

Flexibility in Lithuania Enterprises: Comparative Analysis of Garment, Food and IT Enterprises

Asta Savanevičienė

Kauno technologijos universitetas
Laisvės al. 55, LT-44309, Kaunas

The article presents the comparative analysis of flexibility in Lithuania enterprises. The choice of the theme is based on some aspects. First, the influence of highly dynamic environment conditioned by rapid technological changes, increased consumers' requirements, competition globalization. Trying to keep up with the dynamics of situation, it is very important to perceive the capability of an organization and understand what is going on in their business environment and to take actions before it might be too late. On the second hand, Lithuania enterprises have functioned under the conditions of transitional economy for a long time. This economy has been characterized by the fusion of planned and market economies. A lot of researchers who have studied the peculiarities of Western Europe enterprises have stressed the influence of planned economy, its unwillingness to change, difficulty to adapt to rapidly changing market requirements, low enterprise flexibility, of avoidance risk, fear of responsibility as well as low initiative of employees. It can't be unlikely stated that today enterprises follow only the principles of market economy, especially when the interior activity of an enterprise is concerned. The attitude of leaders and employees is of the utmost importance, heaving in mind tasks, decisions, enterprise management, changes and development. This attitude has been formed for decades and although it changes with time and is closely connected with changes of business cultural values, the process is not rapid. Third, enterprise flexibility is very much dependent on the sector type. The enterprises of low technologies are functioning under less dynamic conditions than as it is in the case of the enterprises of high technologies. This influences their flexibility.

This article presents various authors' notions of enterprises flexibility, generalizing the main enterprises flexibility features. Basing on the scientific literature analysis a questionnaire was prepared. The survey was carried out in Lithuanian national enterprises where national culture peculiarities based on particular country social, economic, political, and technological development are demonstrated the best. Total 25 garment, food and IT enterprises were surveyed, 748 respondents. Analysis of descriptive statistics was used for research results process.

Research results have proved the hypothesis about the flexibility of different enterprises. Surveyed IT enterprises appeared to be the most flexible as compared to garment and food enterprises. However, a general flexibility evaluation should be taken into account. This flexibility could be evaluated as an average one.

Keywords: *flexibility, business cultural values, changes, openness, cooperation, activity*

Introduction

Over 2000 years ago, the Chinese General Sun Tzu (about 400 BC) stressed the importance of flexibility in the context of the art of warfare. He stated: "Just as water adapts itself to the conformation of the ground, so in war one must be flexible; he must often adapt his tactics to the enemy situation...for if the enemy is given enough rope he will frequently hang himself" (Scarnati, 1999). This attitude in a contemporary business is quite actual not only for enterprise activities with respect to competitors but also for the evaluation of environment dynamics. Present organizational environment can be characterized as messy, frenzied, disordered, and even chaotic (Glassman, 2005). Ongoing changes in technology, markets and competitive pressures condition highly dynamic environments, that according to Dess (2005), require a strong emphasis on the exploration of new opportunities for a firm to be innovative, take a proactive stance, and assume risk. Boonstra (1996) considers that the rapid development of the market requires to enhance their flexibility, ability to innovate and to increase their learning capacities. Skordoulis (2004) agrees to the statement and holds that under the present conditions the concepts – flexibility, innovation and change – are frequently used side by side and are very important for enterprises in seeking to integrate into dynamic environment.

On the second hand, Jackson (2002) entitles the model of cultural values of an enterprise in European Union as the flexible organization (in USA – the competent organization, in Japan – the motivating organization). Perhaps what differentiates the European states from more homogeneous context of Japan, and indeed the United States, is the degree of lateral flexibility, change and innovation that is required alongside the need for temporal flexibility (Jackson, 2002). Jackson (2002) states that especially Europe if compared with the USA and Japan has quite different divergence of cultural values in business. There is no other region in the world where so many different histories, cultures and languages exist in such a relatively small space (Jackson, 2002). For more than seventy years here existed two absolutely different economic systems that had various business cultural values. According to Scarnati (1999), the former Soviet Union provides myriad examples of a centralised

disfunctional system that was neither flexible nor adaptive. Therefore one of the most interesting questions is: "Are there any obvious contrasts of business cultural values between post Soviet enterprises and the enterprises of Old Europe?" especially, when flexibility is discussed – the requirement that was voided of attention in centralized economy.

The assumption of business cultural values assimilation is the statements of convergence theory (Buchen, 2002, Scholz, 2000). Schein (1992) agrees that cultural convergence is possible but reminds that this is rather a long process. This idea has been supported by the investigations of Hagemann (2000), which show that in spite of the rapid process of Euro-integration after the alliance of Europe and the turn of the Eastern European states from the centralized into market economy significant differences still occur in business cultural values: small activity of employees, inability to take responsibilities, etc.

Lithuania enterprises rapidly integrate into the European market, especially it is true about the enterprises of garment and food sectors. These industries are considered to be traditional in Lithuania. Although most of these enterprises are newly established ones, others are reorganized, however, rapid changes of business cultural values are not possible. It is very important to analyze the flexibility of these enterprises. On the second hand, it is important also to study IT sector enterprises flexibility. The latter is based on rapid use of Lithuania resources – human and capital – resulting in flexibility because of technological developments, innovations and the growth of consumers' demands.

The **aim** of the article is to present the comparative analysis of flexibility of garment, food and IT sectors enterprises in Lithuania.

Flexibility in context

Flexibility is a multidimensional concept (Sushil 2001a; Karuppan, 2004, etc.) and it means different things to different people (Sushil, 2001a).

Generally speaking, flexibility could be defined as capability to rapidly adapt to the requirements of a changing environment (Keuper, 2001). According to Sushil (2001, b), flexibility at various levels of management is desirable to manage organizational change effectively. Kara (2002) ypač stresses the ability to respond effectively to the ever-changing and increasing needs of the customer.

In the scientific literature the synonym of flexibility – dynamic capabilities – is also used (Eisenhardt, 2000; Teece, 1997, etc.). According to Teece (1997), dynamic capabilities can be defined as the firm's ability to integrate, build and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments.

The concept of flexibility can be used in different aspects and in various levels viewing it more widely or narrowly. Labor flexibility has been mostly associated with the notion of job enlargement, i.e. the number of tasks or operations performed, the number of machines operated, intradivisional jobs that a worker can perform, and intradivisional workstations at which an operator can work, (Anell, 2002, Karuppan, 2004). Manufacturing system

flexibility includes four identifiable types: (a) new product flexibility – the ability to introduce and manufacture novel products or to modify existing ones; (b) mix flexibility – the ability to change the range of products being made by the manufacturing system within a given period; (c) volume flexibility – the ability to change the level of aggregated output and (d) delivery flexibility – the ability to change planned or assumed delivery dates (Oke, 2005; Slack, 2005, Worren, 2002). Organizational flexibility or "Inter Flexibilities" includes: (a) organizational structure flexibility, (b) technological flexibility, (c) information system flexibility, (d) human resource flexibility (Engelhardt, 2002, Kara, 2002).

These taxonomies do not contradict one another. They simply show different angles of enterprise flexibility analysis. Speaking about any organization, there can be differentiated its hard and soft nature (Bleicher, 1992). While analysing post Soviet enterprises flexibility, it is very important to pay attention to soft nature – human resources – that is very significant to for business cultural values as well as for labor flexibility, tiek manufacturing system flexibility and organizational flexibility. Further research is to deal with influential business cultural values that are frequently mentioned in scientific literature.

Orientation to openness

According to Sushil (2001, b), the first step in generating flexibility is to have an open mind. Scarnati (1999) flexibility requires a continual examination of environment and, when warranted, quickly adapting to changing circumstances.

While speaking about organization adaptation to the requirement of environment, the view of an organization to its clients is the most frequently mentioned aspect (Bleicher, 1992; Koch, 2000). The main questions are: Does the organization strive to find out its clients' needs? How does it react to the clients' problems? Aren't their problems treated as obstacles? This aspect is emphasized in the empirical research carried out by Cameron and Quinn (1999) in the field of market culture. The importance of this factor has been distinguished by Scholz (2000). Orientation to clients is considered as business cultural values, necessary for the enterprises seeking to become market leaders. Haller (2003) states that enterprise sensibility and openness in striving to understand potential clients' needs is one of the main orientations to openness, the latter being the future of the flexible enterprise.

On the second hand, rapid technological development calls for constant interest in innovations both in the field of technologies and modern work management methods.

Orientation to changes

The orientation to openness and orientation to changes are two interrelated dimensions. A friendly attitude to changes makes the organization open and ready to accept environmental challenges and react to them. Hostile view to changes arise seclusion and the avoidance of external influence. Sushil (2001, a) holds that flexibility is not a one-time phenomenon, but a process of continuous change. The ability to change means innovative solu-

tions with courage under unexpected circumstances (Sushil, 2001 a). There an important role is played by a subjective point of view to changes. According to Storey (2000), an important set of clue to the problem of the management in dynamic environment is located in the domain of managerial perceptions of the need for changes, managerial perceptions of the opportunity to change and the perceptions about the way to change.

There could be distinguished some aspects influencing successful implementation of changes. On one hand, it is the management system of the enterprise oriented to delegating responsibilities to employees and formalization reduction (Bullinger, 2003, Burnes, 1997). On the second hand, it is the role of leadership to inform employees about changes, their necessity and implementation. These measures decrease uncertainty and raise employees' reliance both in themselves and enterprise policy (Rothwell, 2005).

Orientation to cooperation

Boonstra (1996) holds that the main barriers to the implementation of changes are insufficient cooperation between departments and poor vertical communication. That includes the formal as well as informal communication.

In a dynamic environment one of the most important factors ensuring organizational flexibility is the management of information flows. Bleicher (1992) notes that more purposeful is not standardized but the situational way of information transmission when cooperation is conducted according to the principle "inquiry – answer" and it acquires not logistic but dialogue nature applying information transmission principles. It might seem that in this case not culture values are dealt with but the distinctions of managing some concrete information system in the organization are spoken about. However, it should be remembered that information is a very wide notion, not necessarily including quantitative indicators. The system of information management is arranged by people. Thus, managers' and employees' cooperation, both among various departments and work groups, is of the utmost importance.

Orientation to activity

According to Nonaka (1991), in economy where the only certainty is uncertainty, the source of lasting competitive advantage is knowledge. Therefore the ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage" (Senge, 1990). Loermans (2002), cites Kim and states that the process of organizational learning is defined as increasing an organization's capability to take effective action.

Analyzing the origin of man's being, Schein (1992) asks a question if people are reactive, fatal and passive observers of their organization development or they are proactive and able to outrun forecasted events. Thus, organizational flexibility is closely connected with learning. The dynamic development of the environment and passive observance of the events, reluctance to learn lead to the loss of both organizational and competitive potential, which does not conform to the aspirations of a contemporary organization. Recently the emphasis on the concep-

tion of a learning organization requires to train learning-oriented culture which is characterized by active employees who want to learn and be satisfied not only with the requirements of the present moment but to develop future competences.

The other recent requirement, speaking about organizational flexibility, is innovation. Lorsch (1986) points out the responsibility of the leaders in acknowledging the importance of flexibility and innovation as the main constituents of organizational culture. An innovation enterprise is the one which has creative and initiative employees. According to Mumford (2000), in creative people can guarantee evolution of organization, but they hardly are able to guarantee forward breakthrough, quality jump that are essential for organization in dynamic environment. According to Westwood & Low (2003), innovations are the practical application of creative ideas and an organization cannot innovate unless it has the capacity of generate creative ideas. The other prerequisite of innovations is risk and readiness to learn (Kutschker, 2002, Carter, 2005).

Active actions are emphasized by Cameron and Quinn (1999) in defining adhocratic culture which is considered to be the culture or failure distinguishing itself by creative and dynamic working places as well as presenting all the necessary conditions for an active employee's self-expression. These are the profiles of the organization oriented to flexibility.

Research method

The purpose of the research was to compare garment, food and IT enterprises flexibility in Lithuania. Different sectors were chosen assuming the fact that subject to industry this influence can differ. IT diffusion is a very dynamic branch both in technologies and consumers' demand development. There is a significant amount of work in this area related to this sector and the processes in it, i.e. innovation, virtualization and the like (Picot, 1998). However food and garment sectors have been rarely researched.

The choice of these sectors has been made because IT environment dynamism raises high requirements for organizational flexibility (Picot, 1998). Food and garment sectors environment is not so dynamic, and this has made it possible to formulate the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1

Flexibility in the enterprises of IT sector is more manifested than in the enterprises of garment and food sectors.

Lithuania enterprises have turned from planned economy to market economy during the last fifteen years. The main requirement for the enterprises under planned conditions was cost reduction, i.e. better use of interior resources. While under market economy there appear new factors. First of all it is flexibility: openness to environment, orientation to changes, etc. Evaluating business culture values conditional stability, the period of fifteen years is not very long and it cannot cardinaly change views and behaviour. Thus the second hypothesis can be formulated:

Hypothesis 2

Absolute evaluations of enterprise flexibility are not very high.

The method of data collection was based on the questionnaire developed through literature review.

The four flexibility indicators – orientation to openness, orientation to changes, orientation to cooperation have been formulated providing three possible answers: “Yes, agree“, “Partially agree“, “No, disagree“. While processing the results, answers “Yes, agree“ have been evaluated – 3, “Partially agree“ – 2 and “No, disagree“ –

1. Analysis of descriptive statistics was used for research results process In order to obtain a quantitative evaluation of each dimension, average numbers have been taken because they reflect the evaluation of the dimensions

Findings

There was made a survey of 25 national business enterprises and 748 respondents: IT – 73 respondents, Food – 480 respondents, Garment – 195 respondents. The subordinates have taken part in the research

The obtained research results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Expression of flexibility indicators in surveyed enterprises of garment, food and IT sectors

	Sector	N	Evaluation, %			M	SD	V, %.
			Yes	Partly	No			
Orientation to openness	Garment	195	18.45	28.70	52.85	1.6556	0.58097	35
	Food	480	19.35	35.85	44.80	1.7385	0.57603	33
	IT	73	35.35	52.45	12.20	2.1164	0.54340	26
Orientation to changes	Garment	195	38.64	36.93	24.43	2.1419	0.52632	25
	Food	480	34.37	42.87	22.76	2.1028	0.48316	23
	IT	73	37.42	47.93	14.65	2.2670	0.49014	23
Orientation to cooperation	Garment	195	20.83	31.60	47.57	1.7333	0.53578	31
	Food	480	22.13	38.20	39.67	1.8208	0.49148	27
	IT	73	25.60	41.70	32.70	1.9224	0.42499	22
Orientation to activity	Garment	195	24.08	38.90	37.02	1.8077	0.50787	28
	Food	480	24.43	35.82	39.72	1.8726	0.50984	27
	IT	73	35.75	49.52	14.73	2.2189	0.42611	19

Table 1 shows that all flexibility features (indications) in IT sector enterprises have been higher evaluated than in the food and garment enterprises where the expression of flexibility is comparable. Thus, hypothesis 1 has been proved. The highest evaluation in all surveyed enterprises has been given to orientation to changes, and the lowest evaluation – orientation to cooperation. Having in mind the fact that the first evaluation could fluctuate from 1 to 3 points, the average numbers obtained are not high. They range from 1.6 to 2.21 point. Thus, flexibility in the enterprises that have undergone the study could be defined as an average result. This proves the hypothesis 2.

There should be noticed that there exists a rather high dispersion probability characterized by a standard deviation (approximately from 0.42 to 0.58 point). It is purposeful to carry out an expanded analysis of all flexibility features that might bring much more evidence about separate questions Table 2 presents a detailed version of flexibility features.

Orientation to openness has been highly evaluated by the respondents of the enterprises of IT sector compared to food and garment enterprises. It should be noted that the respondents in food and garment sector enterprises gave rather evaluation to the interest in technology changes and modern management methods. The difference as compared to IT sector enterprises was 0.5 point. This could be explained by the dynamism of IT sector.

Orientation to changes has been given the highest evaluation in all sectors enterprises, however, the answer to the question whether managers inform employees about changes and their necessity the answers have a rather informal distribution. Only 13-16 per cent of respondents have given a negative answer. Employees’ friendly attitude to changes has been negatively evaluated by 20 per cent of food and 31 per cent of respondents of garment sector. Accordingly 24 per cent of garment and 32 per cent food sector respondents marked that there exist too many formalities in the procedure of changes.

Speaking about orientation to cooperation, it has become evident that informal communication of managers and employees in IT sector is usual. However, the cooperation among departments received a lower evaluation. This could be explained by individual activity and lesser dependence.

Flexibility is the ability to rapidly adapt to a dynamic environment. It requires creativity and constant learning. The answers in IT sector respondents in this respect were quite different from those of food and garment sector respondents. 44 per cent of IT respondents stated that they independently develop their skills, acquire new technologies and modern work methods. Even 55 per cent of the IT respondents noted that they used all the possibilities to learn, and 44 per cent of the respondents stressed the fact that employees are creative and generate new ideas.

Table 2

Expression of detailed flexibility indicators in surveyed enterprises of garment, food and IT sectors

	Statement		N	Evaluation, %			M	SD	V, %
				Yes	Partly	No			
Orientation to openness	Employees are interested in clients' needs, analyse possibilities to meet them	S	195	21.0	44.6	34.4	1.8667	0.73405	39
		M	480	27.8	43.7	28.5	1.9937	0.75093	38
		IT	73	34.7	55.6	9.7	2.2500	0.62235	28
	Employees are interested in changes in the field of technologies, modern work management methods	S	195	15.9	12.8	71.3	1.4462	0.75363	52
		M	480	10.9	28.0	61.1	1.4979	0.68451	46
		IT	73	36.0	49.3	24.7	2.0137	0.71673	36
Orientation to changes	Most employees are friendly disposed to changes	S	195	33.8	34.4	31.8	2.1487	0.78873	37
		M	480	34.2	45.5	20.3	1.8914	0.72371	38
		IT	73	39.7	47.9	12.3	2.2740	0.67207	30
	Changes do not need many formalities	S	195	39.5	35.9	24.6	2.0205	0.81202	40
		M	480	21.3	46.6	32.2	2.1395	0.72602	34
		IT	73	31.5	50.7	17.8	2.2570	0.69352	37
	Managers inform about changes, their necessity and the whole process	S	195	42.6	40.5	16.9	2.2564	0.72928	32
		M	480	47.6	36.5	15.9	2.3173	0.73149	32
		IT	73	41.1	45.2	13.7	2.2740	0.69242	30
Orientation to cooperation	Common discussions of managerial staff and employees took place	S	195	21.0	27.2	51.8	1.6923	0.79800	29
		M	480	20.0	35.2	44.8	1.7521	0.76660	44
		IT	73	50.7	37.0	12.3	2.3836	0.69980	29
	The problems of other departments are well known	S	195	13.8	29.7	56.4	1.5744	0.72393	45
		M	480	16.3	36.3	47.4	1.6889	0.73560	44
		IT	73	6.9	33.3	59.7	1.4722	0.62736	42
	Employees of different departments cooperate, exchange information and experience	S	195	27.7	37.9	34.4	1.9333	0.78692	41
		M	480	30.1	43.1	26.8	2.0335	0.75439	37
		IT	73	19.2	54.8	26.0	1.9315	0.67348	35
Orientation to activity	Employees are creative and generate ideas	S	195	20.0	35.9	44.1	1.7590	0.76547	44
		M	480	27.7	41.5	30.8	1.9688	0.76528	39
		IT	73	44.4	43.1	12.5	2.3194	0.68846	30
	Employees present suggestions how to rationalize activity and increase work effectiveness	S	195	12.8	24.1	63.1	1.4974	0.71345	48
		M	480	10.5	31.6	57.9	1.5251	0.67789	45
		IT	73	15.3	52.8	31.9	1.8333	0.67135	37
	Employees willingly exchange experience, and learn from one another	S	195	43.6	39.0	17.4	2.2615	0.73800	33
		M	480	45.1	34.4	20.5	2.2463	0.77207	34
		IT	73	27.4	56.2	16.4	2.1096	0.65747	31
	Employees raise their qualifications, acquire new work methods and technologies	S	195	24.6	30.3	45.1	1.7949	0.81163	45
		M	480	26.5	37.3	36.3	1.9021	0.78663	41
		IT	73	44.4	52.8	2.8	2.4167	0.55029	23
	Employees use possibilities to learn	S	195	29.7	32.8	37.4	1.9231	0.81811	43
		M	480	29.4	31.9	38.8	1.9063	0.82089	43
		IT	73	55.6	33.3	11.1	2.4444	0.68974	28
	Employees are full of initiative	S	195	13.8	33.3	52.8	1.6103	0.71032	44
		M	480	16.4	38.2	45.5	1.7086	0.73120	43
		IT	73	27.4	58.9	13.7	2.1370	0.63059	30

It should be said that both hypotheses have been proved. However, dynamic environment should be taken into account. Nevertheless growing requirements for flexibility should be neglected because it can make enterprise development much more difficult. The factors that increase flexibility are to be evaluated according to the approaches formulated by Scarnati (1999): "What I am today is not what I was yesterday, nor what I will be in the future. I will adapt".

Conclusions

The undertaken study enabled to draw the following conclusions:

1. Trying to keep up with the dynamics of environment enterprises flexibility is one of the main factors conditioning its competitiveness in the market.
2. Speaking about enterprises flexibility, there often prevails a functional approach, e.g. flexibility of a manufacturing system. However, there could be singled out some indications that show enterprise flexibility: orientation to openness, orientation to changes, orientation to cooperation and orientation to activity. These indications stress the importance of a human factor in ensuring enterprise flexibility.
3. Fifteen years ago Lithuania started its turn from planned economy to market economy. This was followed by the increase of requirements; flexibility was voided of attention in centralized economy.
4. Having carried out the research in the field of flexibility in garment, food and IT sector enterprises, it could be stated that flexibility in IT sector is more manifested than in the enterprises of garment and food sectors. However, absolute flexibility evaluations are not very high. It could be generalized that the enterprises under the research are not sufficiently oriented to flexibility. This makes competition in the market and cooperation much more difficult.

References

1. Anell, B. I. The flexible firm and the flexible coworker / B. I. Anell, L. T. Wilson // *Journal of Workplace Learning: Employee Counseling Today*, 2000, 12 (4), p. 165-170.
2. Bleicher, K. *Das Konzept integriertes Management* // Frankfurt/Main; New York: Campus Verlag, 1992.
3. Boonstra, J.J. Technological and Organizational Innovation: a Dilemma of Fundamental Change and Participation / J.J. Boonstra, M. J. Vink // *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 1996, 5(3), p. 351-375.
4. Buchen, I. H. "The great convergence": visionary illusion or megatrend? // *Foresight*, 2002, 4(1), p. 36-42.
5. Bullinger, H. J. *Neue Organisationsformen im Unternehmen* / H. J. Bullinger, H. J. Warnecke, E. Westkämper. 2., neu bearb. u. erw. Auflage, 2003.
6. Burnes, B. Organizational choice and organizational change // *Management Decision*, 1997, Vol. 35, No10, p. 753-759.
7. Cameron, K. S. *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture* / K. S. Cameron, R. E. Quinn // Addison-Wesley, 1999.
8. Cartier, L. *Best Practices in Leadership Development and Organizational Change* / L. Cartier, D. Ulrich, M. Goldsmith. Pfeiffer: A Wiley Imprint, 2005.
9. Dess, G. Entrepreneurial Orientation as a Source of Innovative Strategy / G. Dess, G. T. Lumpkin. *Innovating strategy process* / Edited by S. W. Floyd [et al.]. -1 st ed., 2005, p. 3-9.
10. Eisenhardt, K. M. Dynamic capabilities: what are they / K. M. Eisenhardt, J. A. Martin // *Strategic Management Journal*, 2000, 21, p. 1105-1121.
11. Englehardt, Ch. S. Organizational flexibility for a changing world / Ch. S. Englehardt, P. R. Simmons // *Leadership & Organization*, 2002, 23 (3), p. 113-121.
12. Glassman, A. M. *Thinking Strategically in Turbulent Times* / A. M. Glassman, D. Zell, Sh. Duron // M. E. Sharpe: Armonk. New York, London, England, 2005.
13. Hagemann, H. *Die Diagnose und Handhabung interkultureller Konfliktpotentiale und Konflikte in deutschen Tochtergesellschaften und Joint-Ventures in Rumänien*. Bamberg: Universitaet Diss., 2000.
14. Haller, Ch. *Verhaltenstheoretischer Ansatz für ein Management von Innovationsprozessen*. Diss. Betriebswirtschaftliches Institut der Universität Stuttgart, 2003.
15. Jakson, T. *International HRM: a cross-cultural approach*. Sage Publications: London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, 2002.
16. Kara, S. The Role of Human Factors in Flexibility Management: A Survey / S. Kara, B. Kayis, Sh. O'Kane // *Human Factors and Ergonomics in Manufacturing*, 2002, 12 (1), p. 75-119.
17. Karuppan, C. M. Strategies to foster labour flexibility // *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management*, 2003, 53(6), p. 532-547.
18. Keuper, F. *Strategisches Management*. Muenchen; Wien: Oldenbourg, 2001.
19. Koch, R. *Guide to strategy. How to create and deliver a useful strategy* (2nd ed.). London. New York: Prentice Hall, 2000.
20. Kutscher, M. *Internationales Management: mit 100 Textboxen* / M. Kutscher, St. Schmid. 2., bearb. Aufl. // München; Wien: Oldenbourg, 2002.
21. Loermans, J. Synergizing the learning organization and knowledge management // *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 2002, 6(3), p. 285-294.
22. Lorsch, J. W. *Managing Culture: The Invisible Barrier to Strategic Change* // *California Management Journal*, 1986, 28(2), p. 95-109.
23. Mumford, M. D. Managing creative people: strategies and tactics for innovation // *Human Resource Management Review*, 2000, 10(3), 313-351.
24. Oke, A. framework for analysing manufacturing flexibility // *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, 2005, 25 (10), p. 973-996.
25. Picot, A. *Die grenzenlose Unternehmung: Information, Organisation und Management* / A. Picot., R. Reichwald, R. T. Wigand. Wiesbaden: Gabler, 1998.
26. Rothwell, W. J. *Models for Changes* / W. J. Rothwell, R. L. Sullivan. *Practicing Organization Development* (2nd ed), 2005.
27. Scarnati, J. T. Beyond technical competence: the fundamentals of flexibility // *Participation & Empowerment: An International Journal*, 1999, 7(7), p. 194-200.
28. Schein, E. H. *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, 1992.
29. Scholz, Ch. *Personalmanagement: Informationsorientierte und verhaltenstheoretische Grundlagen*. München: Vahlen, 2000
30. Senge, P. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York, 1990.
31. Skordoulis, R. T. Strategic flexibility and change: an aid to strategic thinking or another managerial abstraction? // *Strategic Change*, 2004, 13, p. 253-258.
32. Slack, N. The flexibility of manufacturing systems // *International Journal of Operations & Production*, 2005, 25(12), p. 1190-1200.
33. Storey, J. The management of innovation problem // *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 2000, 4(3), p. 347-369.
34. Sushil. Demythifying flexibility Metaphors // *Management Decision*, 2001a, 39, p. 860-865
35. Sushil. Flexibility Metaphors // *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 2001b, 18, p. 569-575

36. Teece, D.J. Dynamic capabilities and strategic management / D.J. Teece, G.Pisano, A.Shuen // *Strategic Management Journal*, 1997, 18 (7), p. 509-533.
37. Westwood, R., Lee, D. R (2003). The Multicultural Muse: Culture, Creativity, Innovation / R. Westwood, D. R. Lee // *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 3(2), p. 235-259.
38. Worren, N. Modularity, strategic flexibility, and firm performance: a study of the home appliance industry / N. Worren, K. Moore, P. Cardona // *Strategic Management Journal*, 2002, 23, p. 1123-1140.

Asta Savanevičienė

Lietuvos įmonių lankstumas: palyginamoji siuvimo, maisto ir IT sektoriaus įmonių analizė

Santrauka

Straipsnyje pateikta lankstumo Lietuvos įmonėse lyginamoji analizė. Ši tema pasirinkta dėl kelių aspektų. Viena vertus, nepaprastai dinamiška aplinka, kurią sąlygoja spartūs technologiniai pokyčiai, augantys vartotojų reikalavimai, konkurencijos globalizavimas. Siekiant išsilaikyti šioje dinamiškoje situacijoje, labai svarbus įmonės sugebėjimas suvokti, kas vyksta įmonės išorinėje aplinkoje, ir imtis atitinkamų veiksmų, kol nevēlu. Antra vertus, Lietuvoje įmonės ilgą laiką dirbo tranzitinės ekonomikos sąlygomis, kuri pasižymėjo planinės ekonomikos bei rinkos ekonomikos samplaika. Daugelis mokslininkų, tyrusių Rytų Europos įmonių veiklos ypatumus, ypač akcentavo planinės ekonomikos palikimą, nenorą keistis, sunkumus prisitaikant apie sparčiai kintančių rinkos reikalavimų dėl žemo vidinio įmonės lankstumo, rizikos vengimo, baimės imtis atsakomybės, mažo darbuotojų iniciatyvumo. Vargu ar įmanoma vienareikšmiškai teigti, kad šiandien mes dirbame, vadovaudamiesi tik rinkos ekonomikos principais, ypač kai kalbame apie įmonės vidaus darbo organizavimo principus. Įtakos turi tiek vadovų, tiek darbuotojų nuostatos ir požiūris į uždavinius, jų sprendimą, įmonės valdymą ir jų reagavimas, nuostata į vykstančius reiškinius ir plėtrą, kuris formavosi ne vieną dešimtmetį; nors išorinių sąlygų veikiamas, šis procesas keičiasi, tačiau jis susijęs su verslo kultūrinių vertybių kaita ir nėra greitas. Trečia, įmonės lankstumas gali priklausyti nuo sektoriaus. Žemų technologijų sektoriaus įmonės veikia palyginti mažiau dinamiškomis sąlygomis nei aukštųjų technologijų sektoriaus įmonė, ir tai gali sąlygoti jų organizacinį lankstumą.

Lankstumas yra multidimensinė sąvoka, traktuojama labai įvairiai, todėl straipsnyje pateikiamos įvairių autorių nuomosės. Pateiktosios taksonomijos neprieštarauja viena kitai, tik parodo skirtingus įmonės lankstumo analizės kampus. Bendrąja prasme lankstumas gali būti apibrėžtas kaip gebėjimas greitai prisitaikyti prie pakitusių aplinkos reikalavimų. Kalbant apie organizaciją galima išskirti jos „kietąją“ ir „minkštąją“ prigimtį (Bleicher, 1992). Nagrinėjant posovietinių įmonių lankstumą, ypač svarbu atkreipti dėmesį į jų „minkštąją“ prigimtį – žmogiškuosius išteklius, nuo kurių priklauso verslo kultūrinių vertybių o kartu ir darbo jėgos lankstumas, gamybinės sistemos lankstumas, ir organizacinis lankstumas. Tolesnei analizei pasirinktos dažniausiai minimos mokslinėje literatūroje įmonės lankstumui įtaką darančios verslo kultūrinės vertybės: orientacija į atvirumą, orientacija į pokyčius, orientacija į bendradarbiavimą ir orientacija į aktyvumą.

Orientacija į atvirumą. Teigiama, kad įmonės jautrumas ir atvirumas, siekiant suvokti potencialius klientų poreikius yra vienas pagrindinių orientacijos į atvirumą požymių, būdingas lankščiai įmonei (Haller, 2003, Scholz, 2000; Bleicher, 1992). Antra vertus, sparčiai vystantis technologijoms, būtinas ir nuolatinis domėjimasis naujovėmis tiek pačių technologijų, tiek modernių darbo organizavimo metodų srityje.

Orientacija į pokyčius. Tai tiesiogiai su orientacija į atvirumą koreliuojanti dimensija. Draugiškas požiūris į pokyčius daro įmonę atvirą ir pasiruošusią pripažinti bei reaguoti į aplinką. Galima išskirti keletą aspektų, nuo kurių priklauso sėkmingas pokyčių įgyvendinimas. Viena vertus, tai įmonės valdymo sistema, orientuota į įgaliojimų darbuotojams suteikimą, formalizavimo mažinimą (Bullinger, 2003; Burnes, 1997). Antra vertus, tai vadovų vaidmuo informuojant darbuotojus apie pokyčius, jų būtinumą ir eigą, taip sumažinant netikrumo jausmą ir formuojant darbuotojų pasitikėjimą tiek savo jėgomis, tiek įmonės vykdomos politikos teisingumu (Rothwell, 2005).

Orientacija į bendradarbiavimą. Įgyvendinant pokyčius, labai svarbi ir vertikali, ir horizontali komunikacija, ir formalus, ir neformalus bendradarbiavimas, apimantis tiek vadovo ir pavaldinio santykius, tiek atskirų padalinių ir darbo grupių bendradarbiavimą.

Orientacija į aktyvumą. Pasak Nonaka (1991), situacijoje, kur tik nepastovumas yra pastovus, pagrindinis įmonės konkurencingumą galintis užtikrinti veiksnys yra žinios. Tai reikalauja iš įmonės darbuotojų aktyvumo, nes tik aktyvus darbuotojas yra pasiruošęs mokytis, nori semtis naujų žinių, jas aktyviai panaudoti praktikoje, rodyti iniciatyvą, inovatyvumą ir kūrybiškai spręsti problema.

Remiantis mokslinės literatūros analize, parengta anketa. Tyrimas atliktas Lietuvos nacionalinėse įmonėse, siekiant, kad tai kuo tiksliau atspindėtų nacionalinės verslo kultūros ypatumus, kurie formavosi šaliai būdingų socialinio, ekonominio, politinio, ir technologinio vystymosi kontekste. Iš viso buvo tirta 25 siuvimo, maisto ir IT įmonių, apklausti, 748 respondentai. Šių skirtingų sektorių įmonių pasirinkimas grindžiamas prielaida, kad aukštųjų technologijų sektoriaus (IT) aplinkos dinamiškumas kelia itin aukštus reikalavimus įmonės lankstumui. Tuo tarpu maisto ir siuvimo sektoriaus aplinka yra palyginti mažiau dinamiška. Tai leido suformuluoti pirmąją hipotezę, kad lankstumas IT įmonėse bus didesnis nei siuvimo ir maisto sektoriaus įmonėse.

Lietuvos įmonės per pastaruosius penkiolika metų iš planinės ekonomikos persiorientavo į rinkos ekonomiką. Planinės ekonomikos sąlygomis pagrindinis įmonėms keliamas reikalavimas buvo orientacija į kaštų mažinimą, t.y. vidinių išteklių geresnį panaudojimą. Tuo tarpu rinkos ekonomikos sąlygomis atsiranda naujų veiksmų, kurie anksčiau neturėjo tokios didelės reikšmės. Tai visų pirma tokie įmonės lankstumo požymiai kaip organizacijos atvirumas aplinkai, orientacija į pokyčius ir pan. Įvertinant verslo kultūrinių vertybių sąlyginį pastovumą, penkiolika metų nėra labai ilgas laikotarpis, galėjęs kardinaliai pakeisti požiūrį ir elgseną. Todėl buvo suformuluota antroji hipotezė, teigianti, kad įmonių lankstumo absoliutiniai įverčiai nebus labai aukšti.

Rezultatams apdoroti pasirinkti deskriptyvinės statistikos analizės metodai.

Tyrimo rezultatai patvirtino pirmąją hipotezę. Visi lankstumo požymiai tirtose IT sektoriaus įmonėse gavo aukštesnį įvertį nei tirtose maisto ir siuvimo sektoriaus įmonėse, kur lankstumo raiška yra panaši. Pažymėtina, kad didžiausią įvertį visų sektorių tirtose įmonėse gavo orientacija į pokyčius, o mažiausią – orientacija į bendradarbiavimą. Turint galvoje, kad pirminiai įverčiai galėjo svyruoti nuo 1 iki 3 balų, gauti vidurkiai nėra aukšti. Jie atitinkamai svyruoja nuo 1,6 iki 2,21 balo. Taigi lankstumą tirtose organizacijose galima apibūdinti kaip vidutinį, ir tai patvirtina antrąją hipotezę.

Detaliau aptariant kiekvieną tirtą lankstumo dimensiją, galima taip apibūdinti:

Orientacija į atvirumą. Aukštesni įverčiai gauti IT sektoriaus tirtose įmonėse nei tirtose maisto ir siuvimo sektoriaus įmonėse. Pažymėtina, kad respondentai tirtose maisto ir siuvimo sektoriaus įmonėse palyginti menkai įvertino domėjimąsi technologijų, modernių darbo organizavimo metodų pokyčiais. Nuo IT sektoriaus respondentų tai skyrėsi net daugiau nei 0,5 punkto, ir tokių rezultatų prielaida kaip tik ir gali būti sektorių specifika, IT sektoriaus įmonėms dirbant kur kas dinamiškesnėje technologinėje aplinkoje.

Orientacija į pokyčius. Plyginus su kitomis dimensijomis, gauti didžiausi įverčiai visose tirtų sektorių įmonėse, tačiau matyti, kad tik atsakydami į klausimą, ar vadovai informuoja apie pokyčius, jų būtinumą ir eigą, respondentų atsakymų procentinis pasiskirstymas yra tolygus. Tuo tarpu atsakant į kitus klausimus respondentų nuomonės skyrėsi.

Orientacija į bendradarbiavimą. Pažymėtinas neformalus vadovų ir pavaldinių bendravimas IT sektoriaus tirtose įmonėse. Tačiau IT sektoriuje praščiau buvo įvertintas padalinių bendradarbiavimas, ir tai galima paaiškinti individualizuota veikla, maža padalinių tarpusavio priklausomybe.

Orientacija į aktyvumą. Aukštesni įverčiai gauti IT sektoriaus tirtose įmonėse nei tirtose maisto ir siuvimo sektoriaus įmonėse. Ypač kalbant apie kūrybiškumą, ir nuolatinį mokymąsi.

Apibendrinant galima teigti, kad tirtos įmonės yra nepakankamai orientuotos į lankstumą, ir tai apunkina tiek konkuravimą rinkoje, tiek bendradarbiavimą.

Raktažodžiai: *lankstumas, verslo kultūrinės vertybės, atvirumas, pokyčiai, bendradarbiavimas, aktyvumas.*

The article has been reviewed.

Received in October, 2006; accepted in December, 2006.