

Linking Job Design and Training in the Romanian Organizations

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Abstract

In this paper the author present an image of the human resources practices used in the Romanian companies. In this way, we conducted a study regarding human resources management practices in the Romanian companies, on 150 organizations from different fields. The main objective of the study was to obtain a relevant volume of real and trustworthy information regarding the degree of knowledge, the implementation and the future directions of human resources management development process in Romanian companies.

The author presents a comparative analyze regarding the job design and training activities in the Romanian organizations. He involves in his study different types of organizations such: small and medium enterprises, large companies, public institutions and multinationals.

The value of the information regarding the particularities of human resources management in Romania is extremely important, because we undertook a complex analysis of the main human resources management activities in 150 Romanian companies. Knowing the particularities of the human resource management in the Romanian organizations, specially the particularities of the job design and training, it will be more easier to find out more and better solutions to the problems that we are facing on in different organizations, in the context of the economic crisis and of the reform process of the Romanian public institutions.

Keywords: *human resource management, job design, training programs, small and medium enterprises, public institutions*

JEL Classification: M53

1. Introduction

During the last years we took part at an intensification of the interests in the human resources field. This is a current evolution in Romania. The rising interest in the human resources field could be emphasized both, at the scientific and practical level. The big number of papers, books, courses, workshops, conferences and training programs focused on the human resources management show the attention given to this theme, at the academic and practical level. At the

same time the Romanian companies, from different branches, understood that the human resources are their main strategic resource that they have and the best way to act is to consider the human resources as an investment, not as costs.

The data and the opinions presented in this paper are based on the study results concerning the human resource management practices in the Romanian companies. We conducted the study on 150 companies from different branches and areas, in both private and public sectors. The study based on a questionnaire (40 items) and it was addressed to the human resource specialists. The main purpose of the study was to obtain relevant information about the specificity of the human resource management activities in the Romanian companies (human resource strategies and policies, human resources development, job design and analysis, planning, recruitment and selection, performance appraisal, rewarding management, work relations). The study was addressed to the human resources specialists, 150 specialists were involved in this study, 26.58% were human resource managers and 73.42% were execution job holders.

The sample of the companies involved in the study about the human resource management practices in the Romanian companies is presented in figure 1. The 150 companies are from all four branches of the national economy: agriculture (3.8%), industry (20.25%), construction (6.33%) and services (69.62%).

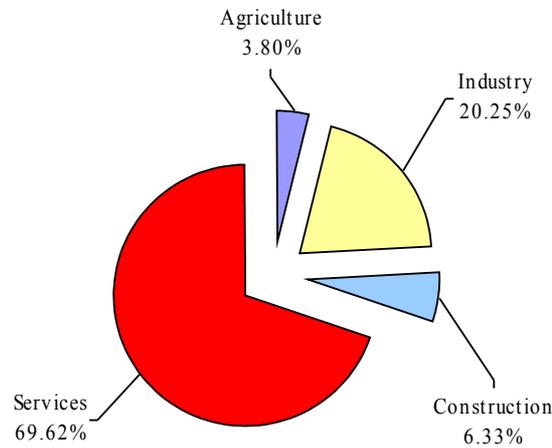


Figure 1 The sample of the companies involved in the study

The sample of the companies involved in the study reflects the contribution of each branch on the Gross Domestic Product. In 2007, the contribution of each branch on the Gross Domestic Product was the following: services – 60.8%, industry – 23.46%, constructions – 9.11%, agriculture – 6.63%. The sample of the companies was structured: small and medium enterprises - 24.05%, public institutions - 21.52%, big companies (Romanian capital) - 16.46% and multinationals - 16.46%.

2. Particularities of the managerial style in the Romanian organizations

The power distance index and the uncertainty avoidance index have a major influence on the Romanian companies' behavior and the way that they are acting.

The management model prevalent in Romania is the one also called "the bucket model". The managers are aware of the problems faced by their organizations but that doesn't mean they solve the difficulties. The result is the same in most of the cases: the problems are gathering, they become acute and induce spontaneously conflicts.

One of the most important features of Romanian management is the planning difficulties and the absence of the long term plans. A large number of companies have the same features in branches. We can only point out the instability and the absence of innovations.

The employees are change resistant and don't approve immediate and quick changes. The absence of a long term perspective slows down the development of flexible organizations that could rapidly react to market changes. The short time perspective doesn't encourage the development of investment strategies. When market conditions are favorable, most organizations are also registering important progresses. The presence of market changes also determines a decrease in the volume of activities, employees' dissatisfaction and internal conflicts.

Frequently, in the Romanian companies innovations are imported and the management doesn't stimulate enough the creativity of the workforce. The fear to assume the risk inhibits the Romanian employees. As a consequence, the personal initiatives are few. The fear of collective disapproval doesn't stimulate creativity. Even in companies where creativity is stimulated some employees consider a waste of time to discuss different ideas that could generate positive effects. Many times, the ideas are being left in the stage of simple projects or discussions.

The managerial style practiced in the Romanian companies is a combination between a familial management style which emphasizes welfare and the personal interests and the autocratic German management style where the honor, the company's interests and the reputation are the main values. Generally, the Romanian employees prefer the type of manager who takes risks and responsibilities and consider that the best leaders are the one who protects them and provide advantages.

A feature of Romanian companies is the large number of procedures that must be followed and which generate delays in reaching the main objectives. The pyramid organizational structure is the most frequent type of structure and emphasizes the high level of the power distance. Flat organizational structures, with a low level of hierarchical levels, are not as frequent as the social status is very important in Romania. The employees consider the structure adjustments as disturbing factors because of the high level of anxiety that characterizes the

Romanian society. The American management model of organizational change can generate high difficulties in organizations and even negative effects in production. In Romania, the ideal leader has a British behavior and leads in a company with a French or German structure and procedures.

3. Job design and analysis

The Romanian organizations do not pay so much attention to elaborate and implement clear procedures for job design and analysis. In the public organizations and multinationals companies, the job descriptions (attaching plugs) are the base of the employee's activity. When we were addressing the question "*Are the job descriptions the base for employee's activity (for job holders activity)*", the answers average was 5.76 for the public institutions and 5.30 for the multinationals. At the entire sample, the average was 4.95 and it shows that respondents agreed with that statement. At the organizational level, in most of the cases, the employees are doing their jobs based on the job descriptions, many times their chiefs are requiring them to do other tasks than the one mentioned in the job description. In the small and medium enterprises it is the most unfavorable situation, the answers average is 4.11 and it means that in this kind of organizations, the job description do not influence (positively or negatively) the way that employees are doing their jobs. We have to mention that we used a scale with 7 levels (steps) to quantify the answers.

In the foreign companies (companies with foreign capital majority), the job descriptions are not very important, because in this kind of organizations the team-working, the project management and the management by objectives are the most important managerial methods. Another reason for this situation is that in the public institutions and in the own state companies, the job descriptions are required by the labor law.

In this study I tried to find out if the employees have an easy access to the job descriptions, also. When I was addressing the question *Do the employees have an easy access to the job descriptions*, the answers average was 4.71. The answers average was 3.47 in the small and medium enterprises and 3.46 in the large companies. In the multinationals companies the answers average was 4.17 and it means that most of the times, the employees have an easy access to their job descriptions. Because of the law regulations, almost any time, in the public institutions the employees have an easy access to their job description. The human resource manager (53%) and the hierarchical manager (44%) have the duty to create the job descriptions (figure 2).

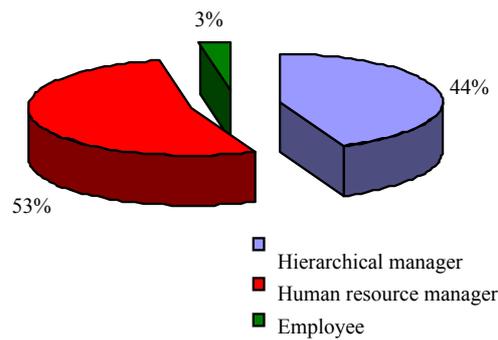


Figure 2 The main responsible for creating job descriptions

In the public institutions, the hierarchical manager has the duty to elaborate the job descriptions (66.7%). In the small and medium enterprises (52.6%) and in the multinationals (57.5%), the human resource managers have the duty to elaborate job descriptions.

In the Romanian companies, the most used job design methods are: job enrichment (31%) and job enlargement (22.48%) especially in the large companies (47%). This situation is presented in table 1.

The main job design methods, used in the Romanian companies

Table 1

| Methods | SMEs | Public institutions | Large companies | Multinationals |
|---------------------------|------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Job rotation | 10% | 21% | 35% | 17% |
| Flexible working programs | 7% | 29% | 35% | 24% |
| Job enlargement | 20% | 14% | 41% | 19% |
| Job enrichment | 13% | 25% | 47% | 26% |
| Work at home | 0% | 7% | 0% | 4% |
| Autonomous working teams | 7% | 11% | 6% | 11% |

In the small and medium enterprises, the flexible working programs are used very poorly. In all types of organizations, the most used job design method is job enlargement (table 1).

Only 3.1% of the companies are using the work at home as a job design method, especially in the public institutions. The main causes for this situation are: the poor technical endowment of the population with computers and communications equipments and low rate of the wireless connections, than in other European countries.

4. Employees training

In the Romanian organizations, the training programs (29.76%) and the promotion (22.02%) are the most used methods to develop their own employees (figure 3). In the small and medium enterprises, the human resources development process is based mainly on the collective training programs, like team work (28.57%). In the large companies, the training programs and the promotion are main methods used to develop their employees (17.59%), while multinationals are focusing on the training programs (32.88%). In the public institutions, the promotion is the main method to develop their employees, but in these organizations the training programs become more and more important (25.81%).

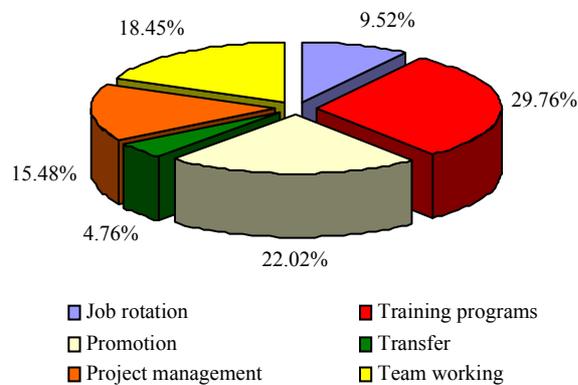


Figure 3 The main methods for the employees development in the Romanian organizations

In the Romanian companies, teamwork is used for developing new products and to improve the work relations, while the project management is considered one of the most important methods to make the employees to take more responsibilities and to do a better work.

On job training (OJT) is often the main training process in the Romanian organisations. 58.11% of the companies use this method to train their employees (figure 4), small and medium enterprises – 56.67%, public institutions – 66.67%, large companies – 57.69% and multinationals – 56.06%.

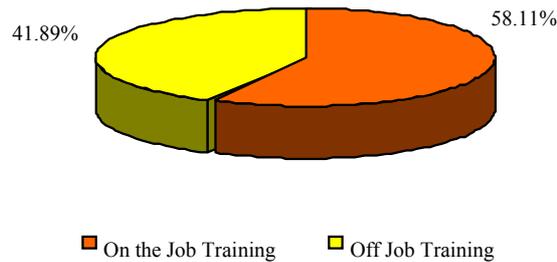


Figure 4 The main training methods use in the Romanian companies

On the job training, organized by the companies as internal programs, focused on the job tasks, are used in the small and medium enterprises (43.33%), public institutions (38.46%), large companies (37.04%) and multinationals (30.30%), due to their low costs. 29.63% of the large companies and 25.76% of the multinationals are using the specialized training programs delivered by the professional training companies. The public institutions are choosing to use the training program, focused on the job tasks, at the work place level, delivered by the specialized training programs (30.77%).

41.89% of the Romanian organizations are using off the job training programs (figure 3); the small and medium enterprises (43.94%) and the multinationals (43.33%) are using this training methods more frequently than the small and medium enterprises and the public institutions. 21.21% of the Romanian companies are using off the job training programs, delivered by training companies.

The Romanian companies pay much attention to the training programs to train their employees and we can sustain this. First, we can talk about the educational level of the young graduates, who have a strong theoretical education, but the practical skills are very low. Therefore, the companies must focus their training programs on the practical skills and abilities of the young graduates. Second, the main purpose of the training programs is to improve the work results of the employees. Third, due to the collective culture, the employees are expecting training programs and protection from company (their employer). Also, a small number of the Romanian employees are making individual efforts to improve their educational level, their skills and abilities. This explains the risk of not being successful for many individual training programs.

The main purpose of the training programs focused on communication is to develop the initiative of the employees and their assertiveness behavior. Many of these training programs will be appreciated by the employees as very important, from the theoretical view, but not from the practical view, also. The employees couldn't implement the communication skills to improve de relations between them and their managers and their subordinates due to the high power distance. In many cases, the training programs must focus on the employees personal life and

do not threaten the *status quo* of the employees, because the Romanian employees do not have the feeling of controlling their jobs.

In the Romanian organizations, the direct observation (38.73%) is the main instrument to identify the training needs of the employees (figure 5). This trend is available for all the types of the studied companies (table 2). Also, the hierarchical manager (25.98%) has an important role in the selection process of the employees that will be involved in the training programs (figure 5), because he is coordinating the activities of his subordinates. It is important to mention that the opinions of the hierarchical manager are subjective, in many situations, and it depends on the relations with his subordinates.

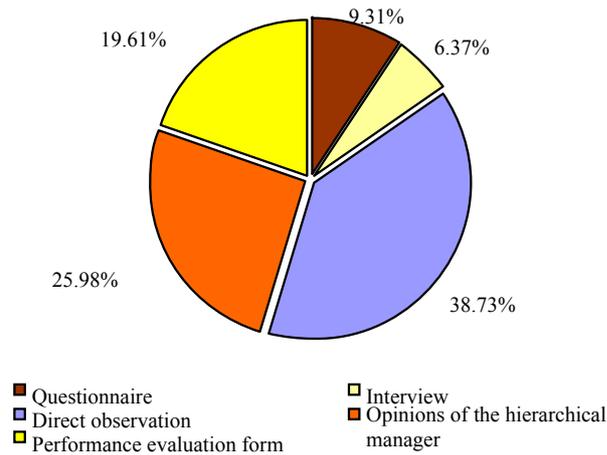


Figure 5 The main instruments used to identify the training needs, in the Romanian companies

The results of the performance evaluation process offer, for the managers, important information about the training needs of the employees, especially in the public institutions (table 2).

In the Romanian organizations, the questionnaire and the interview are used rarely to identify the training needs of the employees (table 2) and we can sustain this. First, these two instruments could have the stopping agent effect on the employees. In many cases, the employees are afraid to express their opinions, due to the high power distance and they prefer to speak about things that do not reflect the reality that exists in their company.

The main instruments used to identify the training needs, in the Romanian companies

Table 2

| Instruments | SMEs | Public institutions | Large companies | Multinationals |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Questionnaire | 4.65% | 6.67% | 11.43% | 12.35% |
| Interview | 11.63% | 2.22% | 2.86% | 7.41% |
| Direct observation | 44.19% | 37.78% | 37.14% | 37.04% |
| Opinions of the hierarchical manager | 30.23% | 26.67% | 28.57% | 22.22% |
| Performance evaluation form | 9.30% | 26.67% | 20.00% | 20.99% |

Most of the multinationals evaluate the efficiency and the effectiveness of the training programs. When we were addressing the question *Do you evaluate the efficiency and the effectiveness of the training programs*, the answers of the average was 5.6 (we used a scale with 7 steps (levels) to quantify the answers. In the small and medium enterprises the evaluation process for the training programs has a medium importance, the answers average was 4.74. Overall, the evaluation process of the training programs is an important activity, the answers average was 5.15.

Conclusions

The low importance of the job descriptions, as basics for the employees to do their work, reflects the high level of anxiety in the Romanian society and it approves the managerial bucket model that is applied in many companies. Not knowing the main task, competences and responsibilities, the employees are recording low levels of efficiency and effectiveness, especially in the small and medium enterprises. In a culture with a high index of uncertainty avoidance, like Romania, the job descriptions contribute to the reduction of the uncertainty. Whereas the work at home is mentioned (provided) in the labor legislation, this kind of work is used very little in the Romanian companies.

The Romanian organizations award a high importance to the training activity. On the job training dominates off the job training programs. The direct observation and the opinions of the hierarchical manager are the most important instruments to identify the training needs of the employees. The multinationals are concerned with the evaluation of the efficiency and the effectiveness of the training programs.

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