



CONDITION OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATION IS EMPLOYEE EDUCATION

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Abstract: *When organisations implement innovations, respectively changes, they invest a lot of money in machines and technologies, and want to appreciate them. But results often do not correspond with expectations. It is therefore very important to be aware of the fact that how inputs are appreciated in a company is predominantly dependant on how people approach this change and how ready, or educated they are for its implementation. Our special survey analysed in this study shows how companies and organisations operating in Slovakia are aware of this strategy and how they implement it.*

Key words: *Human resources management, education process, innovative organisation, interviewed organisations, present state analysis,*

KEY SOURCE ARE EMPLOYEES AND CONDITION IS MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Priority source of effective operation and prosperity of each organisation is human potential. However, this statement cannot be understood in general, its validity lies in how it is ready for organisation tasks, what its education and culture, ability to cooperate, perception of social and ecological factors of environment etc. are. Systematic creation and usage of human potential is a precondition of building and development of strengths and competitive advantages of organisations. To make it reality, systemically framed management of human resources is necessary, orientating employees to achieve strategic goals and objectives of organisation. [2]

Process of positive changes requires a mixture of creativity, clear thinking and ability to finalize issues successfully. It requires a close cooperation of people who think with people who can implement an idea in practice. Management of organisation has to create environment with room for development of thoughts, new ideas, and offer means necessary for their implementation.[1]

Therefore, organisations which want to be competitive need constant participation in innovative transformation process. This process can be successful only in case that organisation creates environment where employees will be able and willing to adapt to constantly changing conditions. Innovative environment in organisation can be created and subsequently retained only under constant active support by management who does not support this environment in organisation only formally but actively encourages and motivates employees by different directed activities to share information, and in their permanent development and education [3].

Trends in education of employees are directed towards development and education of employees leading to performance increase and quality efficiency measurement under the influence of

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increasing pressure on constant change of environment. That results in the need of a change from random, respectively unplanned education (i.e. education when necessary courses and trainings are performed only on the basis of an impulse of a need to obtain the given knowledge, respectively experience) to general approach to education, to so called learning organisation. The aim of learning organisation is to reach permanent education of employees focused on performance increase immediately but also within a longer time horizon on the basis of continuously provided feedback.

We tried to map the awareness and implementation of this strategy by companies and organisations operating in Slovakia, through a special survey, which we analyse in this study.

RESEARCH CHARACTERISTICS

Objective of the article is to present results of the research conducted in the period from February 2011 to May 2011, aimed predominantly at finding out whether and how human resources management is currently implemented in organisations operating in Slovakia. Regarding extent of the given issue, research was divided into ten partial objectives, while one of them was to identify whether organisations realize the importance of focusing on education of their employees and innovative organisation implementation. This article is going to deal with results of this partial objective.

Set of respondents comprised 340 organisations operating in Slovakia, while the main condition posed on the organisation was the size of at least 50 employees. Overall size structure of interviewed organisations is given in Figure 1, implying that organisations with the number of employees between 50 and 300 were most represented in the research.

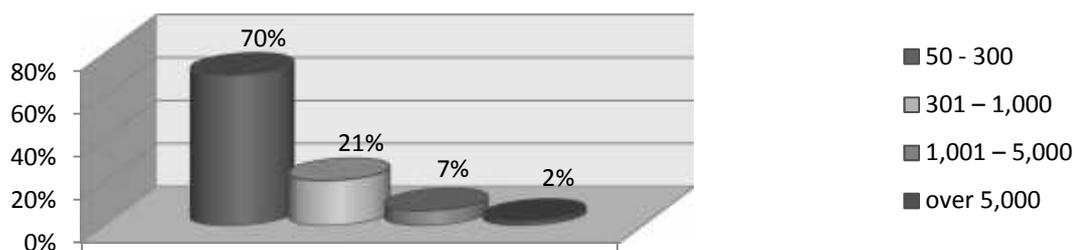


Figure 1 Size structure of the analysed organisations
Source: Authors

RESEARCH RESULTS

Within presentation of results of our broad-range questionnaire, we will introduce answers of organisations to three questions which we consider essential regarding the described sphere. First of all, we will focus on finding out whether organisations, respectively their executives, realize the importance of dealing with innovations, and subsequently, whether they declare this focus outwards as well as inwards in the form of defined objectives in the sphere of innovations. Last but not least, we were interested in whether organisations are actively concerned with education and development of their employees, as this fact can be pointed out as key in creation as well as in implementation of innovations, with regard to the fact that only employees understanding a change are able to appreciate, support and implement it correctly.

For the purpose of finding out whether company managements support innovation implementation, we were primarily interested in whether they realize their importance, and therefore we asked: „**Do you consider important that your organisation deals with innovations (in any sphere)?**“ Answers to this question sounded more than positive, as 93 % of executive employees gave positive answer to it. Remaining 7 % stated that it would be financially demanding for them to innovate in any sphere and they do not know if their company survives. As a result, they do not deal with the issue of innovations at all. From the aforementioned we assumed that even if not all 93 % of executive employees at least majority of them would tend to engage in innovation implementation. However, already second answer disconfirmed our assumption.

Second question: „**Has your company elaborated documentation defining mission of organisation, corporate strategy and objectives in the sphere of innovations?**“ We focused on

finding out existence, respectively absence of individual documents, because if management is engaged in the support of innovations this objective to innovate in the company has to be necessarily defined in corporate strategy, and it is corporate strategy creation on which management has a direct impact. Research showed that corporate mission and corporate strategy are defined in writing, respectively in non-written form in approximately 85 % of analyzed companies, however, innovation objective itself is defined in writing in only 23 % of them (Figure 2). These 23 % represent only one fourth of companies which answered positively to the first question regarding importance of innovation, which is very few, since we do not consider innovation objective definition itself significantly financially demanding. Confidence, respectively realization of importance of innovation need by company management is essential.

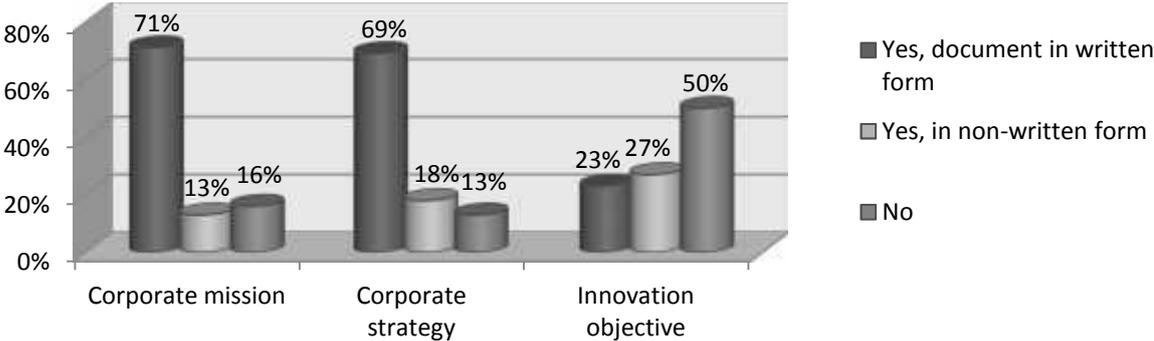


Figure 2 Graph showing percentage of companies with elaborated corporate mission, strategy and innovation objective
Source: Authors

The third question was focused on employee education, as appropriate education ensures that employees have knowledge and abilities necessary to perform their present as well as future work. It can be generally applied that effective education needs to be well-arranged, systematic and continuous within a repeating cycle. Answers of interviewed companies showed that 25 % of them use so called organized approach towards education of their employees, which can be marked as the third level of five-level scale, on whose end is so called learning organisation, currently denoted as the most appropriate and purposeful way of education. More than 60 % of companies indicated lower-level approaches towards education, particularly 37 % indicated so called random approach, and 25 % indicated so called zero alternative where education is restricted only to compulsory trainings stipulated by law or directives. Only 5 % of companies use the approach of structured education concept and 8 % indicated their approach towards education as learning organisation concept.

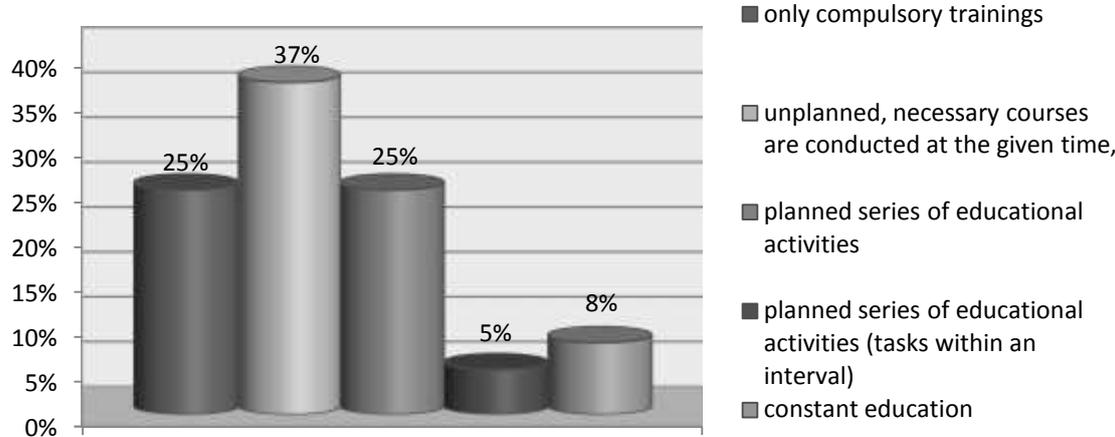


Figure 3 Graph showing educational process in interviewed companies
Source: Authors

RESEARCH EVALUATION

Answers of interviewed organisations operating in Slovakia showed that more than 90 % of managing employees realize the importance and need of innovation in their organisation, however, their engagement in written definition of particular innovation objective was not so significant. Research showed that **only 23% of medium and big companies had defined innovation objective**, while its definition can be considered company's first step in innovation "initiation" and therefore if management engages in innovation implementation it should insist on this objective definition as necessity. This fact points out that companies usually do not deal with innovative organisation implementation, although they clearly realize the need to innovate.

The following characteristic feature of organisation's focus on advancement and innovation implementation is the need of change from random, respectively unplanned education towards holistic approach. It means organisation's focus on education at a higher, respectively more complex level, i.e. creation of learning organisation. Objective is to reach constant education focused on performance increase at the moment as well as in the long-term on the basis of continuous feedback focused on "modifying objectives", i.e. learning on the move. However, research showed that **only 13 % of respondents are successfully approaching learning organisation**.

We see justification of the given research part in practice particularly in revealing irresponsible behaviour of organisations operating in Slovakia in directing and advancing in the sphere of education and innovation. On the basis of our presentation of obtained results, organisation managements can compare their own present state within the given spheres to state that interviewed organisations declared, and subsequently consider options of its enhancement. At the same time, we consider as necessary to continue in this research in order to improve, modify, enhance and develop individual approaches on the basis of new information obtained from interviewed organisations.

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