taken with precaution, is the negative attitude of top job doing HRM specialists and professionals toward the usage of external employees' assessment centres to compare with lower level managers. Why top managers do not appreciate sharing HRM responsibilities with external partners, this research does not provide the answer and it require additional research. But this conclusion also should be taken cautiously due to the fact that only 15 top managers participated in the research.

On the other hand, external examination centres increase their value in employees' selection process with the growth of the company. Bigger companies value their services more than smaller ones. This conclusion is in line with other sources where it is stated that the use of methods such as personality tests and assessment centres sometimes exceed the resources of the organization (Miles and Sadler-Smith, 2014) and do not appear to be given serious consideration when making the selection decision (Heraty and Morley, 1998).

Employees appraisal practices are very diverse in analyzed companies, with no single method applied by majority of organizations, what could mean that this area of HRM is highly customized to the specific needs of individual companies. The evaluation of effectiveness of commonly discussed employees' appraisal tools has been close to the average of the measurement scale also support the idea, that those traditional tools are not perceived by HRM specialists and professionals as being very useful for business success. On the other hand, higher evaluation of the option “other”, where respondents could consider their own specific, custom-tailored employees evaluation methods also support the idea that businesses are looking for more specific, more individualistic methods to assess their employees.

Achievements reports are used in almost a half of respondents' companies, which makes it the most popular single tool in business companies. It is more popular in big service and trading companies, but much less in manufacturing and smaller size companies. The assessment of behaviour ratings, as the tool to evaluate employees, has clear dependency on the age. With the time people find this method less attractive than in the young age. The research proves that education in HRM has the positive effect on the understanding of the usefulness of formal employees' appraisal methods, while other type of education increases scepticism about the value of those methods. This finding somehow contrasts with previously described conclusions where engineers less trusted in IT technologies for recruiting employees and psychologists – in applying psychology related employees' selection methods to compare with those who were less familiar with the internal mechanism of the method. Probably, not surprisingly but study shows that the smallest companies have the most negative attitude toward the effectiveness of the usage of formal employees' appraisal methods.

Research suggests that very positive attitude toward employees training prevails in absolute majority of business organizations. This is true for both on-the-job and off-the-job trainings. Both methods are very broadly applied by business organizations, but also, they are considered as very important by HRM specialists and professionals. The research suggests that employees experience and their position on career path plays important role in understanding the importance of training. Those young but already experienced or middle age respondents, mainly in their thirties and forties who have already established their career path but still expect to make some steps further see the necessity of training as more important than those which careers have already reached zenith.

The size of the company directly affects the most widespread method of training employees – conducting seminars and conferences to improve employees' skills. Application of this method is increasing with the size of the organization. It should not surprise us, due to the fact that for bigger companies it is easier to assemble more homogeneous auditorium for training sessions, what is usually very important in having seminars or conferences. This finding is in line with the finding by Edralin (2011), who found out that in large Philippines companies the most frequently used training method, regardless of the industry sector and training categories, was the lecture with the use of new technologies such as the CD-ROM, the Internet, and the company intranet/portal. Again, as in the case of appraisal methods, those with educational background in HRM tend to trust off-the-job training more than those having background in other areas.

One interesting research finding, which should be taken with great portion of precaution is that female HRM specialists and professionals are more valuing training methods based on analysis of experience of other businesses, then their male counterparts. As it was mentioned before, the precaution here is necessary due to comparatively small number of male respondents on which conclusion is based. The findings of this research should be interpreted having in mind some important limitations. First of all, this research represents cross-sectional one-time picture of HRM practices in one particular country. This limits the comparative value of the research. To be comparable new cross-countries researches based on the same methodology should be carried out. Second, the usage of HRM practices and their perception is very time sensitive. The development of new technologies, first of all, IT technologies, general changes in companies' environment, makes some practices outdated very fast, whereas new practices appear. Therefore, the comparison of this research findings with the findings of researches done previously has limited value. Longitudinal researches would be very important to understand those changes.

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