

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIUM-SIZED HUMAN RESOURCE MARKETING ENTERPRISES IN LATVIA

Ilze Boitmane

*I-Work Group Ltd., Terbatas Street 32, Riga, Latvia, LV-1011
e-mail: ilze.boitmane@i-work.lv*

Solveiga Blumberga

*RISEBA University, Meza Street 3, Riga, Latvia, LV-1048
e-mail: solveiga.blumberga@riseba.lv*

Abstract

Research on the development of human resource (HR) marketing is very topical because HR marketing as a function of human resource management is a novelty in Latvia; rapid digitalization and growth of the number of Internet users are taking place; there is an obvious shortage of qualified labour in the world's economy, and an inability to attract human resources using the traditional methods can be observed. The purpose of the research is to study the development of HR marketing in Latvia (Boitmane, 2016).

The proposal is to research the development of human resource marketing in Latvia and the prospects of development of the use of human resource marketing tools.

The methodology includes the study of theoretical literature and a survey prepared by the authors of the study, 'Human Resource Marketing in an Organisation', which includes 9 sets of clauses with 73 clauses. The authors performed a target-driven, focused observation with a non-representative sampling of 15 respondents selected by the authors. Descriptive and conclusive methods of statistics were used in the data analysis. The research sampling consists of juridical entities – organisations that have a corporate website where the job advertisements of the organisation are published and that have their own strategy and activities in the sphere of human resource management. The probable sampling of the research constituted 90% of the population, that is, 62 respondents. A sampling of 79 respondents participated in the research.

The findings revealed by the research were comparatively little competence and knowledge on the part of organisations in the sphere of human resource marketing. In organisations where the process of strategic human resource management is organized purposefully, the competence and knowledge of the management is higher, which, as a result, shows that human resource marketing is not being identified as a term, but the authors of the research concluded this based on the human resources marketing tools used currently by the organisations. The results of the research show that it is the shortage of labour that will motivate the application of human resource marketing.

Research limitations. In performing the research, the authors faced the fact that out of 415 organisations or respondents, valid survey questionnaires were filled out by 79 respondents. Many of the survey forms were filled out partially or incompletely, showing evidence of the lack of information and knowledge. The empirical part took place over 3 months, which was 1 month longer than anticipated in the research plan. The extraction of the research data was complicated by the large volume of survey clauses.

Practical implications of the research: as a result of human resource marketing research, theoretical material has been created that will encourage organisations to implement human resource marketing functions in their business activities. The data, materials and conclusions obtained from the research provide motivation for the creation of a handbook for leaders of organisations and human resource managers on putting human resource marketing into practice in an organisation.

The social implications of the research provide knowledge and vast information for the public about human resource marketing, its development and opportunities. From the scientific perspective, nowadays, the term 'human resource marketing' indicates new developmental directions that are connected with rapid technological development and changes in public thinking and traditions. It is a transformation of organisational thinking from product marketing to human resource marketing.

The originality is determined by the uniqueness of the research, since there has been little study of

human resource marketing in Latvia and no research has been performed on the function of human resource marketing in Latvia.

Keywords: Human Resource Marketing, HR Marketing Development, HR Marketing

INTRODUCTION

Human resource marketing as a human resource function has developed comparatively recently, although the origin and empirical explanation of the term was identified more than fifty years ago. In recent years, this human resource management function has obtained its topicality due to such reasons as the rapid increase in digitalization and the number of Internet users; traditional human resource selection and attraction approaches becoming obsolete and losing their popularity; the new traditions of Generation Y, the so-called “digital generation”, setting in and impacting the world's economy; a pronounced global shortage of qualified labour and the inability to attract new employees using the traditional methods; the peculiarities of demographics, including the ageing of the population, the decrease in the birth rate and the corresponding lack of human resources; and the rapid development of the economy and the pressure of the competition, which require adjustment to the new conditions and tendencies of the labour market. See I. Boitmane (2016) for more in-depth discussion.

The development of human resource marketing is facilitated by new human resource management tools and new approaches that can attract more potential personnel and, simultaneously, advertise the organisation in public space, thus impacting public opinion about the organisation and its human resource management processes. Human resource marketing can impact the business activities and results of an organisation, including the ability to sell existing products and services, by involving employees in product and service marketing and replacing product advertising and marketing with human resources.

The problematics of the research are characterized by the fact that no research has been done on human resource marketing in Latvia and that it has been under consideration as a separate human resource management function only recently. Organisations are already putting human resource marketing tools into practice, but do not identify it as a separate function or strategy of human resource management. In the future, the necessity for human resource marketing tools will grow rapidly. In the framework of the research, the development trends of human resource marketing in Latvia and the human resource marketing tools used in practice must be identified, and the prospective direction of human resource marketing development must be determined. The research paper must answer the following questions: How is human resource marketing developing in Latvia? How will human resource marketing develop in the future?

1. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MARKETING RESEARCH, REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE, RESEARCH WORLDWIDE

In the context of human resource marketing, scientists emphasize that currently there is a shortage of human resources and unique and unconventional tools are necessary for organisations to attract new employees successfully and to cultivate new talents, as researched by B. Friedman (2006). Human resource marketing is a skill to ‘sell a part of personnel’, says M. Rose (2007), and actually this means a capability to create powerful and effective tools and methods that would help human resource managers to attract new employees to their organisations in the future (Rose, 2007). S. Fahrbach (2013) stresses that one of the human resource marketing actualities and tasks in the coming years is the necessity to attract new talent. This should encourage employers to pay attention to marketing – to promote the recognition of the employer's image and to advance the public relations of talent or the ‘talent hunt’ (Fahrbach, 2013). K. Stritzke (2010) indicates that the topicality of human resource marketing is characterized by the development rate of the economy, competition and the public. The tendencies of the last few years testify that competition among enterprises is becoming very fierce, the economic pressure, migration of human resources and influence of globalisation are forcing organisations to pay attention to the positioning of their businesses and to attracting new human resources (Stritzke, 2010). Researchers from the German Research Institute DGFP indicate that the main problems in human resource management, especially in human resource attraction, are defined as a shortage of qualified labour, global demographic problems in Europe, lack of graduates in the most

in-demand and relevant industries, continuous economic tension, overly high demands by employers towards candidates, the inability of candidates to find a balance between work and private life, high staff turnover and globalisation in this particular aspect (DGFP, 2006).

Turning to human resource marketing with regard to Latvia – rapid progress can be observed, especially in international organisations that have inherited global traditions and methods. However, during the last five years the majority of local organisations have paid attention to linking human resource management to marketing in order to solve the same problems that are indicated from the global perspective – the shortage of human resources, changes in communication channels, etc. The authors of the research draw attention to the awareness of human resource marketing in Latvia, to the number of enterprises that use the tools and methods, and how the prospective development of human resource marketing is forecasted in the nearest future. A study on the increase of the role of human resource managers in Latvian enterprises performed by TNS Latvia shows that, in recent years, the topicality of human resource managers involves motivation and retention of employees and talent management. Attraction of new candidates and solving the shortage of employees in the most in-demand industries have become the most topical issues. In order to attract new specialists to enterprises, a new approach and new methods are necessary, for instance, creating an attractive employer image, a positive reputation for the organisation, high social responsibility. A study performed in 2014 shows that the leaders of large enterprises (200+ employees and/or turnover of 7 million EUR) more often highlight that human resource management is growing increasingly important for the strategic processes of the business. Several parts of the research clearly show that human resource managers are becoming more and more engaged in the strategic processes of the human resource management and the politics of enterprises. In general, the research demonstrates that the human resource manager as a personality plays a major role in the process of involvement, while the initiative and involvement from the side of enterprise management plays a lesser role (TNS, 2014). The latest Latvian research in the human resource management marketing field is by Susanna Maria Minder (2016), who studied the German labour market. “The *aim* of the thesis is to assess whether the application of an HRMM approach has an impact on employee satisfaction, while focusing on companies and their employees in Germany. Aside from this, suggestions for general management and human resource professionals concerning the application and improvement of their companies’ HRMM approach are presented” (Minder, 2016:7).

The first insight into the definition of the term 'human resource marketing' is associated with the notion of human resource marketing as a resource of the economic activity of an enterprise – as a separate function of human resource management to acquire and attract new human resources, including facilitation of efficiency of the personnel selection process, as indicated by Steinmetz (1997). H. Beyer (1990) defines human resource marketing as traditional marketing, transforming marketing ideas as marketing concepts in the context of human resource management (Beyer, 1990). The term 'human resource marketing' was mentioned for the first time in 1962 in a study by Schubart. Scholz (1999), in turn, indicated that the basic theoretical framework of marketing in the context of human resource management lies in the theory of marketing that is to be implemented over time with the help of human resource management (Scholz, 1999). In 1985, Seiwert (1985) clearly states that human resource marketing is viewed as a separate element of human resource management functions. In 1989, Frohlich and Sitenstock (1989) broaden the essence of human resource marketing, claiming that it is not only an advertising tool, but also a body of functions that can externally motivate the current employees of an organisation, attract and motivate potential new human resources and be an extremely effective tool for organizing human resource selection and attraction. In 1987, Meyer (1987) includes and integrates the human resource marketing term as an element of a united culture of an organisation (Meyer, 1987). The benefits and practical use of human resource marketing were identified – for the first time – in the activities of political parties: they were actively popularizing their candidates, members and organisations, gaining notable recognition and awareness of their position from the public. M. Suss (1997) performed research on marketing from the aspect of human resource advertising. It was concluded that by using simple marketing tools from human resources, the recognition of an organisation can be increased notably, a large number of new members can be attracted, and the current members and candidates of the organisation can be presented publicly in the aspect in which the human resource politics of an organisation was built. Thus, this example illustrated the effectiveness of this marketing tool in the activities of a political organisation (Suss, 1997). The further development of human resource marketing is marked by another new tendency – the development of technology and

widespread use of the Internet in everyday communication. M. Meckel (2008) and B. Schmid (2008) concluded from their studies that employees can use social media as a communication tool, to reflect their experience by sharing it, and to perform remote job functions (Meckel and Schmid, 2008). In 2015, Australian researchers from the organisation Thought Leadership Partners (TLP) performed a comprehensive annual study of the latest trends in human resource marketing. The research included organisations where a full-fledged human resource management process has been implemented. In total, 60 organisations were surveyed, with a total number of employees of 5000 and an average organisation size of 11 to 130 employees. In the first part of the research, the researchers established the goals of the organisations to invest in human resource marketing during the next year. 61% of the respondents planned to invest in human resource marketing, in 35% of the cases the volume of investments would stay at the same level as the previous year, and in 4% of the cases the organisations planned to decrease the volume of investments. The second part of the research investigated the directions in which human resource departments planned their strategic human resource marketing and their particular activities during the next period of time. Four main directions of marketing were established: client reference marketing or recommendations marketing, social media marketing, content marketing and e-mail marketing (TLP, 2015). Another important study was performed by the Australian organisation Employer Brand International (EBI). The research was led by B. Minchington (2010), who studied the communication of employer brand, including all sub-branches of human resource management, human resource marketing among them. 1143 organisations from 18 countries worldwide participated in the research. The average number of employees in one organisation was 1 to 5000, and 65% of the respondents were mid or high-level managers, while 20% were administrative staff. The research methods included a study of social media, a study of traditional media, a study of corporate websites, and a survey comprised of 20 questions about human resource marketing. Minchington (2010) has performed research in this sphere since 2009. The research clearly shows the latest changes and reveals the prognoses. It confirms how important the development of organisations in the spheres of employer brand management and human resource marketing is. It indicates the perspectives for future development and puts emphasis on human resource marketing in particular as the main function of an organisation with a strategic importance. Another baseline is the use of social media in an organisation in the context of human resource marketing, and it needs a separate strategy and provision of functionality. Most likely, it will be in the competency of a human resource department. Thus, new functions arise whose realisation and implementation will demand appropriate knowledge of human resource marketing and technical skills in the use and administration of social media (Minchington, 2010).

The topicality and problematics of the research on human resource marketing are mainly characterised by the following factors: change of generations and peculiarities of thinking; the world economic situation and the developmental tendencies and levels of national economies and competition; the development of new information and media channels and the rapid social media invasion in the labour market; global demographic problems – decreasing birth rates, the ageing of the population, the shortage of qualified labour; negative forecasts on the dwindling labour force in Europe over the next 50 years; the human resources deficit in specialised and technical industries; the dynamics and intensity of employee turnover in organisations that create continuous demand for new human resources; lack of uniform understanding and a system in the practical use of human resource marketing. The topicality of the research paper is emphasized by the necessity to develop the image of the employer, the corporate culture of an organisation and human resource marketing in order to attract new talent and human resources. The questions and problems identified by the researchers in general coincide with and shape the main guidelines revealing the prospective development of human resource marketing both globally and in Latvia. As mentioned by the authors of this research paper, the term 'human resource marketing' cannot be translated unambiguously and has not been defined in Latvian; thus, no research has been performed on this topic in Latvia and no statistical data is available on the developments in this sphere. Therefore, in the theoretical part of the paper, research performed in Latvia and the theoretical aspects have not been examined. Globally, research on human resource marketing dates back to 1962, with the first ideas on advertising organisations as employers and about the topicality of the shortage of labour, which stimulated in-depth research of the sphere. The authors of the research illustrate the range of research of international scope that has been performed on human resource marketing and brand management during the last 10 years. As a result, the main guidelines of human resource marketing for

the coming years can be outlined:

- 1) the role of human resource management in organizing human resource marketing as a function will increase notably;
- 2) in the future, organisations will plan to invest more in human resource marketing and in brand management; in contrast to the product marketing of previous years, the role and importance of marketing for organisations and their culture will change;
- 3) in the coming years, the role and development of social media will increase manyfold in the context of human resource marketing, especially human resource selection and attraction;
- 4) organisations will plan to invest and engage in development of social media politics in order to promote the recognition of their brand and create successful human resource marketing;
- 5) the role of traditional marketing methods of human resource attraction and traditional or printed human resource marketing tools will decrease substantially.

The theoretical framework by the authors of the research paper reveals the variables of the research and the questions put forward, as illustrated in Image 1.2 and studied by I. Boitmane in her research (Boitmane, 2016).

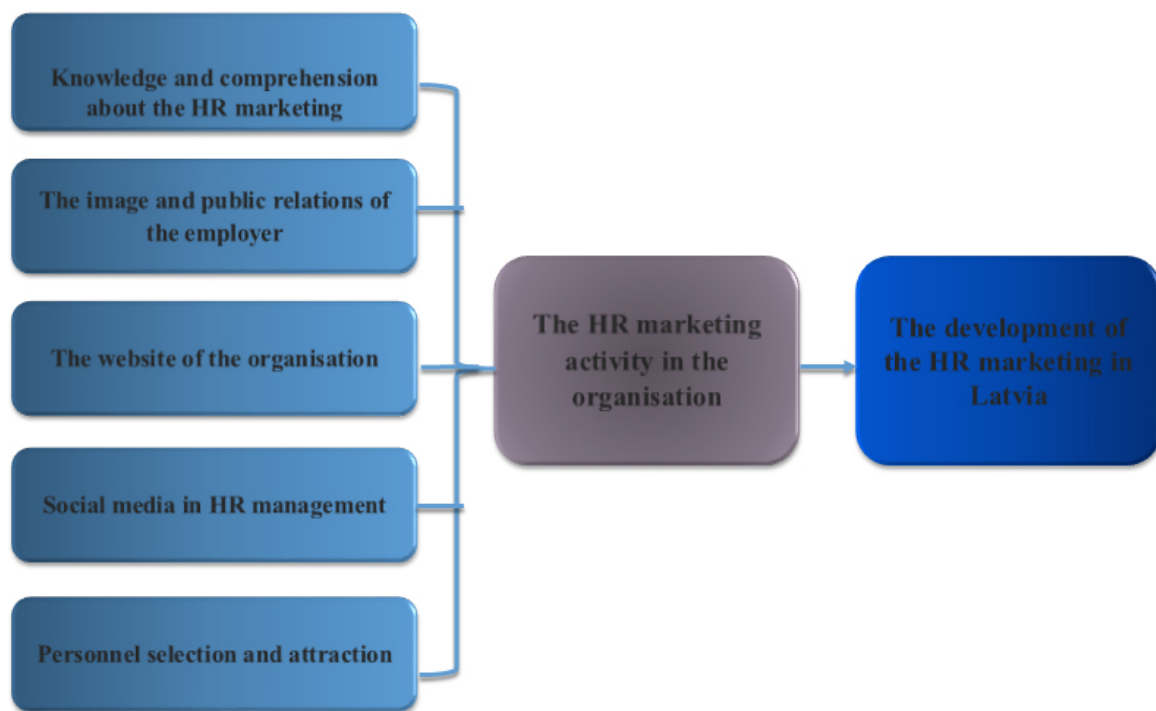


Image 1.1. The conceptual model by the authors of the research – the theoretical framework for the research 'The Development of Human Resource Marketing in Latvia'

Source: Ilze Boitmane "Personāla marketinga attīstība Latvijā" (Boitmane, 2016)

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY (RESEARCH SAMPLING, RESEARCH METHODS)

The research sampling consists of juridical entities, organisations and enterprises of the small, medium and large business sectors that actively perform economic activities. On December 6, 2015, there were 242 929 juridical entities in Latvia, according to data from the Register of Enterprises Lursoft (Lursoft, 2015). Since the research sampling is based on the object of the research – human resource marketing – the organisations to be studied should have a conception about and characteristics in the sphere of human resource management – an understanding of the term 'human resource marketing' and the competency to answer the questions of the survey. The organisations should have characteristics that certify factual use of human resource marketing tools in practice or readiness to use human resource marketing in the future. Therefore, the authors of the research structured the research sampling taking into account the additional criteria that were established based on the research and the sampling criteria that were discussed in the theoretical part of the paper: the organisation has a website; the organisation publishes its job advertisements; the organisation has human resource management functions and

performs external activities.

Analysing the three criteria, the probable representative sampling of the research constitutes 90% of the corresponding population, that is, 62 respondents, while 99% of the population comprises 71 respondents with a permissible error of 5% (Kristapsons, 2014). A sampling of 79 respondents participated in the research.

The theoretical method used in the research is analysis of the scientific literature on human resource marketing. The following data acquisition methods are used in the research: the survey 'Human Resource Marketing in an Organisation', investigative observation of human resource marketing. The following methods are used in data analysis and processing: verification of the credibility of the survey with Cronbach's alpha coefficient (*Cronbach's alpha*); Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z (*K-S test*); correlation analysis; indicators of the central tendency (*mean, median, mode*); indicators of variation (*variance, dispersion, standard deviation, skewness*); coefficient of excess (*kurtosis*).

3. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OBTAINED FROM THE RESEARCH

The analysis of the quantitative data of the research was performed with the descriptive and conclusive methods of statistics. The data of the descriptive statistics show the following:

1) Cronbach's alpha shows the credibility of the sets of clauses of the survey; on average, for all sets of clauses it is within the limits $\alpha = 0,773-0,861$, while for two sets it is $\alpha \leq 0,6$. The authors of the research excluded these sets of clauses from further data analysis and interpretation;

2) Verification of the credibility of the survey (normal distribution, representative data) with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (K-S Test). According to the K-S Test, the sets of clauses of the survey correspond to normal distribution, because Sig is within the limits 0,059–0,644. For one set of clauses Sig=0,017; thus, it does not correspond to normal distribution. The authors of the research decided to exclude this set of clauses in the further analysis of the data;

3) Indicators of the central tendency – the arithmetic mean *Mean* shows that the respondents have an understanding of human resource marketing. Median variance corresponds to the mean, which means that the distribution is symmetrical. Indicators of variation – variance or dispersion show that it is closer to the Mean value. The coefficient of asymmetry *Skewness* is $A < 1$ on all scales, which means that the mean values on all scales are above the Mean. The standard deviation of the coefficient of asymmetry is 0,271, and it does not notably exceed 0. Indicator of excess – kurtosis. The indicator of excess shows that the distribution of the research is flattened and characterizes the concentration of the variances in the side classes. The standard deviation of the coefficient of excess is 0,535.

The analysis of the conclusive statistics shows connections among variables: the indicator of the conclusive statistics Pearson's coefficient of correlation characterizes the connection between two variables. The acquired data verify that a positive correlation is observed in several sets of clauses and that the statistical relevance is significant. A high correlation is observed between 'The website of an organisation' and 'Social media in human resource management'. This means that if an organisation has a website, it actively uses social media in human resource management. There is a correlation between 'Human resource marketing activities and communication channels in the organisation' and 'The website of an organisation'. This means that if human resource marketing is organised in an organisation, the organisation definitely has a functional website. There is a correlation between 'Human resource marketing activities and communication channels in the organisation' and 'Social media in human resource management'. This means that if human resource marketing is organised in an organisation, it actively uses social media in human resource management. There is a correlation between 'Human resource marketing activities and communication channels in the organisation' and 'Personnel selection and attraction'. This means that if human resource marketing is organised in an organisation, it actively performs personnel selection and attraction processes as well. Summing up the correlations between two factors, the authors of the research confirm once again that there is a close connection among the variables described above. Human resource marketing activities and the communication channels in an organisation are closely connected with the organisations having a corporate website, performing personnel selection and attraction on a systematic basis, and using social media and social networks in everyday processes, as illustrated by the Correlation Matrix, Image 3.1., from the research performed by the authors of the paper (Boitmane, 2016).

	Website of the organisation	Social media in the HR management	Personnel selection and attraction	HR marketing activities in the organisation
Website of the organisation	1			
Social media in the HR management	0,578**	1		
Personnel selection and attraction	0,318**	0,399**	1	
HR marketing activities in the organisation	0,505**	0,748**	0,497**	1

Image 3.1. Correlation matrix for the survey 'Human Resource Marketing in an Organisation' by the authors of the research

Source: Ilze Boitmane “Personala marketinga attistiba Latvija” (Boitmane, 2016)

According to the theoretical framework of the research and the research performed on the topicality of human resource marketing and the structural model of human resource marketing, the main problems in human resource management, especially in human resource attraction, are defined as a shortage of qualified labour, global demographic problems in Europe, lack of graduates in the most in-demand and relevant industries, continuous economic tension, overly high demands by employers towards candidates, the inability of candidates to find a balance between work and private life, high labour turnover and globalisation in this particular aspect (DGFP, 2006). In the research, in accordance with the survey, the topicalities and the reasons for development of human resource marketing were established. In addition to the ones mentioned above, the authors studied the extent to which every set of problems is explicit particularly in Latvia. As concluded before, the two main problems are: a shortage of qualified labour and a lack of potential. Just as elsewhere, global problems – the shortage of labour – will persist in Latvia, too, as illustrated by Image 3.2.

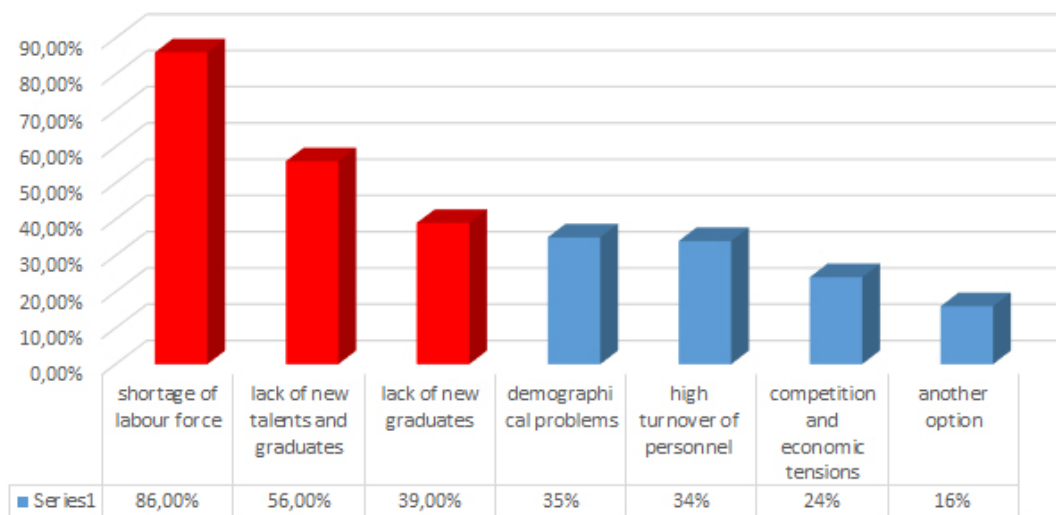


Image 3.2. Topicality of human resource marketing in an organisation

Source: Ilze Boitmane “Personala marketinga attistiba Latvija” (Boitmane, 2016)

During the research for the paper, an observation, 'Human Resource Marketing', was carried out by the authors (Boitmane, 2016), and the paper reflects the main directions or goals of the observation: the number of the total count of respondents that participated in the survey, the opinion of the respondents and the competency of the opinions expressed about the term 'human resource marketing', and the behaviour of the respondents during the observation. During the observation, 9 out of 15 respondents took part in the survey 'Human Resource Marketing in an Organisation'. The observation indicates that, judging from the explanations of the topic and the term, some of the participants of the observation did not understand the topic because they were hearing about it for the first time. The difficulty in understanding the topic is also testified by the time that was necessary to fill out the survey. It took 30% more time than was allotted for the completion of the survey. Verbal reflection confirmed that the participants of the observation had heard the term 'human resource marketing' for the first time, but, getting acquainted with the content of the survey and receiving the verbal explanation, they understood its meaning and interpretation. At the beginning of the survey, the behaviour and communication of participants was negative and reserved, which indicates that the participants were facing a new, difficult and unfamiliar task; the middle phase showed that the content of the survey assured the majority of the respondents that the topic is applicable in everyday actions and that the majority of them had had previous, indirect experience with human resource marketing tools. In the concluding phase of the observation, the respondents relaxed and engaged in open non-verbal communication, which indicated that an opinion and new experience about the topic of the research had formed. In general, the observation showed that the topic of human resource management is new in Latvia; however, human resource marketing tools are already recognizable. As was already indicated by the authors of the research, in total, 242 respondents filled out the main survey of the research – out of 415 potential respondents who opened it – that is, 33%. The observation and the responsiveness to the electronic survey of the research testify that the majority of respondents have formed no particular opinion and knowledge of the topic of human resource marketing because it has not been researched in Latvia yet.

CONCLUSIONS

The authors of the scientific research paper 'The Development of Human Resource Marketing in Latvia' made the following conclusions that answer the research questions: leaders of organisations and human resource managers have little knowledge of human resource marketing, which is basically related to the limited availability of materials and the fact that human resource marketing has not gained popularity. The development of human resource marketing in Latvia occurs from the perspective of the development of social media and social networks; the use of social networks in the corporate and professional environment has grown rapidly in recent years. It has been concluded that organisations in Latvia mainly use the following human resource marketing tools: social media and social networks, personnel selection and evaluation, efforts to promote their employer image, public relations activities, and management of the functionality of their corporate websites. As for the future, organisations will use human resource marketing tools mainly when an explicit shortage of labour, a lack of new talent and graduates, high staff turnover and demographic problems occur.

During the research, the authors drew the following additional conclusions: organisations already use a range of human resource marketing tools in practice, but do not identify the term 'human resource marketing' as a separate function. In Latvia, leaders of organisations and human resource managers understand the function and tools of human resource marketing more as an external process, although human resource marketing encompasses a very extensive application both as external and internal human resource marketing. The theoretical research of the topic, against the conception of the authors that the term has been studied little, revealed that the function and term 'human resource marketing' has been studied for many years; however, it has gained topicality during the last 10 years, which is connected with the shortage and migration of human resources on a global scale. In Latvia, this development is affected by similar factors: the decrease in the working-age population, the shortage of professionals, the migration of the population and shortage of labour in general. These and many other factors motivate organisations to search for new solutions regarding how to attract new human resources and retain existing employees, because traditional methods have become ineffective and new solutions must be sought, for instance, human resource marketing.

PROPOSALS

The authors of the study developed the following proposals:

In the future, to conduct further HR marketing research and studies of its correlations; to create an HR marketing function as a separate element of personnel management functions which in the future could test practical applications in organizations; develop informative materials for practical use of HR marketing at enterprises.

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