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## INNOVATIVE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR THE TALENT MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

**Abstract.** *The central topic of the paper is talent management. It is a highly topical subject matter in science and theory of business management, particularly human resource management. Attracting and retaining talented employees has become one of the key roles of modern human resource management. The paper aims to provide an analytical view of the use of selected innovative human resource management (HRM) practices through a comparison of companies that implemented talent management practices and companies that did not implement talent management practices. In addition to processing the theoretical basis of talent management, the paper presents the research results carried out on a sample of 187 Slovak companies. Primary data were collected in person and through a questionnaire from January to June 2021. The research aimed to determine the current state of implementation of talent management practices in the Slovak Republic and verify the existence of statistically significant differences in the rate of use of selected innovative HRM practices methods between companies that implemented talent management practices and companies that did not implement talent management practices. For the research purposes, HRM practices directly related to the acquisition, development, and retention of talented employees were selected, particularly training and development, evaluation of individual performance, and remuneration. In the case of HRM practices, the research focused on methods used in the implementation of individual practices. In contrast, the rate of use of each method was determined on a Likert scale 1-5, with a value of 1. It expresses a low rate of use of the method and a value of 5 a high rate of use. To meet the aim of the research, research hypotheses for individual HRM practices were tested, in particular the H1 (training and development), H2 (performance evaluation), H3 (remuneration). For each HRM practice, three partial hypotheses were tested. The Mann-Whitney U test at a significance level of 5% was used to test the hypotheses, i.e., to determine statistically significant differences between the companies that implemented talent management practices and companies that did not implement talent management practices. The research results confirmed statistically significant differences in the use of selected HRM practices between companies that implemented talent management practices and companies that did not implement talent management practices in the case of 8 variables. In the case of 1 variable, the hypothesis was not confirmed.*

**Keywords:** human resource management, talent management, human resource management practices, talent management implementation.

**Introduction.** The goal of companies is to have talented employees with great potential. These could either be recruited from external sources, the labor market, or from internal sources, i.e., from the ranks of their own employees. Many managers share the same view - the company can be successful only when teamed up with talented employees with high potential. Globalization and competition in today's labor market only underline the need for talent. To develop talent, the company must invest in the education of its talents. Therefore, talent recruitment and the process of talent development are the most crucial steps every company should take. Talent management is a complex issue that is constantly evolving. It is

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influenced by external factors, such as the company's state, global expansion, mergers on a national and international scale. Critical success factors for effective talent management are aligned with the company's strategic goals, top management support, and well-functioning human resource management (Sojka, 2020). One of the prerequisites for the survival of companies in today's environment is to focus on talent management. Mpofo and Hlatywayo (2015) and Kermally (2004) note that regardless of the type of company, it is very important to implement practices aimed at acquiring talented employees and their development retention. The implementation of talent management is an essential tool for developing human resources. Its procedures are important for ensuring the growth and development of all employees, not only talented ones (Saadat and Eskandari, 2016).

**Literature Review.** The most effective way to win over and keep talented employees is to use the tools of talent management and ensure effective coordination of its individual activities. The goal of talent management is to acquire talented employees and filter through those who do not have what it takes to hold demanding job positions in the company (Brockbank and Ulrich, 2009).

Talent management consists of several activities. They aimed to provide a comprehensive strategy for the management and development of employees. Talent management creates conditions for the effective use of employees and efficient job rotation. It guarantees that the right people would be put in the right job at the right time (Kesler, 2002).

Talent management pursues several goals – primary and secondary. The primary goals include finding, acquiring, and retaining key employees. Another important goal is to identify the so-called risk management positions the company wishes to fill by suitable staff and to draw up a job description sheet outlining skills necessary for the said job positions. It also requires having a clearly defined human resources management strategy and an analysis of the current situation in the company in terms of personnel needs. Secondary talent management goals include analysis, continuous monitoring, and assessment of existing competencies, their comparison with ideal abilities and skills. Based on these analyses, adequate measures are proposed, such as the formulation of training strategies, development programs for current employees, and new head-hunting methods (new employees can be an important source of competitive advantage in human resources management) (Sayyadi et al., 2011). Wall and Knights (2013) considered talent management a constantly evolving strategic tool that serves the employees themselves. It prepares them for the company's future needs and enables them to prepare for the changes they may face in the future.

Pruis (2011) states that talent development should not be addressed only by employers but also employees as they are the ones to make the most of the opportunities that the company creates for them in terms of their own development. This approach leads to the fulfillment of needs on both sides, on the part of the employer and the part of the employee.

In part, talent management focuses on education and development. However, it is also important to consider investments in education and talent development. Through training and development, a competitive advantage is created in human resources management, as the development of employees leads to special and inimitable changes in human resources. At the same time, two essential roles of training in talent management could be pointed out: training as an integral part of human resources management and development as an important means of retaining talented employees.

Talent management is a process that focuses on the future. It identifies needed people and seeks to develop them while systematically closing the gap between the company's current state of human resources and the need for talent to meet future challenges (Wellins et al., 2006). The concept of effective talent management includes a clear understanding of the current and future state of the company's strategy and the identification of differences between the current and the desired talent situation, and the design of a comprehensive talent management process to address the identified differences. That plan should be integrated into business strategies and, in particular, the personnel strategy (Mobini Dehkordi and Tahmasb Kazemi, 2013).

According to Ramanaiah and Lavanya (2011), employee retention requires 4 main things: remuneration, work environment, growth opportunities, and adequate support from the employer. They further emphasize that retention strategies should include these factors and employee needs and expectations of the company. Only then the retention strategy could be successful and effective in the long run. Companies need to be employee-focused to be able to maintain effective retention strategies. Therefore, retention is considered the strongest tool to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage today. Most companies should be aware of this and implement these strategies so that all employees accept them. Unless companies are employee-focused and give employees the right platform for performance, retention strategies will ultimately fail.

Companies are developed through individual employees whose talent plays a major role in the company's success. Therefore, talent management is considered an important part of the overall management of a company (Michaels et al., 2001). Haskins and Shaffer (2010) proposed a talent management implementation model that includes four components:

1. Detailed knowledge of the company's objectives;
2. Identification of specific aspects of talent development through a model of education and development;
3. Emphasizing the lifelong need for education and career development;
4. Focus on the achieved results.

The purpose of leading talented workers is to guarantee that suitable people with the right skills are in the right job position. Career development is an important determinant of increasing success in the job and the company. Achieving maximum business performance is possible if human capital is in line with the key interests of the company. The management of human resources itself should focus not only on the present but also on the future. Even though the company has talented employees, it is important to know how to ensure their development for the company's future needs. Therefore, it is necessary to look for and find unique competencies that create a competitive advantage for the company. Talent management provides procedures and tools to support and strengthen the position of employees in the company (Svetozarovova and Pollak, 2019). Effective talent management must be quantitative and qualitative, ensuring the company's goals and strategies (Cartwright, 2008). One of the advantages of investing in implementing talent management procedures is the expected high return on the investment. The actual return on investment depends on several factors, such as a highly motivated workforce and self-confidence in implementing a talent management strategy (Bethke-Langenegger et al., 2011).

**Methodology and research methods.** To analyze the current state in the field of the use of talent management, the research was carried out in the conditions of the Slovak Republic on a sample of 187 companies. The research aimed to compare companies that implemented and companies that did not implement talent management in terms of the degree of application of individual methods of selected HRM practices. It was assumed that companies with implemented talent management would implement HRM practices through the methods to a greater extent than companies that did not implement talent management practices. For the research purpose, HRM practices were selected which are related to the recruitment, development, and especially the retention of high-performing and talented employees:

1. Training and development.
2. Performance evaluation.
3. Remuneration.

Concerning the HRM mentioned above practices, the research subject was selected methods or tools used to implement the practices, while the degree of use of each method was determined on a 1-5 Likert scale. In the case of the training and development practice, the following methods were employed: a) mentoring, b) coaching, and c) job rotation. In the case of the performance evaluation practice, the following methods were examined: a) a performance-oriented evaluation interview, b) a self-diagnostic questionnaire, and c) 360-degree feedback. In the case of employee remuneration, the following was the

subject of research: a) a performance-based variable remuneration system; b) the payment of regular premiums; c) provision of status benefits.

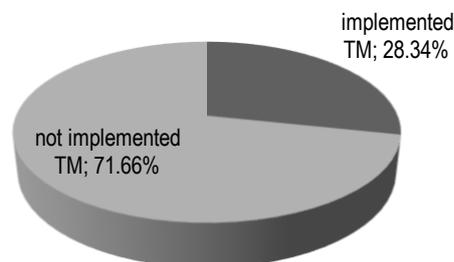
To meet the research goal, the research hypotheses were tested for individual HRM practices marked as H1, H2, H3, while for each HRM practice, three partial hypotheses for individual methods or tools were tested:

H1: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of selected methods, particular training and development of employees (1a) mentoring; 1b) coaching; 1c) job rotation) in terms of talent management implementation.

H2: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of selected methods, in particular, performance evaluation (2a) evaluation interview; 2b) self-diagnostic questionnaire; 2c) 360-degree feedback) in terms of talent management implementation.

H3: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of selected remuneration methods (3a) variable performance remuneration; 3b) regular premiums; 3c) status advantages) in terms of talent management implementation.

For primary data collection, the method of the standardized questionnaire was used. Data was collected in the period from January to May 2021. Figure 1. shows the composition of the research sample concerning the state of implementation of talent management. Thus, it is clear that companies employing talent management (n = 53) account for a significantly lower share of the research sample than companies not employing talent management (n = 134), which was also assumed. The Mann-Whitney U test at a significance level of 5% was used to test the hypotheses, i.e., to determine statistically significant differences between the companies that implemented and those that did not implement talent management practices.



**Figure 1. Research sample**

Sources: developed by the authors.

**Results.** The research aimed to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of methods in implementing HRM practices in terms of whether or not the company has implemented talent management. The first practice examined was training and development. It is a practice that several authors consider to be one of the most important practices to be part of the implemented talent management. Given that training and development is part of the HRM of almost every organization (regardless of the implementation of talent management), attention has been focused on training and development methods representing an innovative, modern way of employee development. They are more expensive and therefore are more likely to be used to a greater extent by companies that have implemented talent management. The research subject was three methods, based on which three hypotheses were tested.

H1a: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of mentoring in terms of the

implementation of talent management.

H1b: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of the coaching in terms of the implementation of talent management.

H1c: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of the job rotation in terms of the implementation of talent management.

The hypotheses were tested using the Mann-Whitney U test. Table 1 shows the results.

**Table 1. Testing of hypothesis H1 (partial hypotheses H1a, H1b, H1c)**

<b>Mann-Whitney U Test</b>					
<b>By variable Rate of use of education and development methods Marked tests are significant at <math>p &lt; 0.05000</math></b>					
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Rank sum implemented TM</b>	<b>Rank sum not implemented TM</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p-value</b>
mentoring	3064.000	2396.000	1018.000	2.183564	0.028995
coaching	3373.000	2971.000	955.000	3.580326	0.000343
job rotation	3083.000	3133.000	1117.000	2.407894	0.016045

Sources: developed by the authors.

The results of hypothesis testing confirmed that companies with implemented talent management and without implemented talent management show statistically significant differences in the use of selected methods. In particular, training and development are as follows: in the case of mentoring (H1a is accepted), coaching method (H1b is accepted), and the job rotation method (H1c is accepted). Given the assumptions for all three examined methods were confirmed, hypothesis H1 is accepted. It could be stated that there are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of training and development methods between the examined samples of companies.

The second practice examined was evaluating the individual performance of employees. An effective employee performance appraisal system is an important tool for motivating employees to perform better, building loyalty, and, consequently, employee retention. Performance appraisal is a common part of human resource management. Still, it is not always innovative enough to assess employee performance as comprehensively as possible and to provide feedback, and, in particular, to motivate better results. It requires the application of several evaluation methods at regular intervals. For the research, evaluation methods including evaluation interviews, self-diagnostic questionnaires, and 360-degree feedback were chosen.

H2a: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of the method of performance-oriented evaluation interview in terms of the implementation of talent management.

H2b: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of the self-diagnostic questionnaire method in terms of implementing talent management.

H2c: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of the 360-degree feedback method in terms of implementing talent management.

The hypotheses were tested using the Mann-Whitney U test. Table 2 demonstrates the results. The results of hypothesis testing in all cases showed  $p < 0.05$ , based on which all three partial hypotheses (H2a, H2b, and H2c) were accepted. Thus, it could be confirmed that enterprises with implemented talent management and without implemented talent management showed statistically significant differences even in terms of performance evaluation practice, in particular in the use of the methods of evaluation interview, self-diagnostic questionnaire, and 360-degree feedback. Therefore, hypothesis H2 would be accepted.

**Table 2. Testing of hypothesis H2 (partial hypotheses H2a, H2b, H2c)**

<b>Mann-Whitney U Test</b>					
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**By variable Rate of use of education and development methods Marked tests are significant at  $p < 0.05000$**

Variable	Rank sum implemented TM	Rank sum not implemented TM	U	Z	p-value
evaluation interview	3678.500	3224.500	1013.500	2.569125	0.010196
self-diagnostic questionnaire	3373.000	2971.000	955.000	3.580326	0.000343
360 degree feedback	3229.500	3325.500	1180.500	2.411523	0.015886

Sources: developed by the authors.

The research also paid attention to rewarding employees as a necessary tool for the retention of the best employees. Therefore, for the remuneration system to be effective and fulfill its purpose, it must build on a performance appraisal system and reflect the real performance of employees. At the same time, the system must use tools to build employee loyalty through incentive benefits; in the case of key employees, certain status benefits that would reflect the importance of the employee concerning the company should also be included. Concerning remuneration, the rate of use of the variable remuneration system (depending on performance), regular bonuses (based on the fulfillment of objectives), and status benefits were examined.

H3a: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of the variable remuneration system in terms of implementing talent management.

H3b: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of regular bonuses in terms of implementing talent management.

H3c: There are statistically significant differences in the rate of use of status benefits in terms of implementing talent management.

Table 3 shows the results.

**Table 3. Testing of hypothesis H3 (partial hypotheses H3a, H3b, H3c)**

**Mann-Whitney U Test**

**By variable Rate of use of education and development methods Marked tests are significant at  $p < 0.05000$**

Variable	Rank sum implemented TM	Rank sum not implemented TM	U	Z	p-value
remuneration system	3038.500	3295.500	1210.500	1.975272	0.048238
regular premiums	3300.000	3254.000	1109.000	2.831533	0.004633
status benefits	2963.500	3141.500	1188.500	1.857739	0.063207

Sources: developed by the authors.

The results of hypothesis testing in the case of remuneration practice showed that statistically significant differences between companies in terms of the implementation of talent management were confirmed in the case of 2 examined variables, namely a variable remuneration system and regular bonuses. In the case of status-related benefits (H3c), the hypothesis was rejected, as  $p > 0.05$ . Hypotheses H3a and H3b were accepted.

The research aimed at comparing companies which implemented talent management with those that did not. Results in most cases confirmed our assumptions regarding selected HRM practices. In the case of training and development, it was confirmed that the examined samples of companies use all three examined methods (mentoring, coaching, and job rotation) to a different extent. The results regarding testing the H2 hypothesis showed statistically significant differences in the practice of performance evaluation, using the method of evaluation interview, self-diagnostic questionnaire, and 360-degree feedback. In the case of the employees' remuneration practices, the hypotheses were confirmed in two cases, namely the extent of using a variable system of remuneration and the provision of regular bonuses.

Based on the research results, it could be assumed that the implementation of talent management is associated with a different level of implementation of researched personnel practices and a different degree of use of most researched methods, particularly training and development, evaluation, and remuneration of employees.

**Conclusions.** Companies that aim to have and retain the best employees should pay attention to personnel practices, as they are a tool for attracting and retaining talented employees. At present, companies have a wide range of different ways and methods at their disposal to influence their employees. The effective implementation of personnel practices creates the ideal environment for the implementation of talent management. It is in the interest of personnel managers to apply innovative methods to develop, evaluate, or remunerate remarkably talented employees. Effective implementation of HRM practices is a means to support high engagement and build employee loyalty, and last but not least, to build the image of a quality employer.

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**Талант-менеджмент: інноваційні методи управління людськими ресурсами**

У статті визначено, що залучення та утримання талановитих працівників в компанії є одним із головних завдань сучасного управління людськими ресурсами. Таким чином, досліджувана тематика є актуальною як для науковців, так і представників бізнес-сектору. Головною метою статті є аналітичне оцінювання ефективності інноваційних методів управління людськими ресурсами (HRM-методів) на основі результатів порівняльного аналізу компаній, які впровадили та не впровадили систему управління талантами у господарську діяльність. Підґрунтям дослідження стали теоретичні напрацювання та результати анкетування 187 компаній Словачької Республіки. Опитування респондентів проведено у січні-червні 2021 року. Для досягнення поставленої мети було досліджено сучасний стан впровадження методів управління талантами у Словачькій Республіці. Авторами здійснено перевірку наявності статистично значущих відмінностей у рівнях використання окремих інноваційних HRM-методів, пов'язаних із залученням, розвитком та утриманням талановитих співробітників між компаніями, які впровадили та не впровадили систему управління талантами. Для визначення доцільності використання відповідного HRM-методу було застосовано шкалу Лайкерта від 1 до 5 (де 1 – низький рівень ефективності застосування методу, 5 – високий). У ході дослідження здійснено оцінювання дієвості HRM-методів, а саме: Н1 – доступ до навчання та розвитку, Н2 – оцінювання індивідуальних досягнень, Н3 – винагорода. Для кожного методу було перевірено три часткові гіпотези. Методологія даного дослідження заснована на U-тесті Манна-Уїтні при рівні значущості 5%. За результатами дослідження підтверджено статистично значущі відмінності у застосуванні методів управління талантами між компаніями, які впровадили та не впровадили систему управління талантами у випадку 8 змінних. При цьому у випадку однієї змінної, гіпотезу дослідження не підтверджено.

**Ключові слова:** управління людськими ресурсами, управління талантами, методи управління людськими ресурсами, впровадження системи управління талантами.