

Peculiarities of Human Resources Management in a Service Enterprise

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Theoretical summaries as well as practical evidence validate an opinion that an effective human resources management (HRM) has a positive influence on results of an enterprise activity and plays a crucial role in a competitive advantage development process. This is especially vital for the activity of service sector enterprises because in this case, activities of employees in the service provision process often become a measure for an evaluation of service quality or even the whole enterprise activity perceived by customers. Based on this reasoning, the purpose of this article is to make a theoretical-level examination and summarize the peculiarities of HRM in service sector enterprises.

Revealing the diversity of scientific approaches representing the field of HRM, it is underlined that, in the context of marketing studies, this is a question that is not less important and not less needed for the examination than it is in the view of the general theory of HRM. Moreover, a review of former theoretical studies shows that marketing theorists view the HRM in a slightly different aspect – they usually emphasize an impact of the human factor on the intangible enterprise and service value perceived by a customer. Therefore, it is concluded that it is important in a service enterprise not just to create strategically and tactical objectives related to the HRM, but also it is inevitable to define the content of the HRM function, i.e., to identify its constituents.

Though all scientists of the field of HRM emphasize the importance of contact employees for the results of the service enterprise activity, it must be noted that actually there are no theoretical studies providing a construct for the evaluation of “quality” of human resources required for the provision of particular services, and what work environment has to be created, taking into account specifics of services provided. Due to these problematic aspects of HRM, most attention in this article is paid to the analysis of constituents of the HRM function, namely, competence and its development, collaboration encouragement and empowerment of employees. Emphasizing the necessity of an integrated approach to these constituents, a theoretical model for the examination of an enterprise’s HRM function is provided.

Keywords: *Human resources management (HRM), service marketing, employees’ competence, collaboration, empowerment.*

Introduction

The present world economy is in the process of a transformation from an industrial economy to a more ser-

vice-based economy. One of main factors of an enterprise’s success and survival in such a market is knowledge and skills of people working in the service sector and their work environment. Growing value of intangible assets such as human resources causes a question that is often raised by enterprise leaders: how have these resources to be managed and their management evaluated?

Scientists analyzing HRM consider the results of the evolution of research in this field in different ways. Some of them state that HRM reveals the necessity of a new approach to the employees, their needs, capabilities, competencies and work environment (Looy, Dierdonck, Gemmel, 2003; Sherman Jr., Bohlander, Chruden, 1997). Others refer to an attitude that the paradigm of HRM is not new, it has been only corrected by changing primary aspects of a traditional personnel management (Neela, 2000; Legge, Keenoy, Fowler, 1998). The third group thinks that HRM is a contrast for the concept of personnel management and it is directed to meet needs of human resources (Torrington, Hall, 1991).

The analysis of the studies of scientists shows that the problems of HRM are examined not just by *representatives of the field of personnel management*, but, according to L.A. Battencourt, K. Gwinner (1996), M.D. Hartline, O.C. Ferrell (1996), *marketing theorists* pay growing attention to the personal interaction between the a customer and a provider. C. Grönroos (2000) and other scientists provide that *execution of a marketing-oriented HRM is not an easy task for a service enterprise management*. V.A. Zeithaml, M.J. Bitner (2002), B.V. Looy, R. Dierdonck, P. Gemmel (2003), R.W. Lucas (2004) state that, in the context of HRM, priority has to be given for the *identification and management of factors of employees job satisfaction* and not for the material motivation of employees. According to J. Chen, Z. Zhu, H.Y. Xie (2004), studies of HRM issues in marketing view would provide opportunities for a service enterprise management to suggest particular measures and ways for the correction of HRM.

Scientific problem. Representatives of service marketing and personnel management sciences emphasize the relevance of HRM problematic topics and state that employees are the most valuable asset of a service enterprise. Though present exploration level of this question shows that quite often an only one direction of HRM function examination is selected. One group of scientists stresses the priority of employees’ competence and its development, others, considering employees as internal customers of an enterprise’s services, analyze an encouragement of employees’ collaboration. The third group

examines questions of the employees' empowerment and its level and type selection. These single-sided views of scientists reveal limitations and enable to state the importance and timelessness of an integrated approach to the HRM function of an enterprise.

Purpose of the research – after revealing peculiarities of HRM in a service enterprise, to develop a model for the examination of HRM function in a service enterprise.

Object of the research – HRM function of a service enterprise and its constituents.

Methods of the research – systematic and comparative analysis of scientific literature and summarizing.

Concept of HRM in a service enterprise: the HRM function and its constituents

Analyzing peculiarities of service enterprise activities scientists don't contravene the suggestion *that employees create a common view of consumers to services of an enterprise and they are a constituent part of services provided by an enterprise* (Zeithaml, Bitner, 2003; Lovelock, 2001; Grönroos, 2000; Gremler, Gwinner, 2000).

On the other hand, a *service enterprise* in the process of personnel work environment creation, formulation of tasks, corresponding individual characteristics of a person, his or her motives, needs, *provides services for its employees and, at the same time, plays an important social role* (Normann, 2002).

In the intellectual capital value analysis, provided by J. Chen, Z. Zhu, H.Y. Xie (2004), states that *the intellectual capital is used for the creation or improvement of the enterprise value. Human capital is considered as the basis of intellectual capital*, the primary element that enables execution of intellectual capital functions. C. Grönroos (2001) determines intellectual capital as a total value of an enterprise, minus its balance value.

For a successful performance of an enterprise, not only an intangible capital is required, but also a capability for its management and evaluation, and only the methods used by an enterprise for the management of this capital can open or close the way to its profitability and growth potential (Chen, Zhu, Xie, 2004; Normann, 2002). As C. Cabral-Cardoso (2002), L. Bagdonienė, R. Hopenienė (2004) state, decisions of HRM of service enterprise can become a competitive advantage or a disadvantage of an enterprise.

Due to the features characteristic to services, the general scheme of a service provision process can be standardized only in part, foreseeing the main aspects of service provision. Simultaneity of services leads to an inherent link between employees' behaviour, their motivation, competence, satisfaction and commitment and value perceived by customers as well as conformity to the needs depending on these aspects. HRM function plays a crucial role in the management of service provision operations and service quality creation (Gilore, Carson, 1996; Looy, Dierdonck, Gemmel, 2003; Zethaml, Bitner, 2003).

Analyzing the content of the HRM function in the scientific literature, it is *difficult to observe some clear tendencies of distinguishing its constituents*, but, summa-

rizing most studies, three basic constituents can be distinguished: employees' competence, encouragement of their collaboration and empowerment of employees. Employees' competence is the most often mentioned of HRM aspects (Looy, Dierdonck, Gemmel, 2003). Hereafter in this article, the results of the theoretical analysis of each HRM function constituent are provided.

Employees' competence and its development

Rapid modernization of the service sector and creation of a professional, adequate for the time, environment of service provision show that employees of service enterprises, seeking to adapt to new requirements, have to make continuous improvements of their skills and competences (Gilmore, 2003). On the other hand, the fact, that competence now is more important than ever before (Thomas, 1990) and not hierarchical, flexible and communication-based management is used more widely, determines the growth of tolerance for the employee's individuality (Cabral-Cardoso, 2002).

Scientist B. Magnin (1993), cited in the works by L. Bagdonienė, R. Hopenienė (2004), divides competence into many elements and for the technical competence attributes only narrow and specific technical knowledge related to job specifics, but, for example, she distinguishes managerial, organizational or strategic capabilities. Though, according to other foreign authors, the technical aspect of competence is often oriented to a wide array of knowledge and capabilities that is required for task or work completion. Knowledge is related to information about particular areas held by a person (Looy, Dierdonck, Gemmel, 2003) and it is constituted by technical and academic knowledge. It is received from training and teaching institutions and is theoretical (Chen, Zhu, Xie, 2004; Normann, 2002), therefore it is especially important for an employee starting his or her professional carrier (Bagdonienė, Hopenienė, 2004; Magnin, 1993). Still, capabilities are practical skills for a completion of a particular physical or mental task (Looy, Dierdonck, Gemmel, 2003; Chen, Zhu, Xie, 2004). Definition and measurement of capabilities is very difficult, though they are very important for employees of a service enterprise (Chen, Zhu, Xie, 2004).

Another aspect of competence, though it is partitioned into many various elements by most scientists, includes characteristics of a human personality that are related to the self-perception of a person, his or her norms of behaviour and communication abilities. R. Normann (2002) calls these interactive capabilities of employees. In conditions of open competition communication competence is becoming the most important and primary one (Bagdonienė, Hopenienė, 2004; Magnin, 1993) when seeking to gain a competitive advantage through consumption of human resources (Cabral-Cardoso, 2002).

B.V. Looy, R. Dierdonck, P. Gemmel (2003) base separation of elements of employee behaviour and personal characteristics on the fact that any behaviour can be observed even in a short interaction with a person, and personal features are laid deep in a personality. They attribute such features of behaviour as politeness, friendliness, attention and others to the element of behaviour in

the context of a constituent of competence. According to them, personal characteristics are a complex of motivation, features and the concept of personality.

After the analysis of segmentations and characterizations of the competence, as the HRM function constituent, we suggest that it is purposeful to consider competence as a mix of technical and communicational abilities competences, which structure is depicted in the Figure 1.

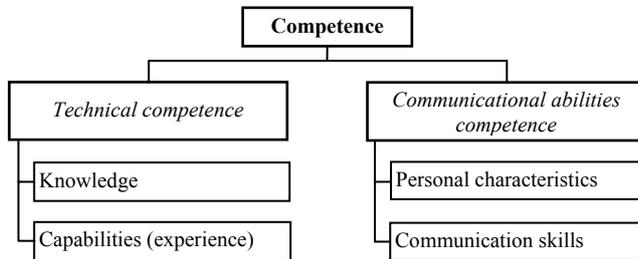


Figure 1. Elements of employees' competence

All elements of competence are interrelated and have a mutual influence. Personal characteristics can influence development of technical competence, depending on personal orientation; selection of new norms of behaviour can cause a modification of a self-concept, etc. The importance of each element depends on situations of an inevitable interaction between a customer and a service provider (Looy, Dierdonck, Gemmel, 2003; Bagdonienė, Hopenienė, 2004). Ch. Lovelock (2001) relates creation of possible situation with two types of service enterprises, namely, *high-contact* and *low-contact* types of service enterprises. Such situations and their opportunities depend on the service conception of an enterprise. B.V. Looy, R. Dierdonck, P. Gemmel (2003) provide three situations of service provision:

- *Maintenance-interactive* service provision is characterized by a quite low level of interaction and task complication (bank employees, hotel administrators).
- *Task-interactive* services are oriented to technical tasks, when a customer has a defined and formulated question, but he or she lacks knowledge to find an answer (consulting enterprises, etc.).
- *Personal-interactive* service providers are involved into a much deeper process of an interaction with a customer. In this interaction they have to find, define and meet needs of customers (employment agencies, medical services).

As it has been noted, all elements of competence are interrelated and have a mutual influence. It cannot be stated that a particular element of competence is absolutely unimportant for a particular type of enterprise. Still, their relational importance for every type of service enterprises is different (Gilmore, Carson, 1996). In case of *maintenance-interactive* services, communication capabilities of an employee have a dominating role. Technical knowledge and abilities are required, but they are less important. In the case of *task-interactive* services, technical competence has the most significant influence on employee selection. Higher requirements in the field of personal characteristics are raised for *personal-*

interactive service provision.

Therefore, competence required for a particular position directly depends on the type of services provided by an enterprise. After completion of an analysis of theoretical studies, we cannot provide a systematized segmentation of elements of competence; it is formed only when a service provision system is known, as well as its specifics and related characteristics, required for employees that can guarantee success of service provision in meeting customer needs.

Employees' collaboration and its encouragement

When analyzing the importance of *collaboration* and its essence in the HRM context of a service enterprise, it can be considered that collaboration questions are mostly studied by internal marketing specialists and marketing scientists, examining the culture aspect of a service enterprise. On the other hand, it must be noted that actually there are no comprehensive works of service marketing theorists analyzing what level of collaboration and in what types of enterprises is important and appropriate to develop. Most studies of internal marketing and enterprise culture are based on abstract considerations about what the collaboration is, in connection with employees' job satisfaction and work quality.

On one hand, *collaboration among employees of a service enterprise is a source of information about service*. As a specialist of internal marketing, Lithuanian scientist V. Kindurys (1998), states, "...services at first are conditionally sold inside an enterprise for its own employees and only after that they are sold for customers" [16, p. 275]. The same idea is expressed by S.K. Foreman, A.H. Money (1995) and C. Grönroos (2000) who believe that thus employees of a service enterprise are completely involved into execution of delegated marketing tasks. R. Mohammed, A.K. Pervaiz (2000) state that employees constitute the main market for an enterprise's services, where job is the product, and customers of this product are employees.

On the other hand, as B.V. Looy, R. Dierdonck, P. Gemmel (2003) note, *the process of solving unexpected, new or specific problems is highly dependent on the level of an interaction or collaboration in the enterprise*. Authors call this interaction a "social dynamics". According to them, if the process of particular service provision can be planned in advance and if the possibility of unexpected cases is low, this dynamics has no sense. Collaboration in such a service enterprise provides only a social, motivational and relaxation function; it has no direct influence on job results. In all other cases social dynamics is important and provides a function of knowledge and experience sharing in an enterprise.

B.V. Looy, R. Dierdonck, P. Gemmel (2003) state that collaboration gives employees an opportunity to find most suitable solutions in new or unexpected situations and to receive and transfer knowledge and experience. In other words, collaboration provides *learning and self-improvement opportunities*. According to C. Grönroos (2001), culture of a service enterprise means sharing of common norms of behaviour and values among employ-

ees of an enterprise; it can also be examined as an *internal climate of an enterprise*.

After the analysis of theoretical views regarding the collaboration issue presented by scientists, it is necessary to define the main elements of the collaboration constituent, expression of which depends on the specifics of a service provision and the type of services:

- Internal climate of an enterprise.
- Values being created and common norms.
- Training of beginners.
- Discussions among colleagues.
- Knowledge and experience sharing.
- Solving of unexpected situations and problems.
- Information transmission.
- Compliance to rules and regulations.

It must be noted that provision of different types of services is characterized by a various level of uncertainty, possibility of unexpected situations. In the case of *maintenance-interactive* services the level of unexpectedness is low; so employees can trust determined systems of service provision, procedures and descriptions. In case of *task-interactive* – the unexpectedness extends. For *personal-interactive* service provision a high uncertainty is important, and this must be considered.

Presented considerations enable to state that social dynamics is essential for the two latest types of enterprises. Its neglect in the process of service provision, as C. Grönroos (2000) states, can cause such an effect when the result of service provision does not meet requirements and expectations of customers. This is obvious when the process of new employee training is discussed, not only when extension of knowledge of employees is discussed or shared or new experiences are interpreted.

Empowerment of employees

Analyzing changes in business environment, especially in the service sector, that requires a high level of personal interaction between an employee and a customer (Gremler, Gwinner, 2000; Rust, Zahorik, Keiningham, 1996), particular change tendencies can be identified in the field of HRM. According to L. Bagdonienė, R. Hopenienė (2004), a humanistic approach observed in management theories encourages *delegation of a part of formal authority to employees*. R. Mohammed, A.K. Pervaiz (1998) defines an empowerment of employees as latitude of actions in particular situations provided for employees.

Specific nature of services, *heterogeneity* of services and *simultaneity* of their provision and consumption, are some of the most important reasons of the fact, according to R.T. Rust, A.J. Zahorik, T.L. Keiningham (1996), that personal interaction in the time of service provision is the primary determinant of customer satisfaction.

As L. Bagdonienė, R. Hopenienė (2004) state, the employees' empowerment concept motivates higher employees creativity, productivity, responsibility, increases their job satisfaction and the sense of independence. On the other hand, R. Normann (2002) maintains that delegation of authority for employees in service enterprises has to be based on competence, required measures and com-

prehension. Therefore, most often an empowerment is based on the belief of managers that employees can complete delegated tasks appropriately (Gilmore, 2003; Gilmore, Carson, 1996). R.T. Rust, A.J. Zahorik, T.L. Keiningham (1996) state that the fact that *employees feel less restricted is not the purpose of the employees' empowerment, this is its effect*.

R. Mohammed, A.K. Pervaiz (1998) suppose that an empowerment cannot be suitable in all cases and for all employees and it can have positive as well as negative effects on employees and the enterprise. According to Ch. Lovelock (2001), *employees' empowerment alternative* is more reasonable when we're talking about motivated employees and satisfied customers, and *production-line alternative* – when relatively standardized service provision system is created. Therefore, in the implementation of the concept of employees' empowerment, motivation and encouragement program is needed and also decentralization of the organizational structure of the enterprise is effective. Nevertheless, C. Grönroos (1990) acknowledges that "if strategic solutions related to general strategies, business mission and service conception have no centralized definition, chaos is a possible consequence" [12, p. 10].

An empowerment strategy is most suitable in those service enterprises that meet the following criteria (D. Bowen and E. Lawler, presented by Ch. Lovelock, 2001; Mohammed, Pervaiz, 1998): 1) *business strategy* of the enterprise is based on differentiation; 2) *attitude to customers* is based on the creation of long-time relationships with them; 3) the enterprise uses *technologies* that are complex and irregular; 4) *business environment* is unpredictable and unexpected changes are possible; 5) *enterprise managers* don't prohibit self-dependent and voluntary work of employees who seek for benefits for the enterprise as well as for customers; 6) *needs of employees* are related to an attempting of self-improvement and extension of abilities in the work environment; they are interested in the experience of other employees and have good skills of interpersonal communication and group communication.

Different authors suggest different variants of empowerment to secure an effective execution of service provision. R. Mohammed, A.K. Pervaiz (1998) present three types of employee *discretion of actions* provided by S.V. Kelley (1993):

- *Routine discretion* is applied when employees select their actions in service provision from some provided possible activities.
- *Creative discretion* is applied when employees in service provision have to select alternative methods by their choice. In this case, actions are not anticipated, but they are assessed by leaders positively.
- *Deviant discretion* is assessed by leaders negatively because this denotes actions that do not comply with formal employee's activity and are outside his or her competence.

Ch. Lovelock (2001), B.V. Looy, R. Dierdonck, P. Gemmel (2003), R. Mohammed, A.K. Pervaiz (1998) base their approaches on the model developed by D. Bo-

wen and E. Lawler, the reference point of which is an attitude that any system of service provision can be successful and provision methods are described by continuum: on one hand, there is an alternative of “production-line”, and on the other – an alternative of “empowerment”:

- The *production-line* alternative, where employees are not empowered at all, is characterized by task simplification, clear job division and low level of latitude of decision-making given for employees.
- In case of the *employees’ empowerment* alternative, employees have a high level of latitude of actions and autonomy. It is based on the assumption that most employees can make proper decisions and to present important ideas related to business management.

Alternatives of production-line and empowerment are opposite. Ch. Lovelock (2001), R. Mohammed, A.K. Pervaiz (1998) determine *three levels of involvement of human resources into decision-making*, which are situated between the discussed alternatives (Figure 2).

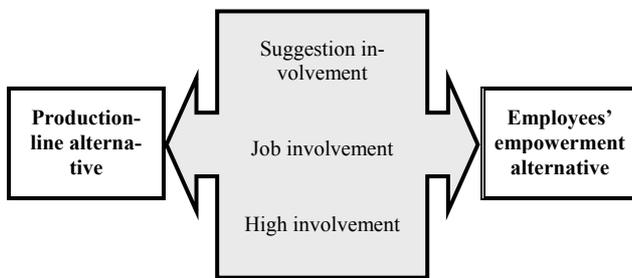


Figure 2. Levels of employees’ empowerment

While making a more detailed examination of employees’ empowerment alternatives presented in Figure 2 it must be noted that:

- In case of the *suggestion involvement* alternative employees are enabled to provide recommendations for service provision but they have no autonomy in daily activities.
- *Job involvement* enables employees to change job procedures in a way that allows them to use more skills that they have. This concept is applied for a group of employees in case of complex services where one employee cannot cover all job aspects.
- The concept of *high involvement* into the organization of activity of a service enterprise gives an opportunity to feel involved into the process of the service provision improvement even for employees of the lowest hierarchical level. In this case, employees share information with each other, skills are developed in teamwork, opportunities of decision making and service provision operation improvement are analyzed.

An analysis of service marketing scientific literature presented by R. Mohammed, A.K. Pervaiz (1998) lets affirm that if decisions are related with a selection of an empowerment strategy to meet specifics of services provided by the enterprise are to be made, dimensions of

complexity of customer needs and contact employee activities (presented in Table) have to be considered.

Table

Dimensions of complexity of customer needs and contact employees activities

Complexity	Dimensions
Complexity of needs of customers	Complexity of the result of services
	Speed of service provision
	Importance of service quality
	Instability of customer needs
	Service customization
Complexity of contact employee activities	Complexity of relations of a customer and the enterprise
	Opportunities for integration of additional services
	Job variability
	Job complexity
	Creativity
	Contact time
	Value created in a contact
	Importance of service provision updating
	Regularity/irregularity of technologies
Process/result orientation	

Table shows that the complexity of customer needs includes the structure of services and relationships with customers and volatility of needs. Complexity of activities includes, among others, the type of required technology and, in part, the result of services provided. Both of abovementioned complexities are influenced by a general business strategy pursued by a service enterprise.

The main reason for the interdependence of contact employees’ empowerment and activity and customer need complexity is the fact that *a level and type of an interaction between a customer and a contact employee can have a major impact on a composition of job that has to be made by a contact employee in order to satisfy customer needs.*

Analysis of employees’ empowerment levels suggested by S.V. Kelley (1993) and D. Bowen and E. Lawler (1992) shows that these categorizations are not equal and they have to be examined individually considering their relation. It is obvious that, for example, the alternative of high involvement in cases of regular and creative discretion will differ and will be implemented differently.

A theoretical model for the examination of the HRM function in a service enterprise

According to C. Grönroos (2001), since the expansion of interest in service marketing research, theorists as well as practitioners agree that a service enterprise cannot function successfully without relevant qualification, abilities and personal characteristics employees. After consideration of these aspects by the leaders of a service enterprise, most suitable ways for the management of these resources and evaluation of this management should be found.

On the other hand, one problem exists here: in fact,

an integrated approach to HRM is not presented in the marketing literature. Analysis of studies considering HRM in service enterprises prepared by marketing scientists shows that they analyze in abstract the function of HRM, and there are no detailed descriptions or individual analyses of the most important constituents. According to M.D. Hartline, O.C. Ferrell (1996), studies of scientific research in the field of HRM most often are oriented to an analysis of an interaction in one of three perspectives, namely, manager-employee, employee-employee and

employee-customer.

In this study, dedicated for the exploration of peculiarities of HRM in a service enterprise, a theoretical model of the HRM function examination in a service enterprise is presented (Figure 3). The creation of this model is based on the study of considerations and analyses presented by scientists and grounded on perception about the relevance of a summarizing approach to HRM function and its structure in the context of marketing.

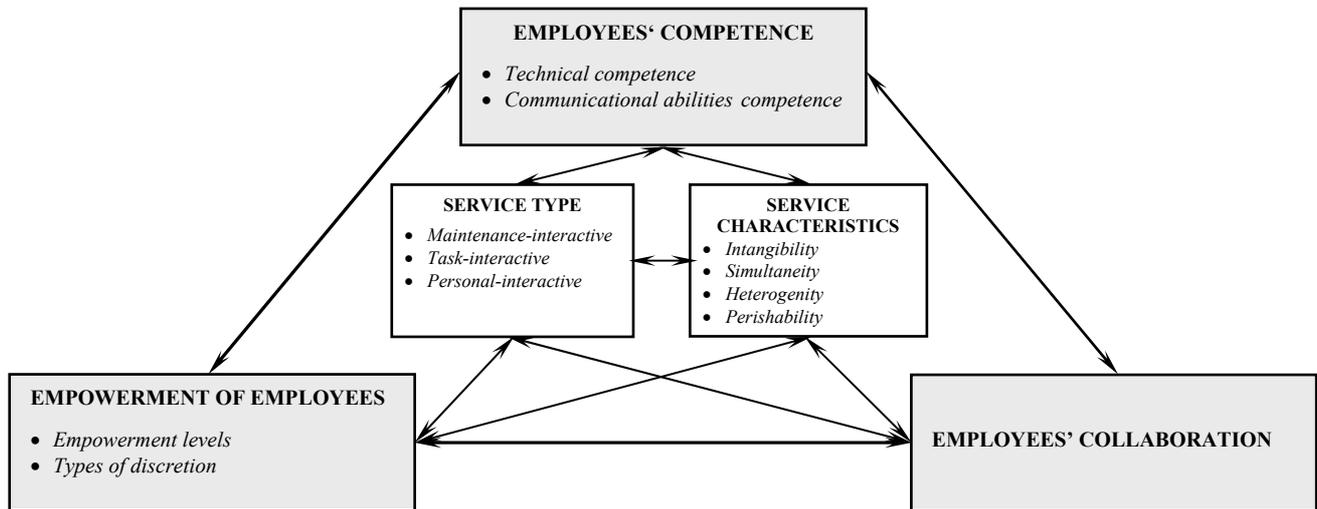


Figure 3. A theoretical model for the examination of the HRM function of a service enterprise

Constituents of the HRM function are integrated in the model depicted in the Figure 3, and a summarized approach to the composition of the HRM function that is selected according to the nature of services provided (service type and the level of characteristics manifestation) is presented. An examination of the HRM function should provide some information about the attitude, perceptions and expectations of contact employees for the management of a service enterprise, and would help to ascertain what changes, in the view of contact employees, should be made in the field of HRM in order to *improve employee job satisfaction and to realize general and marketing goals of a service enterprise*.

Conclusions

1. According to the representatives of various fields of science, the HRM function is related to the creation of the total value of an enterprise, where employees are regarded as the most valuable asset in the enterprise.
2. It has been determined that the specific of the service provision determines the link between employee behaviour, motivation, satisfaction, commitment and quality perceived by customers and a dependant level of need satisfaction.
3. Most marketing scientists, accepting the issue of the relevance of the service enterprise HRM function, don't present a comprehensive and detailed analysis of constituents of this function, but analyze these constituents individually. In this article,

it is attempted to reveal an integrated approach to the HRM function, therefore, three basic constituents of the HRM function of a service enterprise are analyzed:

- a) Analysis of *competence and its development* is related to two elements, namely, technical competence and communicational abilities competence. The technical competence is determined by knowledge and skills related to past experience, and the competence of communication abilities covers elements of personal characteristics and communication skills. Different systems of service provision demand employees with competences of different composition and level, so it is defined only when features of services provided by an enterprise are known.
- b) *Encouragement of collaboration* is mostly analyzed by specialists of internal marketing and marketing scientists working on the aspect of the culture of a service enterprise. On the other hand, actually, there are no comprehensive studies of marketing theorists analyzing the relevant level of collaboration to be developed in certain types of service enterprises. Nevertheless, following elements of collaboration can be determined: an internal climate of the enterprise; values being created and common norms; training of beginners; discussions among colleagues; sharing of knowledge and experience; solution of unexpected situations

and problems; information transmission; compliance to rules and regulations.

- c) *Empowerment of employees*. It is very important for managers of service enterprises to evaluate in what situations what level of autonomy to be provided for employees to enable them to execute delegated tasks and make relevant decisions. Explanations of types of employees discretion (routine, creative and deviant) and levels of empowerment (production-line, suggestion involvement, job involvement, high involvement and empowerment) is presented and a conclusion is made suggesting that these two categorizations are different and they have to be examined in relation to each other.

4. Based on the studies of scientific research, a theoretical model for the examination of the HRM function of a service enterprise is presented in the article. It includes three abovementioned constituents of the HRM function; and also, the influence of a service type and a level of characteristics manifestation on results is emphasized.
5. The further studies in the field of HRM in service enterprises should be directed to the selection of the methodology for the examination of the HRM function. Also, an analysis of an importance of all HRM function constituents is relevant from the position of science.

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Paslaugų įmonės žmogiškųjų išteklių valdymo ypatumai

Santrauka

Pasaulio ekonomikos transformacija į vis labiau paslaugomis pagrįstą ekonomiką veikia neapčiuopiamojo turto, tokio kaip žmogiškieji ištekliai (ŽI), vertės augimą ir lemia paslaugų įmonių vadovų vis dažniau keliamą klausimą, kaip šie ištekliai turėtų būti valdomi, o jų valdymas vertinamas?

Dėl neatskiriamos sąsajos tarp darbuotojų elgsenos, jų motyvacijos, kompetencijos, patenkinimo ir atsidavimo bei vartotojų suvokiamos paslaugų kokybės ir nuo to priklausančio poreikių atitikimo lygio, ŽI valdymo funkcija atlieka lemiamą vaidmenį paslaugų teikimo operacijų valdyme bei paslaugų kokybės kūrimė. Analizuojant ŽI valdymo funkcijos turinį mokslinėje literatūroje, sudėtinga išvelgti aiškias jos sudedamųjų dalių išskyrimo tendencijas. Tačiau, apibendrinus daugumą darbų, galima išskirti tris bazines sudedamąsias dalis: darbuotojų kompetenciją, jų bendradarbiavimo skatinimą bei įgaliotųjų darbuotojams suteikimą. Kompetencija yra dažniausiai mokslininkų minimas žmogiškojo kapitalo valdymo aspektas.

Spartus paslaugų sektoriaus modernizavimas ir paslaugų teikimo aplinkos kitimas rodo, kad paslaugų įmonės darbuotojai turi nepaliaujamai tobulinti savo įgūdžius ir kompetencijas. Kita vertus, tai, kad **kompetencija** šiuo metu yra reikšmingesnė nei bet kada anksčiau bei vis plačiau naudojamas nehierarchinis, lankstus ir bendradarbiavimu pagrįstas valdymas, lemia tolerancijos darbuotojo asmenybei augimą.

L. Bagdonienės, R. Hopenienės (2004) darbuose cituojama mok-

slininkė B. Magnin (1993) kompetenciją skaido į daug dalių ir techninei kompetencijai priskiria siauras ir konkrečias technines žinias, susijusias su darbo specifika. Tuo tarpu kitų užsienio autorių požiūriu, techninis kompetencijos aspektas neretai orientuotas į platų žinių ir sugebėjimų spektrą, kuris reikalingas atlikti tam tikrą darbą. Žinios susijusios su žmogaus turima informacija apie tam tikras specifines sritis ir susideda iš techninių bei akademinį žinių. Tuo tarpu sugebėjimai yra praktiniai įgūdžiai atlikti tam tikrą fizinį ar protinį uždavinį.

Kitas kompetencijos aspektas apima žmogaus asmenybės bruožus, kurie susiję su žmogaus savęs suvokimu, jo elgsenos normomis ar bendravimo gebėjimais. Aktyvios konkurencijos sąlygomis, siekiant per ŽI valdymą įgyti konkurencinį pranašumą, bendravimo kompetencija tampa svarbiausia ir pirmine. Darbuotojų elgsenos ir asmeninių charakteristikų elementų atskyrimas motyvuojamas tuo, kad elgsenos repertuaras gali būti pastebimas net trumpos akistatos su žmogumi metu, o asmeninės savybės glūdi giliai asmenybėje.

Išanalizavus įvairių autorių pateikiamus darbuotojų kompetencijos skaidymus ir apibūdinimus, nuspręsta kompetenciją laikyti techninės ir komunikacinių gebėjimų kompetencijų deriniu. Techninė kompetencija skaidoma į žinias ir sugebėjimus, o komunikacinių gebėjimų – į asmenybės charakteristikas ir bendravimo įgūdžius.

Kompetencijos elementai tarpusavyje susiję ir vienas kitą veikia. Kiekvieno elemento svarba priklauso nuo paslaugų teikimo proceso metu neišvengiamos vartotojo ir paslaugų teikėjo sąveikos situacijų. Tokios situacijos ir jų galimybės priklauso nuo įmonės paslaugų koncepcijos. B.V. Looy, R. Dierdonck, P. Gemmel (2003) nurodo tris paslaugų teikimo situacijas:

- Aptarnavimo-sąveikos paslaugų teikimui būdingas gana menkas sąveikos lygis ir užduočių sudėtingumas.
- Užduoties-sąveikos paslaugos orientuotos į technines užduotis, kai vartotojas turi apibrėžtą ir suformuluotą klausimą, tačiau jam nepakanka žinių ir sugebėjimų rasti atsakymą.
- Asmens-sąveikos paslaugų teikėjai įtraukiami į daug gilesnį ir asmeninį sąveikos su vartotoju procesą. Tos sąveikos metu jie turi išsiaiškinti, apibrėžti ir patenkinti vartotojų poreikius.

Kiekvieno paslaugų tipo įmonės kompetencijos elementų santykinė svarba skiriasi. *Aptarnavimo-sąveikos* paslaugų atveju dominuojantį vaidmenį vaidina komunikaciniai darbuotojo gebėjimai. Techninės žinios ir sugebėjimai ne tokie svarbūs. *Užduoties-sąveikos* paslaugų atveju techninė kompetencija turi didžiausią įtaką pasirenkant darbuotojus. *Asmens-sąveikos* paslaugų teikėjams keliami didesni asmeninių charakteristikų reikalavimai.

Susistemintas kompetencijos dedamosios elementų skaidymas formuojamas tada, kai žinoma paslaugų teikimo sistema, jos specifika ir su tuo susijęs darbuotojams reikalingų savybių rinkinys.

Bendradarbiavimą ir jo skatinimą daugiausia tyrinėja vidinio marketingo specialistai bei marketingo mokslininkai, nagrinėjantys paslaugų įmonės kultūros aspektą. Antra vertus, faktiškai nėra išsamių analitinių paslaugų marketingo teoretikų darbų, nagrinėjančių, kokio lygio bendradarbiavimas kurio tipo paslaugų įmonėse yra svarbus ir plėtotinas. Dauguma vidinio marketingo ar įmonės kultūros studijų remiasi abstrakčiais samprotavimais, kas yra bendradarbiavimas, jį susiejant su darbuotojų pasitenkinimu darbu ar darbo kokybe.

Išanalizavus mokslininkų teorines nuostatas bendradarbiavimo tema, išskiriame pagrindinius bendradarbiavimo dedamosios elementus, kurių pasireiškimas paslaugų įmonės veikloje priklauso nuo paslaugų teikimo specifikos ir paslaugų tipo: vidinis įmonės klimatas; kuriamos vertybės ir bendrosios normos; pradedančiųjų apmokymas; bendradarbių diskusijos; pasikeitimas žiniomis ir patirtimi; nenumatytų situacijų, problemų sprendimas; informacijos perdavimas; taisyklių, nurodymų laikymasis.

Skirtingo tipo paslaugų teikimui būdingas nevienodas neapibrėžtumo lygis, nenumatytų situacijų galimybė, taigi skirtingas ir bendradarbiavimo vaidmuo. *Aptarnavimo-sąveikos* paslaugų atveju nenumatytumo lygis žemas, taigi darbuotojai gali pasikliauti apibrėžtomis paslaugų teikimo sistemomis, procedūromis ar aprašymais. *Užduoties-sąveikos* atveju neprognozuojamumas išauga. *Asmens-sąveikos* paslaugų teikimui svarbus didelis nenumatomumas.

Įgaliojimų darbuotojams suteikimo strategija labiausiai tinkama paslaugų įmonėse, kurios tenkina šiuos kriterijus: 1) įmonės

verslo strategija pagrįsta diferencijavimu; 2) *požiūris į vartotojus* pagrįstas ilgalaikių santykių su jais kūrimu; 3) įmonė naudojami *technologijomis*, kurios yra kompleksinės ir neregulios; 4) *verslo aplinka* neprognozuojama ir galimi netikėti jos pokyčiai; 5) *įmonės vadovai* neprieštarauja tam, kad darbuotojai, siekdami naudoti tiek įmonę, tiek vartotojams, dirba savarankiškai ir laisvai; 6) *darbuotojų poreikiai* susiję su siekimu tobulėti ir gilinti savo gebėjimus darbo aplinkoje, jie domisi kitų darbuotojų patirtimi ir turi gerų tarpasmeninio bendravimo ir bendravimo grupėje įgūdžius.

Įvairūs autoriai siūlo skirtingus įgaliojimų suteikimo strategijų variantus, kurie užtikrintų efektyvų paslaugų teikimo vykdymą. R. Mohammed, A.K. Pervaiz (1998) pateikia S.V. Kelley (1993) išskiriamus tris darbuotojų veikimo laisvės tipus:

- *Reguliarioji veikimo laisvė* taikoma, kai darbuotojai savo veiksmus paslaugų teikimo metu pasirenka iš tam tikrų nurodytų galimų veiksmų.
- *Kūrybinė veikimo laisvė* taikoma, kai teikdami paslaugas darbuotojai turi savarankiškai pritaikyti alternatyvius metodus. Šiuo atveju veiksmai nėra numatyti.
- *Nuokrypių veikimo laisvė* yra neigiamai vertinama vadovybės, kadangi čia nurodomi veiksmai, kurie neatitinka formalios darbuotojo veiklos ir yra už jo kompetencijos ribų.

Ch. Lovelock (2001), B.V. Looy, R. Dierdonck, P. Gemmel (2003), R. Mohammed, A.K. Pervaiz (1998) remiasi D. Bowen ir E. Lawler suformuluotu modeliu, kurio atskaitos tašku pasirinktas požiūris, kad bet kuris paslaugų teikimo būdas gali būti sėkmingas, o teikimo metodai aiškinami tęstinumu – viena vertus, „gamybos-linijos“, kita vertus, „įgaliojimų suteikimo“ alternatyva:

- *Gamybos-linijos* alternatyva nusakoma užduočių supaprastinimu, aiškiu darbo padalijimu, nedidele darbuotojui suteikiama sprendimų priėmimo laisve.
- *Įgaliojimų suteikimo* alternatyva atveju darbuotojams suteikiama didelė veikimo laisvė. Ji pagrįsta prielaida, kad dauguma darbuotojų gali priimti teisingus sprendimus ir pateikti svarbių idėjų.

Gamybos-linijos ir įgaliojimų suteikimo alternatyvos yra priešingos viena kitai. Ch. Lovelock (2001), R. Mohammed, A.K. Pervaiz (1998) išskiria tris žmogiškųjų išteklių įtraukimo į sprendimų priėmimą lygius, esančius tarp aptartų priešingų alternatyvų:

- *Įtraukimo į pasiūlymų teikimą* alternatyvos atveju darbuotojai įgalinami siūlyti paslaugų teikimo proceso ar paslaugų specifikos tobulinimo rekomendacijas, tačiau kasdieniame darbe autonomija nesuteikiama.
- *Įtraukimo į vykdomos veiklos tobulinimą* įgyvendinimas įgalina darbuotojus keisti darbo atlikimo procedūras taip, kad jie galėtų panaudoti daugiau savo įgūdžių.
- *Aukšto lygio darbuotojų įtraukimo* į paslaugų įmonės veiklos organizavimą atveju darbuotojai tarpusavyje dalijasi informacija, grupiniame darbe gilinami įgūdžiai, analizuojamos problemų sprendimo ir paslaugų teikimo operacijų tobulinimo galimybės.

Išanalizavus S.V. Kelley (1993) ir D. Bowen bei E. Lawler (1992) suformuluotus įgaliojimų suteikimo darbuotojams lygius, galima teigti, kad šie skirstymai yra nevienodi ir nagrinėtini kiekvienas atskirai, juos susiejant.

Mokslinių darbų studijos rodo, jog čia abstrakčiai analizuojama ŽI valdymo funkcija, neišskiriant svarbiausių jos dalių arba analizuojant jas atskirai. Šiame straipsnyje, suvokus apibendrinančio požiūrio į ŽI valdymą aktualumą marketingo kontekste, pateikiamas teorinis ŽI valdymo funkcijos tyrimo modelis. Jame integruojamos ŽI valdymo funkcijos sudedamosios dalys ir pateikiamas apibendrintas požiūris į priklausomai nuo teikiamų paslaugų pobūdžio (paslaugų tipo ir savybių pasireiškimo lygio) parenkamą ŽI valdymo funkcijos sudėtį. ŽI valdymo funkcijos tyrimas paslaugų įmonės vadovybei turėtų suteikti informacijos apie kontaktinių darbuotojų požiūrį, suvokimą ir lūkesčius, padėtų išsiaiškinti, ką, darbuotojų požiūriu, reiktų keisti ŽI valdymo srityje, didinant *darbuotojų pasitenkinimą darbu ir įgyvendinant paslaugų įmonės bendruosius bei marketingo tikslus*.

Raktažodžiai: *žmogiškųjų išteklių valdymas, paslaugų marketingas, darbuotojų kompetencija, bendradarbiavimas, įgaliojimų suteikimas*.

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