SELECTED ASPECTS OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN A SPORTSWEAR COMPANY

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Introduction/background: The essence of human resource management is the effective and strategic management of the organisation's people. The key elements of this process are recruiting and selecting appropriate candidates, developing and motivating employees, ensuring harmonious team relations, evaluating staff and managing their departures. Appropriate human resource management contributes to increased productivity, employee engagement and the achievement of organisational goals.

Aim of the paper: The aim of this study is to present the functioning of selected human resource management processes among retail shop employees in a retail company in the sports and functional apparel industry, and to develop conclusions and recommendations contributing to the improvement of HRM processes in the studied company and other organisations.

Materials and methods: For the aim of the study such research techniques like observation, interview and questionnaire survey were used.

Results and conclusions: As a result of the research conducted, conclusions have been developed regarding individual human resource management processes. Recommendations were also made that can be used to improve HRM both in the organisation studied and in other companies. Among the most important areas for improvement were the process of managing departures and the incentive systems used in the organisation.

Keywords: human resource management, motivation systems, employee evaluation, departures management, learning organization.

1. Introduction

Human resource management covers a number of personnel processes carried out in organizations, such as: employment planning, recruitment, evaluation and remuneration, motivation to work, training and development, determining labor productivity and costs, managing diversity and inclusion, managing departures and many others (Borys, 2008, p. 20). Currently, human resource management plays a strategic role in company management and

strives to discover and care for future human capital in its activities. Along with the development of the area of human resources management, the sources of competitiveness on the market were noticed in human resources. Human resource management plays a key role in attracting, developing and retaining the best talents, which is fundamental to the success and competitiveness of an organization. Nowadays, HR is no longer just an administrative department in the company, but it has a strategic function that is involved in the development of human capital and affects the entire organization to remain competitive and effective in a changing business environment. The vast majority of studies is related to a selected process of human resources management embedded in some unusual circumstances - the introduction of innovations, mergers of enterprises, restructuring. A significant number of studies also concern units of a public organization.

The aim of the work is to present the functioning of selected human resource management processes of retail stores in a commercial enterprise from the sports and functional clothing industry. The main thesis was the statement that in the examined company there are selected processes of human resources management, the principles of which are consistent with the general strategy of the organization, and its employees know and understand the systems of motivating, assessing and developing human resources functioning in the structure of the organization. In order to confirm or refute the thesis, several research questions were asked, which concerned the processes of human resource planning, employee selection methods, organization of training, motivational systems, employee evaluation, knowledge management in the organization and activities related to the management of employee's resignations. Within the empirical research surveys, interviews and observations were conducted.

The subject scope of this work includes employees at various levels and managers or the owners of chain's sportswear shops.

2. The essence of human resource management and its elements

Companies and organisations perform various functions, among which, in the context of human resource management, the personnel function should be mentioned. Its subject is the effective acquisition and use of human resources and their adjustment to existing organisational structures (Pocztowski, 1996, p. 9). The main idea of human resource management is the effective use of human potential to achieve organisational goals. Human resource management as an independent function is considered to have emerged at the turn of the 20th century. But even before that, R. Owen - an English manufacturer and reformer - pointed to human resources as equally important components of production as financial and material resources (Pawlak, 2011, p. 13). However, before human resource management as we know it today was created, the personnel function had to go through many phases of development. As Pocztowski

(1996) aptly notes, the evolution of the personnel function is characterised by both continuity and change. The same issues of working conditions, remuneration, motivation, etc. are still being developed, while the approaches of researchers, prevailing trends, the legal and socio-economic situation vary. The following is a brief description of selected areas of human resource management, which have been the subject of research for this paper.

2.1. Employment planning

Employment planning is an integral part of business planning and human resources management, being the starting point for other activities undertaken as part of the company's personnel function (Pocztowski, 2006, p. 101). The concept of employment planning can be defined as balancing the future demand for human resources in the organization with their future supply (Pawlak, 2011, p. 171). However, this definition does not fully reflect the meaning of employment planning. Expanding the concept with important components, it is worth quoting the definition proposed by C. Zając (2007, p. 44), according to which employment planning is determining the needs and requirements in the sphere of human resources in terms of quantity and quality, and creating plans to meet these needs. Human resource planning can also be considered in a narrow and broad sense. In the narrow sense, it is the determination of personnel needs only in terms of the number and qualification and professional structure of employees, while in the broad sense, these are all manifestations of planning - both the size of employment and its structure, as well as issues related to recruitment, layoffs, salaries, training, promotions and evaluating employees (Pawlak, 2011, p. 171).

In human resource planning, one can distinguish the so-called "hard" and "soft" elements (Zając, 2007, p. 45). The 'hard' elements include a quantitative analysis of staffing needs, i.e. identifying the right number of the right people needed at a certain time. The 'soft' elements relate to the creation and shaping of the company's organisational culture with regard to personnel matters. This involves integrating the company's goals with the values, beliefs and behaviours of employees. In spite of the constant volatility of the organisational environment, the lack of confidence of managers and the lack of sufficient evidence of the effectiveness of workforce planning methods in achieving corporate tasks and objectives, and the resulting difficulties, human resource planning should be implemented and its methods improved. This is due to the growing importance of human capital and its role as a factor in business competitiveness (Armstrong, 2007, p. 278; Dessler, 2019, p. 22).

2.2. Recruitment and selection processes

Satisfying the demand for employees resulting from the created employment plan takes place through the selection of employees (Zjąc, 2007, p. 47). It is a set of procedures related to staffing positions and activities undertaken to fill them with the right people (Król, Ludwiczyński, 2006, p. 197). Selection of employees can be considered in a narrow approach, including recruitment, selection and introduction of an employee to work, and in a broad

approach, which is divided into three phases: preparation of selection, proper selection and control of the selection process (Listwan, 2004, p. 109). This means that in a broader perspective, the selection of employees begins with employment planning and the definition of requirements profiles for a specific position. There are two stages in the process: recruitment and selection. Recruitment consists in preparing advertisements for a vacancy, disseminating it and collecting a list of candidates. In the course of employee selection, internal and external recruitment can be carried out. Internal recruitment is directing specific job offers to already employed employees (Pocztowski, 2006, p. 136). It is possible when the company has a staff reserve, i.e. a surplus of employees in relation to the needs, or when it is possible to move the employee to another job and retrain him or her. The undoubted advantage of internal recruitment is its lower cost compared to external recruitment. In addition, the company already has a complete set of information about a given employee, which reduces the risk of making a mistake when recruiting. The current employee also needs less time for adaptation and his/her integration with the company is strengthened (Pawlak, 2011, pp. 200-201). External recruitment, on the other hand, consists in looking for an employee on the external labor market. In practice, it is done by concluding a new employment contract or leasing employees from another company or temporary work agency (Pocztowski, 2006, p. 136). Among the advantages of external recruitment, it is worth mentioning the possibility of "refreshing" employee resources by introducing a person with new qualifications, skills, experience or ideas to the company. An external employee also has an objective point of view on the workplace and its functioning. Conducting external recruitment also has a positive impact on the organization's susceptibility to changes (Pawlak, 2011, p. 210).

The issue of choosing the type of recruitment in an enterprise depends primarily on the type of job for which the recruitment takes place, but also on the stage of development of the organization, promotion rules and applied management methods (Jamka, 2001, p. 19). Selection that is the process of assessing the suitability of candidates for work, the purpose of which is to select one of them, begins when at least two people have responded to the job advertisement. Selection is usually carried out in two stages: pre-selection, which results in a shortlist of candidates, and selection, in which the right candidate is selected. The most frequently used selection tools are the analysis of documents (e.g. CV, cover letter), survey, interview (including job interview) and tests (e.g. psychological, personality tests) (Pawlak, 2011, pp. 211-224).

2.3. Development of human resources

In response to the complexity and changeability of the environment and the complication of internal procedures and structures in organizations, a new field of the personnel function was created - human resources development (Pocztowski, 2006, pp. 298-299). This took place - similarly to the development of human resource management itself - in the 1980s and consisted in a departure from ordinary employee training to entire learning processes (both individual and

organizational). The development of human resources comes from the conviction that people are the organization's unique and most difficult to copy resource, and human capital is one of the most important components of its intellectual capital (Karaszewska, 2010, p. 124).

New requirements for human resources management, continuous improvement of competitiveness and support for achieving long-term goals of the organization had to be covered by other forms of action than before. The development of human resources allows for the creation of such conditions for shaping and improving human capital that positively affect the implementation of the company's strategy and respond to the needs and aspirations of employees. A. Pocztowski (2006, p. 300) emphasizes that the area of research and practice in the field of human resource development in an organization depends on the adopted definition, and therefore it can apply to both training and learning processes, to strategy design. It also formulates a definition according to which the development of human resources includes properly configured undertakings: expanding knowledge, developing the abilities and skills of employees, shaping their attitudes and behavior in the work process, as well as building awareness in the field of economic, social and ecological conditions for effective work and sustainable development of the organization and strengthening the employability of people providing work. It shows that human resource development is an integral part of human resource management and is aimed at developing the entire organization through tools such as career development or talent management (Werner, DeSimone, 2011).

The evolution of human resources development has contributed to the popularization of such concepts as organizational learning and learning organizations (Senge, 2006; Płoszaj, Rok, 2012, p. 62).

2.4. Motivating employees – incentive system

Motivation is called a classic function of organization management and one of the most important roles of human resources management (Zając, 2007, p. 133). An effective manager should have the ability to motivate, know what is a reward for his/her employee and have the conditions to offer this reward. In order to fully use the potential of human capital in an enterprise, an effective incentive policy should be pursued, which increases the competitiveness of the organization. This is because motivation determines employee behavior and, as a result, real work results, determining the final degree of achievement of individual and organizational goals (Karaś, 2003, p. 12). Motivating is influencing others in such a way that they move in the direction we want (Armstrong, 2007, p. 210). In relation to the company, it is a process of conscious and intentional impact of the organization on the motives (i.e. reasons) of the employee's behavior by creating means and opportunities to implement his/her personal value systems and expectations to achieve the organization's goals (Karaś, 2003, p. 12). Motivation is the mental state of an employee, expressed in readiness to make a specific effort aimed at achieving the goals of the organization. The level of this effort is

conditioned by the ability to meet the individual needs of the employee (Robbins, et.al., 1996, p.212).

In the above definitions, one can notice a scrolling division into individual, personal and organizational goals. This is related to the so-called internal and external motivation. Internal motivation comes from ourselves and is expressed in the pursuit of goals set by us. The source of internal motivation are automatic stimuli that determine human behavior, e.g. responsibility, the possibility of promotion, challenges posed by work. External motivation is a system of rewards and punishments created by an organization. Using it brings quick but temporary results, because it refers to the acquired, not innate, characteristics of employees (Armstrong, 2007, p. 212). Over the years, researchers have developed many theories of motivation that they believe would find wide application in various organizations. These theories can be divided into two groups: content theories and process theories. The first of them explain the internal causes that trigger a given behavior. They consist in the identification and classification of needs that have been recognized as the motives for this procedure. They provide practical information on the diverse needs of employees. Process theories, on the other hand, are focused on understanding the triggers of human action and the ways of starting, maintaining and extinguishing this behavior. They provide information on how employees make decisions about specific behavior, as well as on the degree of influence of factors on them such as: aspirations, preferences, rewards or punishments (Pocztowski, 2006, p. 204).

The shape of the incentive system in a given organization depends, among others, on its size, form of ownership, organizational culture, operating industry, scale of operation or development phase.

2.5. Evaluating employees

According to the academic literature, an evaluating employees (known also as employee appraisal) is an oral or written view valuing an employee's personal characteristics, behaviour and performance. More simply, it is any activity or set of activities aimed at collecting, checking, comparing, communicating, updating and using information about an employee. This means that we will consider not only formalised periodic procedures, but also day-to-day judgements as evaluations of a job holder. Day-to-day evaluations, which we would not pay attention to without a deeper look, are intended to instruct the employee in correcting his or her behaviour. Periodic evaluation, on the other hand, provides comprehensive and strategic information, e.g.: on a person's potential. This makes up the input-action-output evaluation. According to this premise, each employee is evaluated at the entrance to the organisation, i.e. at the time of the employment decision, when his or her qualities and suitability for the job are assessed. Performance appraisal takes place while the work is being done, while exit appraisal is about the effects of the person's work. It is also worth noting that the person assessing an employee is not only his/her superiors, but also colleagues or external actors. However, it should be mentioned that the object of employee evaluation is not the person,

but his or her qualities, work activities and the effects of this work (Pocztowki, 2006, p. 224). Employee appraisal can take place at different levels. In a basic sense, a distinction is made between individual and group (team) appraisal, but a specific organisational unit and the whole enterprise can also be evaluated. The use of a particular level of appraisal is influenced by the size of the enterprise and its strategy (Listwan, 2004, p. 204). Employee appraisal fulfils a fundamental function in human resource management. Every personnel decision in the organisation should be preceded by it, and the appropriateness of the decision made depends on the quality of the information provided by the appraisal (Pyrek, 2004, p. 110). Among the classifications of employee appraisal functions proposed by researchers, one can distinguish those focusing on the particular objects and purpose of appraisal, e.g. the division of appraisal functions according to McGregor into administrative, informational and motivational purposes. Another form is that developed by Cummings and Schwab, who divided the purposes of appraisal into those related to the evaluative function - set in the perspective of the past; and the developmental function - looking to the future (Pocztowski, 2006, p. 43).

2.6. Departures management

Managing departures in an organisation is a key element in the effective functioning of a business (Adamska-Chudzińska, 2020, pp. 214-227). As the labour market and employee expectations evolve, effective management of this process is crucial to maintain stability, business continuity and keep the organisation competitive. Among the challenges of managing departures, the loss of knowledge and experience is identified (Piskorz et al., 2022, pp. 11-30). When employees leave an organisation, they usually take their knowledge, skills and experience with them. This can negatively affect productivity and efficiency and require the expenditure of additional resources to train new employees. In addition, recruitment costs and time must also be considered (Rubenstein et al., 2017). The process of recruiting new employees is time-consuming and costly. It requires advertising vacancies, screening candidates, conducting interviews and initial training. Project abandonment can also be a problem: The departure of a key employee can interrupt or delay important projects, negatively affecting the organisation's performance. Furthermore, employee departures can affect the organisational culture, especially if many key employees decide to leave the company. This can result in lower morale and commitment among the remaining employees. Knowledge transfer is also a challenge. Transferring knowledge from departing employees to new team members is time-consuming and not always easy, especially when knowledge is unstructured or undocumented. Managing departures in an organisation is an integral part of HR strategies and human resource management. An effective approach to this issue allows organisations to minimise the negative impact of departures, maintain business continuity and attract and retain talented employees. With the right strategies in place, organisations can build a stable and productive workforce capable of meeting changing market challenges (Hom et al., 2017, pp. 530-545).

3. Description of the research methods

To carry out this study research techniques such as observation, interview and questionnaire survey were used. The subject of the study was the environment of retail shop employees and managers/owners in a retail company in the sports and functional apparel industry. The main research objective was to present the functioning of selected human resource management processes in these units. In the practical dimension, the work aimed to develop conclusions that would serve to formulate recommendations aimed at improving the functioning of the enterprise in the area of human resource management processes in the surveyed company. The results may also constitute a benchmark for other companies willing to improve HRM processes in their businesses. The results of the research were to provide answers to the following questions:

1) Are human resources planning processes applied and are there routine methods of employee selection defined?
2) Is training provided for all employees or just for selected ones?
3) What motivations systems are in place in the company?
4) Are employee appraisals carried out in the company and how are the results of the appraisal used?
5) Does the organisation exhibit the characteristics of a learning organisation?
6) Are measures taken in the organisation to manage departures?

In view of the above, the following research thesis was also formulated: the company under study introduced selected human resource management processes, the assumptions of which are in line with the overall strategy of the organisation, and its employees know and understand the motivation, evaluation and human resource development systems operating in the organisation's structure. The research problem formulated for this study is to identify the key factors influencing the various dimensions of human resource management in the enterprise.

In order to carry out the research, it was decided to compare the expected state (assumptions of the organisation) with the actual state (impressions of employees). First, secondary research was carried out by analysing the literature on the subject. This was followed by a structured interview with the manager (and simultaneously an owner) of the retail store. The questions were developed in advance and had a fixed order of asking. This form was dictated by the desire to obtain information on precise areas, procedures and regulations regarding human resource management. In addition, this form of interview mostly allows for objective answers, which was a key component of the research. In the next step, a questionnaire survey took place among the employees of the retail showrooms. Questions included in the questionnaire addressed a number of issues related to the following human resource management processes: employment planning and recruitment, employee motivation, employee appraisals, human resource development, knowledge management and departures management. A total of 32 respondents took part in the survey. The structure of the survey is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

Structure of respondents

Age			Length of work		
Respondents	**L. odp.**	**%**	**Respondents**	**Quantity**	**%**
Less than 20 years	1	3,10%	Less than 1 year	7	21,90%
20-29 years	22	68,80%	1-3 years	10	31,30%
30-39 years	7	21,90%	3-6 years	10	31,30%
40-49 years	2	6,30%	6-10 years	4	12,50%
More than 50 years	0	0%	More than 10 years	1	3,40%
Position in the company					
Position		**Quantity**		**%**	
Manager		3		9,38%	
Deputy Manager		3		9,38%	
Decorator		6		18,75%	
Client Assistant		13		40,63%	
Senior Client Assistant		7		21,88%	

Source: Authors' own study.

The entire research process was rounded off by participatory observation, characterised by the researcher entering a specific group of people and observing "from the inside", through the eye of a member of such a community. The insights gained in this way made it possible to supplement the information gained in the survey research.

The research sample was selected in a non-random network way - from among the employees of the organisation's retail shops, those working in shops located in the Silesian voivodship were selected for the study. The questionnaire of the survey could be completed by all persons working in the shops, regardless of their seniority and position. The questionnaire was uploaded to the Google Sheets platform and sent to individual respondents electronically using internal e-mail. This type of research was conducted in April and May 2022. The structured interview with the retail shop manager was also based on the Google Sheets platform, where questions were posted with space to leave answers in the form of notes. The interview was conducted in May 2022. The interviewee was the manager of an in-house salon located in one of the cities in the Silesian Voivodeship. As he works with the company through a franchise, he reports directly to the company and is also the owner of this retail outlet. A participatory observation was also conducted in the same retail shop.

4. Human resource management processes - analysis of research results

The organisation, whose showrooms were surveyed, was established in 1995 in southern Poland. The company offers clothing and accessories for amateur and professional sports. Sales activities are conducted in Poland in more than 200 retail outlets and 161 partner and seasonal stands. The company has shops abroad, including in Romania, Latvia, Slovakia, Lithuania and the Czech Republic. The organisation currently has the status of a joint-stock company. The retail shops are divided into those directly subordinate to the company and its

own shops, which are leased to agents in the form of franchises. In this case, the employees of such a shop do not conclude a contract with the company, but with the owner of the shop.

The description of the research will be presented in correlation to the research questions posed for this article.

4.1. Are there human resource planning processes in place in the company and whether routine employee selection methods are identified

The research shows that the organisation uses an employment planning process, which is carried out by the showroom's managers. The planning process in the surveyed company mainly manifests itself in the determination of the number of working hours in the workplace, the preferred form of employment and the division of jobs into specialised positions. The organisation has not formulated detailed planning procedures - management operates on the basis of an allocated budget and a defined number of FTEs. Employees perceive a link between human resource planning and the organisation's strategy, although it is likely that in some commercial units, managers do not follow the direction set by the organisation or do not communicate the strategic objectives of the company to their employees. The results of the question if the respondents notice the correlation between human resource planning and the organisation's strategy is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Perception of human resource planning processes in relation to corporate strategy

Respondent's	% of respondents
Definitely yes	12,50
Yes	37,50
I don't know/I have no opinion	34,40
No	3,10
Definitely no	12,50

Source: Authors' own study.

The organisation has prepared a framework set of qualities and skills required by functional employees, i.e. salon managers, deputies and decorators. The definition of personality profiles applies to a lesser extent to salespeople (client assistants and senior client assistants) - managers are given more leeway in this area during the recruitment process. The recruitment process itself for new employees is relatively easy. It consists of sending or delivering a CV in response to a job offer. Selected candidates are invited to an interview. For some jobs, such as decorator, the candidate's skills and knowledge are also tested.

There is also internal recruitment within the company and it is possible to develop a career path within internal recruitment. Employees in retail outlets receive emails with job offers from the head office and the specialised unit responsible for arranging new shops. The decision to move an employee to a new position must be supported by the opinion of the regional manager. When analysing the human resources planning process in the analyzed unit, it is worth noting the poor cooperation between the head office and the shop managers. The organisation does not

support them in the planning of employment in the sales units, nor does it give them the tools and procedures to organise employment in such a way as to ensure stability of employment and the highest possible quality of work. On the one hand, this may be due to the nature of the workplace - the largest age group in the units surveyed were young people (e.g. students) just entering the labour market. However, the core of the workforce should be made up of permanent employees, distinguished by their high level of knowledge and experience, which allows them not only to do their job better, but also to pass on good practices to new employees. Also noteworthy is the lack of support from the organisation's HR department in recruiting staff. The entire process rests with the salon managers, who formulate and publish job offers and analyse the responses received and conduct interviews. Acting together with an experienced recruiter could have an impact on the quality of the employees recruited.

4.2. Is there training provided in the surveyed company and does it apply to all employees?

The research confirmed that staff training takes place in the organisation. This takes a variety of forms. On-the-job training is provided by managers on behalf of the head office and when new employees are introduced or when systems and software in use are changed. Most training is based on a dedicated e-learning platform for the company's employees. This solution allows them to expand their knowledge anytime, anywhere. However, some specialised training courses require participation in videoconferences. Employee training is available to all employees, regardless of their position. However, some training programmes are designed for managers or their deputies only. Most of the training in an organisation is about the products offered and their features. This is crucial for sales staff, who can use this knowledge when advising customers on their purchases. Another type of training is sales training, which develops salespeople's customer service skills. Every employee must also receive training in data protection and visual merchandising (VM) principles. The variety of trainings provided for the company's employees and the training methods is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Human resource development activities that are undertaken in the organisation

Development activity/Training	Number of responses
Induction programmes for new employees	14
General development workshops	6
Sales skills development trainings	10
Products trainings	16
Training's ways and methods	
Traditional training materials	9
Mobile training applications	7
E-learning platforms	14

Source: Authors' own study.

The company's employees were positive about the training they had received. They felt that it had a positive impact on the quality of their work, improved their work with customers and made their work easier. This means that the organisation has approached the issue of staff development well. The training materials it has produced are valuable and easy to understand. The use of an online platform, which is a convenient training tool for both learners and trainers, is also commendable. Digital materials can take a variety of interesting and engaging forms that better influence learning and the acquisition of new knowledge. However, it was noted that apart from the mandatory training that every employee has to undergo during the probationary period, there are no incentives for self-learning by employees. New courses are rarely added to the platform, which leads to fatigue among those who are constantly training.

Perhaps a better option would be to introduce gamification to the platform to motivate employees to take training, and to provide employees with shorter but more frequent training sessions to consolidate knowledge or remind them of certain important topics. Such a solution would reach both those who want to train - they would have the added activity of gamification and achievements - and those who do not want to train - the motivation of earning a badge, achieving a high level of skill would encourage them to develop.

4.3. What motivating systems are in place in the company?

According to both employees and management, the incentive system is equated with salary, cash and material rewards, and these are only given to salon managers and their sales staff. The organisation did not provide similar incentives for the rest of the workforce, although before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic it organised sales competitions for teams to earn bonuses. Managers have the opportunity to organise challenges for their staff, with the amount and quantity of rewards subject to approval by the regional manager. During the reporting period, the organisation organised a sales competition - the first since August 2021. Currently (as of May 2022), employees only receive discounts on purchases from the organisation - monthly, quarterly and Christmas discounts. The monthly and Christmas discounts are fixed and apply to all employees regardless of performance. Quarterly discounts, on the other hand, are given if a store meets its KPI targets in the months of the quarter. When asked about the factors that motivate them in addition to financial rewards, employees cited the ability to work flexible hours (15 responses), opportunities for promotion and career development (14 responses) as well as participation in trainings (14 responses). However, doubts remained as to whether employees felt motivated by the desire to develop and the opportunities offered by the organisation, or by the lack of other alternatives. The majority of the workforce is young and flexible working hours allow them to combine work and study, and they may express a desire to develop their careers within the organisation. However, in the case of functional staff, such as decorators or senior sales staff (client assistants), who have already been promoted within the organisation and are unable or unwilling to take up job offers at head office, such forms of motivation will no longer be attractive and may lead to frustration and ultimately

job turnover. Employees also pointed out other shortcomings in the motivation system. One of these was the lack of an individual approach to each store. Winning sales competitions is more likely for larger and more popular stores, as the criteria for competitions are most often based on KPIs for the whole region rather than individual stores. If a retail unit's target is lower than the regional target, it may be impossible to achieve, for example due to a lack of product range, lower footfall in a given period, or a plethora of other tasks taking staff away from customers.

As a result, the organisation's desire to motivate employees to perform at a higher level may have the opposite effect, as these employees, knowing that they cannot meet the requirements of the competition, will not take the initiative. These observations clearly point to the need to review the organisation's incentive system. The company's strategy, focused on increasing sales, should direct the work of salespeople in such a way that they do not have to achieve the set KPIs, but want to do so. Therefore, the incentive system should be based on clear and fair rules and be universal for all employees in the sales unit. This, combined with the gamification discussed above, could produce good results not only for the company in terms of performance and quality of the workforce, but also for the employees themselves - job satisfaction, motivation to work and self-development, as well as financial benefits.

4.4. Are employee appraisals carried out in the surveyed company and how are the results of the appraisal used?

Based on the results of the research, it was found that the organisation mainly carries out team appraisals (one trading unit – 50% of responses) and group appraisals (several trading units – 37% of responses). Formalised individual appraisals do not take place unless there is a need to do so, e.g. when an employee reaches the end of their probationary period (19% responses). Team appraisals are conducted by the Regional Manager during a store visit. The assessment criteria relate to the sales assistants, their product knowledge and interaction with customers; the decorators, the preparation of the shop window, mannequins and walls; the management, leading the team's work, solving problems; and the store managers, the physical layout of the store and stock control. After each visit, a report is written by the regional manager, including the assessment itself, but also areas for improvement. A group evaluation is also carried out by the regional manager. It consists of a ranking of the execution of monthly plans and KPIs.

Group evaluation has daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly and annual dimensions. The result of the quarterly evaluation is that employees receive additional discounts on purchases. The direction taken by the organisation is to emphasise collective accountability for performance, encourage collaboration and build relationships with the team. The results of both group and team appraisals are public and available to all employees. In this way, each team member knows how the salon is doing and which parameters need to be improved. The same applies to individual appraisals, which are sometimes decided by management, and ongoing

performance appraisals by colleagues. Valuable comments and tips help people to work better, faster or more efficiently. Of course, and this must be emphasised, this is advice and guidance given with good intentions and in compliance with all the rules of culture and social coexistence, and not biting, malicious remarks. This is particularly important in relations with experienced employees who are involved in the adaptation process of new employees. The analysis of the research results has raised the question of whether it makes sense for organisations to abandon individual employee appraisals. On the one hand, it seems to be in line with the corporate doctrine of 'we make a team'. However, every team is made up of individuals who influence the team as a whole. It would therefore be worthwhile to isolate those individuals who are undermining the team - not necessarily intentionally - and change their behaviour in a way that strengthens the focus on the organisation's common goal.

Of course, this can be done on its own, without formalised assessment procedures, but the execution may produce inconsistent results and fail to deliver the expected results. This brings us back to the problem of the lack of cooperation between the company's HR department and the store managers. If individual assessment criteria were prepared for the managers, they could, together with the employees, shape the team's behaviour in such a way that the work is performed more effectively and the defined goals are achieved. This would certainly work well with the gamification mentioned above and a properly designed incentive system, as a team approach does not exclude individualism.

4.5. Does the organisation exhibit the characteristics of a learning organisation?

A learning organisation is one that engages and empowers people to develop and learn. There is also a link between employees' personal goals and the organisation's goals. The research found that the company in question did not have the characteristics of a learning organisation. Although it has resources and tools to support people development, such as an e-learning platform for showroom staff, it does not encourage people to learn on their own. The company requires some mandatory training, while others are designed for those who are willing and interested.

A solution to this problem could be the gamification mentioned above, which would motivate employees to visit the training platform more often and learn new things as a result. However, the assumptions of organisational learning and knowledge management were found to work. The organisation has knowledge resources (e.g. product, ICT, process) and databases (e.g. sales) that are accessible to all employees via an internal network. This is knowledge management in a codified approach. The personal approach, which involves capturing and interpreting the knowledge of other employees, is rather absent. This reflects the lack of recognition of valuable, experienced employees, which will be discussed below. Organisational learning, i.e. the implementation of changes in the organisation that are not linked to the acquisition of knowledge, but to day-to-day operations and problem solving, is manifested in

the company under study in the existence of process studies that are updated according to the needs that arise.

4.6. Does the organisation have a departure management policy in place?

The research did not reveal the existence of an exit management process in the organisation. The company does not take steps to retain valuable employees and does not provide managers with the tools to do so. They can only ask employees who express a desire to change jobs about the reasons and factors influencing the decision, and try to mitigate the situation if they have the opportunity. In other cases, the employee is allowed to leave because all matters relating to the employee's remuneration and bonuses are determined and approved by the head office. Therefore, when employees were asked what motivated them to join and stay with the company, the atmosphere and close-knit working team were the most common factors. Other factors included flexible working hours, which allowed them to combine work with study or family commitments. Favourable financial conditions were the determining factor for those who were promoted to a higher position, e.g. manager, while working. This means that, apart from the conditions created by the employees themselves and their managers - we are talking about a friendly atmosphere - and flexible working hours, employees have little reason to stay in the organisation. This can lead to lower morale, poorer job performance and, as a result, underperformance. From the company's point of view, this is a problematic situation because it has a negative impact on the achievement of the organisation's strategic goals. If employees felt connected to the organisation itself, supported and understood by it, and wanted to work for it not just because it was convenient, but because it brought personal satisfaction or fulfilment, this would be reflected in their motivation to work and to achieve the organisation's goals.

In view of the above, it can be concluded that the non-existent or not fully functioning human resources management processes in the company under study create a chain system that weakens the motivation of the work teams in the commercial units and does not encourage them to work for the company. Despite the activities carried out to develop human resources, the company does not value experienced employees with a lot of knowledge and skills and does not try to keep them in its ranks. The result can be a weakening of human capital and a decline in the quality of work delivered. A disengaged workforce, convinced that their work is meaningless and undervalued for their proven contribution to the organisation, will affect sales performance and, in turn, the health of the business as a whole. This is a downward mechanism that should be changed as soon and as well as possible, as it can lead to irreparable financial, image and competitive losses.

5. Discussion

Today's organisations face increasing challenges in managing human resources. The role of HR in today's business world is crucial as a complex and dynamic labour market requires appropriate recruitment, development and retention strategies.

Many organisations now recognise that employee engagement has a direct impact on business productivity and efficiency. HR management is therefore becoming a strategic tool for building an engaged and competent team that brings long-term benefits to the organisation.

On the basis of a questionnaire survey carried out among the employees of the enterprise, the analysis of an interview given by the manager of the commercial unit and an observation carried out in the commercial unit, it was possible to partially confirm the hypothesis adopted in the study, which states that in the studied enterprise there are selected processes of human resources management, the assumptions of which are in line with the overall strategy of the organisation, and its employees know and understand the systems of motivation, assessment and development functioning in the structure of the organisation, First of all, the functioning of four out of five studied processes of human resources management was identified in the studied enterprise. These were the functions of human resources planning, motivation, assessment and development. One process that was not present in the company was departures management. However, the fact that the processes in question were functioning in the organisation did not mean that they were complete and effective.

At the start of the analysis, it also seemed that the assumptions of the company's strategy were rooted in the motivation system, the evaluation and development of human resources. The doctrine of the organisation is to focus on teamwork and achieving ever higher sales results. This is reflected in the appraisal system, which generally does not use individual appraisals, and in the incentive system, which offers certain rewards in return for achieving certain KPIs. However, the evaluation criteria, which also affect the incentive system, are unfair, discriminating against smaller stores and excluding some employees from participating. On the other hand, there is no consistent and systematic approach to staff development, which is designed to enhance the human capital of the organisation. This, combined with a lack of departures management, can lead to valuable employees leaving the organisation. The responses of the company's employees also suggest that the majority of them understand how the organisation's human resource management processes work. Only the equation of motivation with financial and material incentives and the appraisal system with formalised procedures were questioned.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

As a result of the research carried out, recommendations have been formulated with a view to shaping individual human resource management processes in such a way that both employees and the organisation are satisfied. The recommendations can be used by other companies with a professional approach to human resource management.

The first recommendation is to introduce gamification at the level of people development. The organisation is familiar with and uses the principles of knowledge management and organisational learning, but does not seem to be moving in the modern direction of a learning organisation. Gamification would encourage employees to participate in training on a dedicated e-learning platform and thus acquire useful knowledge and skills for their work. This would increase the value of the organisation's human capital. The second recommendation is to change the group and team evaluation criteria of the sales units to ensure that smaller stores are more accessible to the incentive system and, finally, to extend the incentive system to all employees in the sales units. The final recommendation is to take action on departures management. Refreshing the development system would be meaningless if well-trained people continue to leave the organisation. The strategic goals of the organisation can only be achieved by strengthening the teams with strong individuals.

One area for further research is to examine similar issues in commercial units in other regions. Other areas of human resource management are also worthy of further research, such as diversity management, ethical aspects of human resource management, or analysing approaches to employees as internal customers of the organisation.

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