
The Human Resources Management System in Slovakia and Poland – Chosen Aspects

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Abstract:

Purpose: The primary objective of this paper is to identify similarities and differences between Slovak and Polish companies for selected elements of HRM.

Design: Literature review and questionnaire research were conducted among 811 Polish and Slovak companies. The possibility of comparing these countries resulted mainly from the fact that both countries underwent transformation at the beginning of the 1990s and were struggling with similar problems resulting from political, economic, social and cultural changes.

Findings: The paper presents the results of research on job descriptions, evaluation of employees, financing employee development and employing talented and intercultural people. The analysis and assessment of data obtained in the course of research has proved the existence of statistically significant differences in selected elements of the system of HRM in Slovak and Polish companies.

Practical Implications: For employees of HR departments, the results of the conducted research may indicate the directions of changes to clarify expectations for employees, ways to use the employee evaluation, financing employee development and employment of talents and people with intercultural skills. For business owners and management staff, the results of conducted research may be helpful in determining the consistency of the general strategy of the company with the adopted HRM strategy in the company and to indicate the directions of future changes in the HRM system in order to achieve compliance of these strategies.

Originality Value: The findings allowed to suggest relevant recommendations for Slovak and Polish companies. A comparison of activities related to the functioning of selected aspects of the HRM system provided an opportunity to exchange good practices and experiences. This paper also indicates the need to constantly monitor the entire HRM process and its individual elements in the company.

Keywords: Human resources management (HRM), human capital, companies, Poland, Slovakia.

JEL codes: M10, M12, M5, P0, L0.

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1. Introduction

Discussion on the HRM system in companies (Zhang and Edgar, 2021), that evolves along with the economic, social (Dorado, Chen, Prado and Simon, 2022), cultural (Aktas, Farndale and Gelfand, 2014) and sustainable (Gholami, Rezaei, Saman, Sharif and Zakuan, 2016) development, is a problem that should constantly remain in the sphere of interest of science and practice (Dessler, 2016).

An effective HRM system (Lertxundi, 2008), through appropriately and precisely selected individual elements (Lawler and Boudreau, 2009), can determine the diversity (Harzing and Pinnington, 2015) and attractiveness of companies (Cooke, 2015), and at the same time determine its success (Rosa-Navarro, Diaz-Fernandez, and Cabrales, 2019), because it is one of the main factors of competitive advantage (Sahu and Sharma, 2014), as well as allows the company to achieve its strategic goals.

In the presented paper, the authors focused on selected elements of HRM system (Hauff, Alewell, and Hansen, 2017) in the company, which, in their opinion may affect the future competitive position of the company. These aspects include mainly, job descriptions (Pató, 2015) and employee specifications (Abd Rahman, Kek Siok, Khairunesa, Ng Kim, and Hairul Rizad Md, 2019), which allow to specify expectations of the company towards the employees, forms of conducting evaluation of employees (Kuzula and Cemal, 2016), as well as ways of using it, financing of employee development (Bagdadli and Gianecchini, 2019), employing talented people (Collings, Mellahi, and Cascio, 2019; De Boeck *et al.*, 2018) and people with intercultural skills (Radivojević, Kahrović, and Krstić, 2019).

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe have been an interesting subject of research, because for many years they have been struggling with the consequences of systemic changes. The literature presents many typologies of transformational changes in this region of Europe (Holmes, 1997; Huntington, 2007; Agh, 1998).

Since the beginning of the 21st century, we can observe an intensification of publications on the emerging varieties / models of capitalism in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. On the one hand, in relation to the above-mentioned countries, standard conceptual approaches (Hall and Soskice, 2001; Amable, 2003) are subject to critical analysis and on the other hand, however, there are developments of standard concepts (Lane and Myant, 2007; Farkas, 2011; Ahlborn, Ahrens, and Schweickert, 2016), as well as non-standard approaches (Bohle and Greskovits, 2012; Myant and Drahokoupil, 2011).

Looking from the current perspective, it can be concluded that the socialist countries entered the road leading to a market economy and they did not have a clear vision of the final shape of capitalism that they intended to build. Despite the undeniable progress in undertaking and implementing structural reforms and building the

institutional infrastructure of the market in these countries, the results achieved so far have turned out to be different from the patterns existing in developed market economies.

Due to the very similarities of the systemic transformations taking place, in a historical perspective, it seems reasonable to compare Poland and Slovakia, which constitute the research subject in the presented paper. However, on the other hand, it is important to point out that since the beginning of the 1990s, the processes of transformation have evolved in different directions and have occurred with different intensity, therefore the capitalist systems developed in these countries differ from each other and affect the functioning of various sectors of the economy, including the operation of the HRM system.

Before economic and political changes in Central and Eastern European countries, only minor characteristics of progressive HRM could be distinguished (Poór, Slavić, Katalin, Berber, Kerekes, and Karoliny, 2020). After the transformation, role of HR also changed (Morley, 2008). However, different countries with different types of capitalism, have different HRM practices. Due to that it is worth to conduct analyses in selected countries that enable detailed comparison.

This paper tries to fill that research gap and focuses on two countries – Poland and Slovakia. We also draw from the previous work that indicates that both countries belong to one of four models of recent and traditional forms of comparative capitalism (Brewster, Morley, and Baciuniene, 2010). Currently, after 30 years of functioning in the market economy system, organizations have developed their own mechanisms of action.

According to Baghirzade (2020), also analogy between a welfare state and a type of political economy should be taken into consideration. Drawing from Poór, Kovacs, Zsuzsa and Machova (2019) we suggest that despite common facts and influences, there are still differences between countries.

The primary objective of this paper is to identify similarities and differences between Slovak and Polish companies for selected elements of HRM system. The comparison also allowed us to suggest relevant recommendations for Slovak and Polish companies and by presenting company level evidence, helped to understand differences in capitalism in Poland and Slovakia in a more finely grained manner, which constitutes added value of the paper.

For the purposes of the paper, a literature review and questionnaire research were conducted in altogether 811 Polish and Slovak companies. Research results allowed for comparison of experiences and practices applied by companies, but at the same time gave a broader, because of an international scope (Thomas and Lazarova, 2014), view on the aspects related to HRM (Phatak, Bhagat, and Kashlak, 2016).

Another important aspect that determined the undertaking of research was the geographical proximity of both countries, as well as the common socio-cultural elements, which are important factors in HRM. Thus, a comparison of activities related to the functioning of selected aspects of the HRM system (Coelho, Cunha, Gomes, and Correia, 2015) would provide an opportunity to exchange good practices and experiences (Wilton, 2016).

Referring to the literature and research, the following research goals were defined for the purposes of this study:

- 1) identifying the points of coherent and different HRM aspects in Slovak and Polish companies;
- 2) developing recommendations for Slovak and Polish companies based on the use of positive experiences;
- 3) developing directions of changes based on negative results in the conditions Slovak and Polish economy in the field of HRM.

2. The HRM System in Slovak and Polish Companies

Economic transformation was a necessary part of democratisation, and at the same time, it greatly influenced the course of democratic consolidation in Slovakia. Political parties entered the elections in Czechoslovakia in 1990, which also included an economic transformation programme in their programme, and in the first democratic elections, pro-Western parties with an economic liberalisation programme clearly prevailed.

However, they focused to a large extent on Slovakia's future position in the federation, which was released until the division of Czechoslovakia into two separate states – the Czech Republic and Slovakia (Kubín, 2002; Beblavý, 2012). In HR, the centrally managed cadre and personnel policy have been restructured to emphasise the importance of employing a quality workforce for the company. The problem in introducing changes in personnel work was managers' lack of preparedness and experience with the work of people in the market economy.

Relatively well-developed staffing practices have been maintained in large companies. After cleansing them of political and ideological objectives, they formed the basis for creating new techniques and a HRM system. The positive experience of HR managers abroad (Vetráková *et al.*, 2021) was also an inspiration for introducing new practices in working with people.

HRM started taking hold in the discourse of management thinking and in emerging practice, which was in stark contrast to mainly administrative, ideological, and social roles of HRM in the socialist times (Brewster, Morley, and Baciuniene, 2010). The driving force behind the strong efforts to get closer to the countries of Western Europe was intention to join the European Union.

Slovakia managed to achieve this goal in 2004. In 2009, the Euro was adopted in Slovakia. According to Lane and Myant (2007), Slovakia was already among the countries closest to continental European capitalism during this period, reflecting the pressures associated with joining the European Union and the need to form institutional arrangements that are complementary to their closest developed trading partners. This important milestone marked a significant shift towards globalisation for personnel work in Slovakia.

According to Stachová *et al.* (2020) the strategic orientation and application of the system approach in HRM is a way of responding to the tendencies that globalization creates in the form of international business cooperation on the one hand and severe hyper-competition on the other.

In the Polish economy since 1989, as in Slovakia, groundbreaking systemic reforms have begun, linked to the policy of eliminating the negative effects of the functioning of the centrally managed economy. The beginning of the implementation of political and economic changes brought about a short-term, but socially painful, transformational recession, but after 1992 the economic situation was much better, with some slowdown in growth in the years 2001-2002.

During the first decade of transformations, unemployment and the growing sphere of poverty became a particularly big problem. Income differentiation of individual population groups was strengthening. In addition, insufficient progress has been made in the development of economic and social infrastructure. However, systemic reforms, especially privatization and deregulation, profoundly changed the structure of the economy and created market institutions that were liquidated during communist rule. The launch of the market mechanism in the Polish economy also influenced changes in the labor market.

Employers began to hire optimal employees from the point of view of the company's interests. At the same time, the creation of a free market economy, corporate restructuring and the collapse of the centrally planned economy system resulted in the adaptation of Western corporate approaches to personnel management. The inflow of foreign capital and the creation of IT systems supporting the management of HR processes also contributed to this.

With Poland's accession to the EU, the Polish labor market has become part of the European labor market with mobility of workers (Pasierbiak, 2012). Since 2004, we can see periods characteristic of the Polish labor market, 2004-2007 - economic growth, increase in employment and decline in unemployment, 2008-2010 - worse economic situation and decline in employment rate, 2010-2015 - problems such as mismatched competences, discrimination against women in the labor market, unemployment among young people and the problem of lifelong learning, 2015-2019 - stabilization of the labor market, low unemployment rate, increase in wages (GUS, 1990-2020).

The political and economic transformations on the Polish labor market also affect aspects related to HRM. The main issues that should be taken into account in contemporary HRM in Polish organizations are: the impact of new technologies on HR support, intergenerational differences, intercultural management, development of employee competences, activation of selected social groups, development of talents, creation of highly specialized jobs (Pocztowski, Rakowska, and Sitko-Lutek, 2021).

Due to social and political changes that have taken place in analysed countries, we could observe changes that took place on the Polish and Slovak labour market alike and in companies' attitudes to HR and their management. Companies began to see employees not only as a resource but also as valuable capital (human capital). Thus, they began to attribute special importance to them, as seen in the systemic approach (McDaniel, 2004) and a strategic approach to HRM (Nastase *et al.*, 2019; Boon *et al.*, 2019).

Due to the specific characteristics of the analysed countries, differences in sizes and number of citizens (labour force) and in the legal system (including the operation of the companies or labour law issues), it is worth pointing to similarities and differences that occur in the achievement of individual, essential elements that form part of HRM.

The relevant literature highlights the importance of HRM in companies' operation. It points out, for example, the importance of implementation of the HRM strategy for the achievement of goals of the organization (Knies and Leisink, 2014). Publications that address this topic also talk about interrelations between HRM practices and company growth and development (Łobos *et al.*, 2020).

A job description and information included therein are key in the process of employing new personnel (Baker, 2016). It is an element that should be effectively used by the managing staff throughout the entire period of personnel's employment. It is because it affects their fulfilment of their professional obligations (Rohr, 2016) and it allows attribution of responsibility for tasks performed in the obligation, which helps prevent overlapping of responsibilities (Gan and Kleiner, 2005).

Therefore, managers should first of all take due efforts to design workplaces appropriately (Pató, 2017). Bearing this in mind, the article presents the following research hypothesis:

HI: *We assume that there are statistically significant differences in more than 50% of types of information included in a job description in companies in Poland and in Slovakia.*

The system of performance appraisal used in companies is crucial in the correct functioning of companies (Perkins, 2018). The literature shows different models

(Kumpikaitė, 2011) and methodological approaches to performance appraisal (based on qualitative and quantitative criteria) and also non-standard methods, such as the expert evaluation method (Gontiuk, 2013) or the application of technology-based indicators (Vac and Talpos, 2019). Also, artificial intelligence is used in evaluation to eliminate possible errors (Shanmugam and Garg, 2015).

Performance appraisal should encourage the building of good relations between employees and their employer, it should be a motivational factor (Stolfova and Fajfrlikova, 2019), it should reinforce employee engagement and it should lead to the strengthening of the position of the employee as a reliable partner for the organization (Daniali *et al.*, 2020). It may also be seen in research conducted among Slovak companies in 2010, 2011 and 2012 (Stacho and Stasiak-Betlejewska, 2014). The following research hypothesis was presented in the article:

H2: *We assume that there is a statistically significant difference in the preferred type of appraisal in companies in Poland and in Slovakia.*

Each company should make an assessment, tailored to their needs, of the benefits that they get thanks to investing in employee development by the use of selected tools and methods. It is also important to recognize financial costs companies bear/will have to bear in relation to the employee development (Pfeifer, 2016; Samoliuk *et al.*, 2021). Due to the costs they incur, for example for employee training, the companies should ensure that there are appropriate clauses in place, so that they are able to benefit from the “investment” made in the development of an employee and so that the benefits of the training transferred onto competition (e.g. when employees leave the company) are minimal (Miceli, 2022).

Among the various tools for the development of employees, companies increasingly rely on on-line courses, which allow greater savings (lower costs of employee training) (Ong and Jambulingam, 2016). Life-long learning must also be looked at. It allows the employee to achieve professional success and to further his career (Leković and Šušnjar-Štangl, 2010), though we need to take into consideration whether it is motivated by employers’ requirements or by employees’ personal needs.

In this context it is important to point to the financial aspects already discussed and legal aspects, such as labour law. For example, Slovakia has recently introduced changes in the educational system based on dual education due to a problem with availability of qualified staff (mainly in the production sector) (Trelová and Olšovský, 2017). These questions contributed to a formulation of the next, third hypothesis:

H3: *We assume that there is a statistically significant difference in the amount of financing of employee development in companies in Poland and in Slovakia.*

At the moment, one of the greatest challenges for organizations is to find suitable employees with required skills, great potential and talent (Swailles, 2020). Therefore, companies have recently begun to attribute greater importance to talent management, that is a process of acquiring, employment, development, retention (Škerháková *et al.*, 2022) and promotion of talented employees, while meeting the organization's requirements at the same time (Kasemsap, 2017).

There are integrated models of talent management (Kumar, 2017), which allow companies to fully use the potential that rests with their employees. It is most of all important to identify and evaluate the potential of a talented employee and to identify characteristics of a talented employee that are crucial for the company (Kabalina and Osipova, 2022; De La Calle-Duran *et al.*, 2021). Dedicated tools and methods such as the Characteristics of Giftedness Scale - CGS (Kursch and Veteška, 2016) are helpful in pinpointing the potential of a talented employee.

However, the first step is to attract him or her and only later to create possibilities of development, to retain and to use potential (Cattermole, 2019). Companies may relay in this regard on adequate practices of HRM (Tej *et al.*, 2021). The research found that there are statistically significant correlations in Slovak companies between selected practices in talent management (which form part of the HRM practice), that is extraordinary performance incentives, education and development and job enrichment, on the one hand and gifted employees' attitudes to staying in a company on the other (Cocuľová, 2020).

In turn, another study carried out among Slovak companies pointed out the impact of HRM processes and procedures on the development and retention of employees in a company (Vetráková *et al.*, 2020) talented employees attributed special importance to the sense of recognition and appreciation. Taking these questions into consideration, another hypothesis was formulated in this article, that is:

H4: *We assume that there are statistically significant differences in more than 50% of key characteristics of a talented employee according to companies in Poland and in Slovakia.*

Globalization processes have contributed to increased mobility and international interrelations, which lead to companies paying greater attention to the intercultural aspect of their functioning, to employees' intercultural skills (Perry and Southwell, 2011) and to the possibility to measure these competences (Matsumoto and Hwang, 2020; Genkova *et al.*, 2021). We must bear in mind that multicultural employees are a diverse group (Fitzsimmons *et al.*, 2017).

An important aspect discussed as part of intercultural skills is their support to the relations between employees and the development of relational leadership, which may lead, *inter alia*, to knowledge acquisition and sharing (an important factor, especially in the case of a learning organization) and to an open innovation

(Engelsberger *et al.*, 2022). Another issue that managers must keep an eye for is employees' intercultural sensitivity (Sizoo, 2006).

In this context of multiculturalism, companies are beginning to see an opportunity to develop cultural intelligence by, for example, peer mentoring (van Bakel *et al.*, 2022) and also by training (which, unfortunately is more time-consuming and costlier than mentoring). It is very important especially where the skill to move about in the cultural diversity is a challenge for many employees (Desai *et al.*, 2018). With this all in mind, the article presents the fifth research hypothesis:

H5: *We assume that there are statistically significant differences in more than 50% of key intercultural skills of an employee according to companies in Poland and in Slovakia.*

Verification of these hypotheses (1-5) will allow us to gain knowledge and thus to partially fill the existing scientific lacuna (identified after an analysis of relevant literature) in terms of companies' attitudes to HRM in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, in particular in Poland and in Slovakia.

3. Research Methods

Primary data has been collected from 430 companies in Poland and 381 companies in Slovakia using online and print questionnaires; the data were obtained in person or online by random selection. The questionnaire consisted of 24 questions related to HRM system in both countries. The respondents were persons responsible for personnel work in analysed companies or HR departments. First partial aim of this study was to identify the points of coherent and different HRM aspects in Slovak and Polish companies.

Second partial aim was to develop recommendation for Slovak and Polish companies based on the use of positive experiences. Third partial aim was to develop directions of changes based on negative results in the conditions of Slovak and Polish economy in the field of HRM. The data were gathered from October 2017 to August 2019 in Slovakia and from October 2019 to April 2020 in Poland with the response rate 9.53% in Slovakia and 7.34% in Poland.

The size distribution of the group of respondents in Poland was as follows – 23.3% hired less than 10 employees, 26.3% hired between 10 and 49 employees, 21.6% hired from 50 to 249 employees and 28.8% hired more than 250 employees. Less equal distribution was observed in Slovakia, where 22.8% employed less than 10 workers, 28.9% employed from 10 to 49 workers, 31.5% employed between 50 and 249 workers and 16.8% employed more than 250 workers. Taking into consideration sector, the sample group was more varied. In Poland 75.8% and in Slovakia 88.2% of analysed companies belonged to the private sector (including non-profit

companies). Respectively, 24.2% of companies in Poland and 11.8% in Slovakia were part of public sector, including state institutions.

In order to verify the hypothesis, Mann-Whitney U test was used. According to Kasuya (2001), this test, among non-parametric statistical tests, is one of the most popular ones. One of its many advantages is the possibility for usage on small samples of subjects and for answering questions related to differences between groups. The testing was conducted at a level of significance equalled 95%. H0 assumes equal distribution and homogeneity of two independent groups. H1 assumes that data distribution is different. In order to conduct the Mann-Whitney U test, each observation from one group was compared with each observation from the other group (Nachar, 2008).

4. Research Results

To assess the statistical significance of the difference between the implementation of job description, the Mann-Whitney U test was used. Table 1 shows the Mann-Whitney U test values comparing the implementation of job description in Poland and Slovakia. The last two columns show the percentage of the implementation of job description and information contained in them in each country.

Table 1. Differences in job description

	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	PL	SK
Job description					
0-50% job positions	78870.500	-1.146	0.252	32.33%	28.61%
51-80% job positions	77106.500	-2.494	0.013*	15.58%	9.71%
81-90% job positions	79166.000	-1.503	0.133	9.77%	13.12%
91-100% job positions	76811.000	-1.778	0.075	42.33%	48.56%
Information in job descriptions					
Purpose	61039.500	-7.601	0.000*	53,26%	78,74%
Duties	75394.000	-3.410	0.001*	91,16%	83,20%
Competence	81666.000	-0.086	0.931	49,30%	49,61%
Responsibility	76892.000	-1.882	0.060	66,05%	72,18%
Conditions	80463.000	-0.505	0.614	47,44%	45,67%
Facilities	67892.000	-5.402	0.000*	36,28%	19,16%
Requirements	49640.000	-11.584	0.000*	18,60%	58,01%
Cooperation	78846.000	-1.158	0.247	32,09%	28,35%
Profile	79474.500	-0.985	0.325	25,81%	22,83%

Note: * Statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Own processing.

Statistically significant difference in information contained in the job description can be observed only in four areas – purpose, duties, facilities and requirements. Thus, we cannot confirm H1, because there are statistically significant differences in less than 50% of the types of information included in the job description of companies in Poland and Slovakia.

It is worth noting that job description is mainly used to inform about duties, responsibilities and purpose in both analysed countries. In Slovakia the information on facilities is least often included in the job description (19.16%), while in Poland on requirements (18.6%). It can be also concluded that 42.33% of companies in Poland and 48.56% in Slovakia implemented job description in more than 90% of job positions.

Table 2 shows the Mann-Whitney U test values comparing the implementation of employee evaluation in Poland and Slovakia. The last two columns show the percentage of the implementation of employee evaluation according to the type, period and purpose of use in analysed countries.

Table 2. Differences in evaluation of human resources

	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	PL	SK
Type of evaluation					
Formal	76241.500	-2.177	0.029*	31.86%	24.93%
Nonformal	70369.500	-4.156	0.000*	30.00%	44.09%
F+N	76043.000	-2.138	0.033*	38.14%	30.97%
Evaluation period					
Annually	79025.500	-1.142	0.253	27.67%	24.15%
Semi-annually	79164.000	-1.330	0.184	16.74%	13.39%
Quarterly	80105.500	-1.030	0.303	11.40%	9.19%
Monthly	70000.000	-5.989	0.000*	6.98%	21.52%
Other Regular	76273.500	-4.750	0.000*	7.67%	0.79%
Irregular	80738.500	-0.444	0.657	29.53%	30.97%
Use of evaluation					
Planning	67750.500	-5.421	0.000*	19.69%	36.98%
Analysis	61673.500	-7.593	0.000*	17.85%	42.56%
Training	80501.000	-0.495	0.620	41.99%	43.72%
Remuneration	66207.500	-5.854	0.000*	78.48%	59.30%
Deployment	74917.500	-2.956	0.003*	25.98%	17.44%
Other	81085.000	-1.068	0.285	1.31%	2.33%

Note: * Statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Own processing.

The calculated values show that implementation of both types of evaluation, formal and nonformal, confirmed a statistically significant difference between companies in Poland and Slovakia (H2 confirmed). Such differences also occurred in two evaluation periods and four purposes of use of employee evaluation. Among those purposes are planning, analysis, remuneration and deployment. Organisation in Poland use both, formal and nonformal evaluation mostly, while in Slovakia nonformal evaluation is adopted most often. Irregular period of evaluation sees to be mostly used by companies in both countries. Furthermore, most companies (78,48% in Poland and 59.3% in Slovakia) implement evaluation in order to remunerate their employees accordingly.

Table 3 shows the Mann-Whitney U test values presenting the differences in finances for development, characteristics of talented employee and importance of intercultural skills in Poland and Slovakia. The last two columns show the percentage of mentioned areas in each country.

Table 3. Differences in finances for development, talented employee and intercultural skills of human resources in organizations

	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	PL	SK
Finance for development					
Rise	81399.500	-0.181	0.856	41.63%	42.26%
No change	80082.000	-0.637	0.524	52.09%	54.33%
Decrease	79566.500	-1.881	0.060	6.28%	3.41%
Amount of financing for employee development					
0.	75952.500	-3.548	0.000*	12.79%	5.51%
1-50€	81027.000	-0.338	0.735	28.84%	29.92%
51-100€	75921.500	-2.274	0.023*	26.28%	33.60%
101-200€	76126.000	-2.780	0.005*	12.09%	19.16%
>200€	75207.000	-3.161	0.002*	20.00%	11.81%
Talented employee - characteristics					
Potential	57335.500	-9.123	0.000*	46.28%	16.27%
Key job	81864.000	-0.020	0.984	26.05%	25.98%
Stable	68256.500	-5.746	0.000*	29.53%	12.86%
Performance	70080.500	-4.133	0.000*	50.93%	36.48%
Creative	59784.500	-9.576	0.000*	32.79%	5.77%
Other	76583.500	-4.375	0.000*	1.63%	8.14%
Intercultural skills					
Foreign language	76954.500	-1.924	0.054*	69.53%	75.59%
Own culture	79584.500	-0.855	0.392	32.33%	35.17%
Work organization	77709.000	-1.459	0.144	46.05%	51.18%
Effective communication	72514.000	-3.368	0.001*	67.91%	56.43%
Style of	67378.500	-5.141	0.000*	31.86%	49.61%

communication					
Cultural differences	76718.500	-1.815	0.070	58.84%	52.49%
Negotiation	78553.000	-1.215	0.224	33.95%	38.06%
Other	81123.000	-1.019	0.308	1.40%	2.36%

Note: * Statistically significant difference at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Own processing.

Taking into consideration amount of financing for employee development, there are more companies in Poland, which spent over 200 Euro for that purpose in 2016, and the difference between countries is statistically significant. Yet, the highest share of respondents from Slovakia (33.6%) spent more on employee development (between 51 and 100 Euro) than the highest share (28.84%) from Poland (1-50 Euro). Thus, we can confirm H3 and state that there is a statistically significant difference in the amount of financing for employee development in companies in Poland and Slovakia.

Calculated values show that there is only one characteristic of talented employee, the importance of which did not confirm a statistically significant difference between companies in analysed countries (performing a key job), thus H4 is confirmed.

However, H5 is rejected, because statistically significant difference occurred in three out of seven competencies a manager working in an intercultural environment should meet. Among those competencies one can find effective communication, communication style and knowledge of at least one foreign language, which is, according to the respondents, the most important intercultural skill. Describing talented employee, respondents from both countries share the opinion, that the most important is his or her performance.

5. Discussion and Recommendations

Findings, presenting company level evidence, create an added value by providing knowledge on differences in capitalism in Poland and Slovakia in a more finely grained manner. Referring to the funding, authors can confirm that there are statistically significant differences in HRM system in both analysed countries (three out of five hypotheses were confirmed).

The analysis and assessment of data obtained in the course of research has proved the existence of statistically significant differences in selected elements of the system of HRM in Slovak and Polish companies. They have been noted in the information contained in the description of the workplace in four out of nine areas, that is purpose, duties, facilities and requirements. The main task attributed to workplace descriptions in Slovak and Polish companies is informing about post-related duties, responsibilities and purpose. Slovak companies found “facilities” to be the least significant, while Polish companies ranked “requirements” the lowest.

The research shows that even though a description of a workplace is considered one of the basic elements of a well-functioning HRM, it is still being undervalued by Slovak and Polish companies alike. We have observed statistically significant differences between companies in Slovakia and Poland also in the case of introduction of formal and non-formal assessment. It has also been noted for four goals of application of performance appraisal, that is planning, analysis, remuneration and deployment.

While Polish companies apply both formal and non-formal assessment, Slovak companies prefer the latter. A statistically significant difference also occurs in three competences that a manager working in a multicultural environment should display. These are effective communication, style of communication and knowledge of at least one foreign language. Another statistically significant difference is observed for the amount of funding allocated to employee development. Employee performance is considered the most appreciated employee attribute in Slovak and Polish companies alike.

The content presented, both theoretical and empirical, shows existing areas to be improved in HRM in companies. It is especially noticeable in organizations that have a system in place for on-going monitoring of their activity, also in the HRM dimension. Unfortunately, this does not apply to all entities analysed.

Therefore, the main recommendation for companies, regardless of their size or type of activity, should be to deploy and update on-going monitoring of their activity in all areas, where special focus should be given to HRM elements. Such an approach gives companies the possibility to run a policy of on-going improvement, also improvement of HRM elements, which, subsequently, fits within the organization's long-term strategic policy. This means that, i.e., HRM should be considered in strategic categories. A strategic approach to managing personnel involves action according to a pre-defined plan which takes into account the company's general strategy. Thanks to this, personnel management contributes to increased profits and a reinforced competitive position.

However, it is important for organizations to work out mechanisms that allow and facilitate a dynamic and constant interaction between a general strategy and a personnel strategy. If done so, HRM functions are exercised in the course of formulating and carrying out of the company's general strategy, which forces a long-term HR perspective, a careful selection of appropriate staff and an emphasis on development, so it may support the implementation of the organization's strategy.

However, as results from the content presented in the paper, managing personnel is seen in many Polish and Slovak companies as operational activity which employs different management techniques aimed at employee acquisition, retention and development. However, they fail to consciously opt for long-term solutions in HRM. When discussing these companies, it is important to point to their creation of

descriptions of workplaces, conducting regular performance appraisal as a basic form of assessment (this applies in particular to Slovak businesses), increasing funding allocated to employee development and working out optimal outsourcing solutions.

6. Conclusions

The research results presented in the paper allowed identification of similarities and differences between Slovak and Polish companies for selected elements of HRM. On the basis of the findings and literature review, authors were able to suggest relevant recommendations for Slovak and Polish companies. In the paper authors also applied the Varieties of Capitalism literature to understand differences in HRM in Poland and Slovakia, which constitutes the added value of the paper.

The authors are aware of the certain limitations of our study. The number of companies that participated in the study was 430 in Poland and 381 in Slovakia, which limits the generalizability of the findings in that country. The sample may be considered as representative in Poland. Drawing from Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for population up to 1 000 000, sample size should be at least 384 (00.05 confidence level).

In 2020 the number of companies with employees in Poland summed up to 897 672 entities (COIG, 2022), in Slovakia summed up to 635 876 entities (Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2022). Moreover, the epidemiological situation hindered the research process in Poland. The motivation to participate in the study has decreased due to many unforeseen problems that companies had to face.

Furthermore, we collected data only from Polish and Slovak companies. Future research may employ analysis conducted in all Visegrad countries, taking also into consideration changes caused by the epidemiological situation. Notwithstanding the limitations, the authors believe that the results highlight the differences and similarities between Polish and Slovak companies. There is also significant potential to adopt the recommendations focused on creation of effective HRM system.

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