BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES

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ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON EMPLOYEES ATTITUDES IN LITHUANIAN BUSINESS SECTOR

Abstract

Measurement of employer's attractiveness has been given much attention in many countries all over the world, but there was no extensive research performed in Lithuania so far, providing empirical evidence to define the landscape of organizational attractiveness in Lithuanian business sector. The aim of this study (N = 1020 respondents) is to identify which dimensions make organizations attractive as employers in Lithuanian business sector. The article employs a research approach based on a postpositivistic perspective. The relevant literature on organizational attractiveness is critically reviewed, analyzed, compared and generalized. Addressing research aim, a scale to measure organizational attractiveness as an employer was developed and administered in Lithuanian business sector in such a manner. Existing methodologies measuring organizational attractiveness were analyzed composing a list of 67 dimensions. Using content validity, scale comprising 30 dimensions was developed to measure organizational attractiveness of companies in Lithuanian business sector. A telephone interview survey method for data collection was used. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequencies) is used to analyze the data of the survey. 30 dimensions of organizational attractiveness were rank-ordered according to their means in descending order from most important to least important drivers of employer's attractiveness. Specifically, the results suggested that good working atmosphere, adequate salary and interesting job are key to the attractiveness as an employer of business companies in Lithuania as perceived by their employees. The article also discusses the implications of the findings.

INTRODUCTION

After the depths of the great economic recession of 2008-12 a significant uncertainty and ambiguity have emerged in the labor markets affected by the fall in GDP and causing high unemployment, *high* level of *redundancy*, falling average incomes and increased inequality. Business firms were unable to operate normally – some of them have bankrupted and all their employees have lost their jobs, some other were reducing costs by lowering salaries, terminating employees and not hiring new ones.

On the other hand – human capital, suffering from the financial crisis all over the world, remains the most valuable asset of any company and crucial to its effective performance, competitiveness and financial success. One may argue that because of the global financial crisis of 2008 and succeeding global economic recession so far hovering around employer's attractiveness has depreciated. Not even likely. On contrary, living with un-

certainty has not diminished but even increased the importance of attracting and retaining the best employees, meanwhile the talented job seekers have enough options and are choosing *the most attractive employers.*

Thus, in today's business environment, war for talent remains the hot topic in strategic human resource management agendas and no signs it could decline in importance in the future as the jobs become more complex and require highly qualified employees. That is why so many people are unemployed and at the same time there are large numbers of job vacancies. Being an attractive employer undoubtedly stands for the most important element of finding the right talents (EB Insights, 2011), since people want to work for organizations with strong and positive reputation and prestige (Rousseau, 2008) in preference to higher wages, thus expecting a pride, which will be provided by organizational membership (Cable & Turban, 2006). Keeping in mind that talents are scarce and their attraction becomes increasingly complex, organizational attractiveness turns to be a winning strategy applied by top companies like Google, Adidas, and Deloitte and definitely urged for "the millions of other companies around the world who have similar challenges" (Minchington, 2011). Eventually, organizational attractiveness helps to build a more consistent employment experience and communication (EB Insights, 2011), and retain current employees assuring their engagement in the culture and strategy of the company they work for (Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004).

Organizational attractiveness for employer in influential approach and a new discourse of human resource management (Martin et al., 2005) has evoked a considerable research attention. The literature examines its theoretical foundations and conceptual framework, analyzes its dimensionality (Ambler and Barrow, 1996; Backhaus and Tikoo, 2004; Edwards, 2010; Lievens et al., 2007; Moroko and Uncles, 2009; Mosley, 2007; Wilden et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2005; Hillebrandt and Ivens, 2013; Berthon et al., 2005), explores premises of attraction to an employer (Highhouse et al., 2007; Highhouse et al., 2003; Devendorf and Highhouse, 2008; Schreurs et al., 2009; Zaveri and Mulye, 2010; Nadler et al., 2010; Ehrhart and Ziegert, 2005; Lievens et al., 2001; Lievens, 2007; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Yu, 2014; Kausel and Slaughter, 2011; Lievens et al., 2005; Turban, 2001; Jiang and Iles, 2011; Shahzad et al., 2011), investigates specific aspects of the phenomenon, such as positioning (Sartain, 2005; Sivertzen et al., 2013; Kroustalis and Meade, 2007), outcomes (Davies, 2008; Cable and Edwards, 2004; Fulmer et al., 2003; Mosley, 2007) and effects of corporate social performance (Turban and Greening, 1997; Albinger and Freeman, 2000).

Nevertheless, despite the great scientific interest in organizational attractiveness as an employer and its unceasing popularity among practitioners, research in the field still poses a number of critical questions and issues for management scholars. The aforementioned economic recession has caused numerous breaches of psychological contracts and, logically, strengthened the focus on social security. The great generational shift with retiring Baby Boomers and Generation Y starting to predominate in the labor market brings the epic change in the work-related norms, values and attitudes of the workforce and is fundamental to understanding *what employment practices determine organizational attractiveness in the new context of labor market volatility and uncertainty.*

Moreover, what works in one industry sector or country may be quite different from what works in another, therefore this paper analyzes Lithuanian employees' attitudes and explores what employment experience facilitates organizational attractiveness as an employer of business companies enabling them to differentiate from their competitors in the labor market. It should be noted that there was no such extensive research performed in Lithuania so far, providing empirical evidence to define the landscape of organizational attractiveness in Lithuanian business sector, and allowing to identify dimensions which make service business companies attractive as employers.

Research object – organizational attractiveness in Lithuanian business sector.

The aim of the research is to determine the dimensions of organizational attractiveness of Lithuanian business companies as perceived by the employees.

1. ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS CONSTRUCT

Organizational attractiveness as an employer denotes "the envisioned benefits that a potential employee sees in working for a specific organization" (Berthon et al., 2005), or the degree to which potential and current employees perceive organizations as good places to work (Jiang and Iles, 2011). Organizational attractiveness is also referred to as "the power that draws applicants' attention to focus on an employer brand and encourages existing employees to stay" (Ibid).

Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005) have defined organizational attraction as "getting candidates to view the organization as a positive place to work" and examined it from applicant's perspective. The authors present a theoretical framework of applicant attraction, encompassing three metatheories as summarized in Table 1, i.e. the *environment processing metatheory*, which is comprised of the image theory, signalling theory, expectancy theory, etc.; the *interactionist processing metatheory*, based on the idea of *fit* between individual and environmental characteristics (person-job abbreviated as P-J and person-organization abbreviated as P-O fit); and the *self-processing metatheory*, which involves relation between attitudes and views of the self and attraction to organization (e.g., the social learning theory, consistency theory, social identity theory).

Table 1. Organizational attraction metatheories

Source: developed from Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005).

Metatheories	Theoretical mechanism	Theories	Proposition
Environment processing metatheory	Relationship between the actual environment and the perceived environment: individuals may hold different perceptions of the same actual environment based on which environment characteristics they attend to and how they process information about the environment	Signaling theory (Spence, 1973)	In the absence of complete information, applicants interpret the information they have about an organization as signals of organizational characteristics
		Image theory (Beach, 1990)	Individuals decide among job and organizational attractiveness by considering how those alternatives fit their image of what is desired
		Heuristic-systematic model (Eagly and Chaiken, 1984)	Type of cognitive processing that an individual implements depends on characteristics of the message being processed
	Relationship between the perceived environment and attraction: the way in which the perceived environment characteristics are processed and why individuals' perceptions of environment influence their attraction	Exposure-attitude hypothesis (Zajonc, 1968)	Repeated exposure to an object yields increasingly positive evaluations of it
		Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964)	Individuals are attracted to jobs or organizations that they perceive to offer valued characteristics
		Generalizable decision processing model (Soelberg, 1967)	Individuals choose their most preferred job or organization on the basis of their perceptions of the environment characteristics that are important to them (e.g., location, culture, firm size)
Interactionist processing metatheory	Objective fit: the extent to which actual characteristics of the environment interact with individual differences to predict the objective fit between a person and an organization	Need-press theory (Murray, 1938)	Environments have characteristics that either facilitate or inhibit the satisfaction of individual's needs: importance of the match between individual's needs and the actual environment's "positive press", or ability to satisfy those needs
		Interactional psychology (Lewin, 1935)	Behavior is a function of the interaction between person and situational characteristics: importance of the similarity between person and actual environment characteristics in predicting attraction
	Subjective fit: pertain to the process by which individuals determine whether they fit with a particular work environment.	Theory of work adjustment (Dawis and Lofquist, 1984)	Individuals desire "correspondence" or congruence with their work environment – work adjustment that is related to positive work outcomes (e.g., tenure and satisfaction)
		Attraction-selection-attrition theory (Schneider, 1987)	People are differentially attracted to jobs and/or organizations with certain characteristics that they perceive match their own

Table 1 (cont). Organizational attraction metatheories

Metatheories	Theoretical mechanism	Theories	Proposition
Self-processing metatheory	Influences on the relationship between fit and attraction: individuals' perceptions about themselves and their own attributes contribute by influencing the relationship between subjective fit and attraction.	Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977)	People will be attracted to jobs and organizations based on the extent to which they believe they can succeed: individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to seek out environments with which they fit, based on their beliefs that they will be successful
		Consistency theory (Korman, 1966)	Individuals with high self-esteem use cognitions about the self to guide choices, and they prefer work that corresponds to their self-image
		Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986)	Self-concept is influenced by the evaluation of the group(s) with whom individual identifies: when organization is viewed positively, subjective fit should have a stronger influence on attraction

Research on organizational choice and the premises of organizational attractiveness as an employer basically focuses on instrumental (job/organization characteristics) and symbolic (trait-based inferences about organization) attributes (e.g., Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007, etc.) and interactionist perspective, which refers to organizational attractiveness as a fit between personal characteristics and characteristics of the job/organization (e.g., Lievens et al., 2001; Kroustalis and Meade, 2007; Schreurs et al., 2009; Chapman et al., 2005, etc.).

This stream is based on the concept of corporate personality, where organizations are regarded like people and attributed human characteristics and different personality traits (Berens and Riel, 2004). For example, in her major study Aaker (1997) identified five brand personality dimensions – sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness, and offered a framework for symbolic use of brands. Another important research by Davies et al. (2001) arrived at Corporate Personality Scale, encompassing seven dimensions of corporate personality: *Agreeableness, Enterprise, Competence, Chic, Ruthlessness, Machismo, and Informality.*

Further, Lievens and Highhouse (2003) developed the instrumental-symbolic framework of organizational attraction and five personality trait-based inferences, i.e. *Sincerity, Innovativeness, Competence, Prestige* and *Robustness* emerged as significant predictors of organizational attractiveness as an employer in their study. Further research in the field (Lievens et al., 2005; Lievens et al., 2007) purified the scale of symbolic attributes to five broad factors which are *Sincerity, Excitement, Competence,*

Prestige and *Ruggedness.* Later this scale was applied examining the moderating influence of the Big Five personality factors (i.e. *Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism* and *Openness to Experience*) in the relationship between symbolic attributes and organizational attractiveness (Schreurs et al., 2009). Meanwhile Slaughter et al. (2004) developed their scale of Organization Personality Perceptions (OPPS) and also suggested that such personality trait inferences as *Boy Scout* (recently changed to *Trustworthiness* by Kausel and Slaughter, 2011); *Innovativeness, Dominance, Thrift* and *Style* are related to organizational attraction and explain differences among organizations.

Instrumental attributes signal the applicants about objective, concrete and factual characteristics that a job/organization either has or does not have and, accordingly, determine company's perceived attractiveness as an employer (Lievens and Highhouse, 2003). Instrumental attributes, in order to influence initial assessments of organizational attractiveness, should be visible, salient, manifesting organizational culture and values and, finally, differ across organizations (Lievens et al., 2001). Research on instrumental attributes found empirical evidence that medium-sized and large-sized, multinational and decentralized organizations were more attractive to potential applicants (Lievens et al., 2001); it was also revealed that applicants' attraction to the Belgian Army was mostly related to such instrumental dimensions as team/sports activities, structure and job security (Lievens et al., 2007). The study by Nadler et al. (2010) suggested that work schedule flexibility positively affects potential employees' perceptions of organizational attractiveness.

It should be noted that personality trait-based inferences have predominantly showed out to be more important organization's attractiveness factor and differentiator than specific job/organization characteristics (e.g., Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Martin, 2007). That supports evidence from marketing literature, where emotional appeal is given preference over functional benefits in the marketplace with similar products or services.

Organization attractiveness as a recruitment outcome variable has been also explored by Chapman et al. (2005) in their meta-analysis of 667 coefficients from 71 studies on recruitment research examining relationships between recruitment predictors and applicant attraction outcomes. The authors reported that perceptions of person-organization fit and job/organization characteristics were the strongest predictors of various recruitment outcomes (Ployhart, 2006). Interestingly, on contrary to previous research, Kausel and Slaughter's (2011) study from complementarity perspective revealed that organizations should not trust similarity in personality as an attraction strategy of most preferred candidates. For example, such organizational trait as

Trustworthiness does not positively correlate with high scores on individual's characteristic Trust as a mediator of organizational attractiveness.

2. MEASUREMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS

As Table 2 illustrates, organization's attractiveness as an employer was repeatedly measured (e.g., Lievens, 2007; Lievens and Highhouse, 2003; Lievens et al., 2005, etc.). For example, Berthon et al. (2005) have extended three-dimensional employer brand structure proposed by Ambler and Barrow (1996) to a five-factor scale for measurement of employer attractiveness (EmpAt) from potential applicants' perspective, comprising Interest value, Social value, Economic value, Development value and Application value. Although the scale demonstrated appropriate reliability (0.96), it was not widely used (Sivertzen et al., 2013), but contributed more as a theoretical model of dimensionality of employer's attractiveness.

Table 2. Measurement of organizational attractiveness

Research focus/Authors	Dimensions/Variables	Items
Employer attractiveness: Berthon et al. (2005); Employer attractiveness and social media: Sivertzen et al. (2013)	Interest value	Exciting work environment, Novel work practices, Enhancing employee's creativity to produce high quality, Innovative products and services
	Social value	Fun, happy working environment, Good collegial relationships, Team atmosphere
	Economic value	Above-average salary, Compensation package, Job security, Promotional opportunities
	Development value	Recognition, Self-worth and confidence, Career-enhancing experience, Spring-board to future employment
	Application value	Opportunity for the employee to apply what they have learned and to teach others, Customer orientated and humanitarian environment
The employer brand mix: Barrow and Mosley (2011)	Wider organizational context and policy	External reputation, Internal communication, Senior leadership, Values and corporate social responsibility, Internal measurement systems, Service support
	Local context and practice	Recruitment and induction, Team management, Performance appraisal, Learning and development, Reward and recognition, Working environment
Measuring attraction to organizations: Highhouse et al. (2003)	General attractiveness	Five items, e.g., "For me, this company would be a good place to work"
	Intentions to pursue	Five items, e.g., "I would accept a job offer from this company"
	Prestige	Five items, e.g., "Employees are probably proud to say they work at this company"
Organizational attractiveness for prospective applicants: Lievens et al. (2001)	Organizational characteristics	Size, Level of internationalization, Pay mix, Level of centralization
	Attractiveness of organization	Six items, e.g., "I would very much like to work for this organization"

Table 2 (cont). Measurement of organizational attractiveness

Research focus/Authors	Dimensions/Variables	Items
The relation of instrumental and symbolic attributes to organizational attractiveness as an employer: Lievens and Highhouse (2003)	Instrumental attributes	Pay, Advancement, Job security, Task demands, Location, Working with customers, Benefits, Flexible working hours
	Symbolic attributes	Sincerity, Innovativeness, Competence, Prestige, Robustness
	Attractiveness as an employer	Three items, e.g., "This bank is attractive to me as a place for employment"
Employer brand as a package of instrumental and symbolic beliefs: Lievens (2007); Organizational attractiveness and employer knowledge: Lievens et al. (2005); Symbolic attributes and organizational attractiveness: Schreurs et al. (2009)	Instrumental attributes	Social/team activities, Physical activities, Structure, Advancement, Travel opportunities, Pay and benefits, Job security, Educational opportunities, Task diversity
	Symbolic attributes	Sincerity, Cheerfulness, Excitement, Competence, Prestige, Ruggedness
	Attractiveness as an employer	Three items, e.g., "For me, the Army would be a good place to work"
Model of employee-based brand equity and organizational attractiveness: Jiang and Iles (2011)	Economic value	People's evaluation of their economic needs
	Developmental value	People's demands for professional development
	Social value	People's social needs, such as sense of belonging
	Interest value	People's need for self-realization and interesting challenges
	Brand trust	Employer's perceived honesty, credibility and ability to satisfy applicant/employee demands
Managing and measuring employer brand: Ambler and Barrow (1996)	Functional benefits	Developmental and/or useful activities
	Economic benefits	Material or monetary rewards
	Psychological benefits	Feelings such as belonging, direction and purpose
Distinctive employer brand: Edwards (2010)	Transactional	Pay for performance
	Relational	Socio-emotional/cultural features
	Ideological	Ideological purpose in accordance with a particular set of values and principles
	Symbolic personality characteristics	E.g., "doing good"
	Instrumental personality characteristics	Pay, benefits and other reward based features of the employment experience
	Organizational identity	Central enduring distinctive characteristics
	Existing employment reputation	E.g., a particularly good environmentally sustainable reputation
Organizational attractiveness as an employer: Turban (2001)	Organizational attributes	Company image, Compensation and job security, Challenging work
	Company image	Concern for the environment, High ethical standards, Overall public image, Involved in the community, Product quality
	Compensation and job security	Benefits, Compensation, Job security, Financially sound, Treatment of employees, Opportunities for advancement
	Challenging work	Opportunities to learn and develop on the job, Challenging work assignments, Training and development programs, Competence of personnel, Opportunities to use latest technologies
Narrow personality traits and organizational attractiveness: Kausel and Slaughter (2011)	Symbolic attributes	Trustworthiness: organizational regarded as friendly, personal, attentive to people and honest
		Dominance: organization is perceived as being big, successful, popular, active, busy
		Innovativeness: organization being creative, exciting, interesting, unique, original
	Instrumental factors	Power, Working conditions, Flexible working hours, Geographic location, Job security
Person-organization fit effects on organizational attraction: Yu (2014)	Organizational values/suppliers	Cable and Edwards (2004) Work values survey: Relationships, Prestige, Security, Autonomy
	Expected need fulfillment	Value expression, Communication, Predictability, Trust, Reputation
	Organizational attraction	Highhouse et al., 2003 (5-item scale)
Complementary and supplementary fit: Cable and Edwards (2004)	Organizational values/suppliers	Altruism, Relationships, Pay, Security, Authority, Prestige, Variety, Autonomy

Table 2 (cont). Measurement of organizational attractiveness

Research focus/Authors	Dimensions/Variables	Items
Employer branding influence on managers: Davies (2008)	Ruthlessness	Egotism, Dominance (negatively valenced)
	Agreeableness	Warmth, Empathy, Integrity
	Enterprise	Modernity, Adventure, Boldness
	Competence	Conscientiousness, Drive, Technocracy
	Chic	Elegance, Prestige, Snobbery
Employer attractiveness dimensions in the employer branding concept: Тьзьner and Yьksel (2009)	Integrated employer branding	25 variables, e.g., Possibilities for advancement/promotion, Tasks that mean bigger challenges, Good reference for future career, Innovative solutions, Strong clear company culture, Good ethic, Good leadership/management, etc.
	Competitiveness	Competitive working environment, Competitive compensation package, Possibilities to work from home
Employer brand experience framework: Mosley (2007)	Employee 'touch-points'	Recruitment, Orientation, Communication, Shared services, Performance and development, Measurement, Reward and Recognition
	Everyday experience	Values, Management competences, Leadership competences
Person-organization fit and attraction to organization: Kroustalis and Meade (2007)	Organization's culture	Innovation, Team orientation, Diversity
	Organizational attraction	Five-items measure (Highhouse et al., 2003)
Perceptions of organizational attractiveness: Nadler et al. (2010)	Flextime	"The company's job offer includes a flextime plan"
	Organizational attractiveness	Five-item measure, e.g., "I would find this company to be an attractive place to work"

Accordingly, operationalization and measurement of organizational attractiveness has evoked considerable attention and resulted in different instruments, scales and approaches.

The Great Place to Work Institute carries out probably the most famous worldwide research and assessment of an attractive workplace, as well as the election of the best ones, which is performed using the Great Place to Work survey tool Trust Index (What is a Great Workplace?, 2014). This tool has been used to evaluate employers since 1980, concluding that trust, pride and joy make a workplace great. Another well-known tool is Gallup's Q12, designed to measure employee engagement (Harter et al., 2013) and used annually for The Gallup Great Workplace Award. The main limitation of this instrument is that organizations must meet criteria of size, minimum response rate, and minimum results in order to be invited to apply (Gallup Great Workplace Award Criteria, 2013). A tool comprising just 12 questions might also appear to be insufficient to capture subtler areas of organizational attractiveness. To go further, FORTUNE World's Most Admired Companies (2013) study produces lists of companies that enjoy the strongest reputations. To determine industry rankings a maximum of 10 top executives and seven directors per company along with a pool of financial analysts

are selected to evaluate the attributes of company reputation. In this way, perceptions of employees are ignored, giving very few ideas about internal truths of organizational life.

In Lithuania, the best employer has been elected by *TNS Gallup* for short period in 2006–2008, using the *Index of the Most Attractive Employer*. On the initiative of governmental institutions, the *National Responsible Business Award* is given out every year, seeking to increase the awareness of the benefits that corporate social responsibility brings to business, the country and every individual, as well as to encourage the country's companies to apply the principles of social responsibility in their work. The following nominations are elected – Employer of the Year, Partner of the Year, Environmental Enterprise of the Year and Socially Responsible Enterprise. The survey "Most Desirable Employer" in Lithuania is performed by business daily *Verslo Žinios* and the career website cv.lt since 2005. The most important factors in attracting and maintaining the best employees that have remained consistent over the years as indicated by the respondents are an Attractive Salary, Social Guarantees, Good Management and possibility to have an Interesting Job. Other important features of a desirable employer are Appreciated Employees, Financial Success and Friendly Staff.

In this vein, while measurement of employer's attractiveness has been given much attention in many countries all over the world, it is still not fairly or just fragmentary applied in Lithuanian context as *there is no clear methodology how organizational attractiveness should be measured in Lithuanian business sector.*

3. METHODOLOGY

During the development of a tool to assess organizational attractiveness in Lithuanian business sector, literature analysis and a survey of best workplace assessment methodologies (e.g. glassdoor.com, indeed.com; linkedIn.com, Vault.com, Monster.com GreatPlaceToWork.com, Fortune.com, UniversumGlobal.com and others) used around the world (Fombrun et al., 1999, DeVon et al., 2007) were performed. Organizational attractiveness dimensions used in these methodologies are the result of long, thorough and purposeful scientific research, thus they are reliable in the measurement of an attractive employer. General list of 67 dimensions of an employer's attractiveness was composed and, using content validity, narrowed down to 30 dimensions of a scale (see Table 5, first column) enabling to measure organizational attractiveness of business companies and identify existing employee attitudes towards employment experience in Lithuanian business sector.

Administration of the scale allowed determining the overall organizational attractiveness of business organization, employee attitudes towards particular features of employment experience, to identify the unique values provided by the company to its employees, as well as to see the gaps or areas for improvement.

Cluster sampling was used to calculate a sample of service companies from the whole population of Lithuanian business sector firms (N = 19433). Calculations were performed aiming at a confidence level of 95 and confidence interval of ± 3%. Ensuring representativeness, the quotes of company size was applied, namely: 0-4 employees (16.4%), 5-9 employees (39.7%), 10-19 employees (21.7%), 20-49 employees (12.0%), 50-99 employees (5.2%), 100 and more employees (5.0%). Accordingly, the sample size of n = 1020 allows to generalize to the whole population with the confidence level of 95% and the confidence interval of ± 2.99%.

Research ethics was ensured asking respondents for an agreement to participate in the survey, allowing a refusal option, guaranteeing respondent's confidence and anonymity. Answers were recorded precisely and incorruptly.

A telephone survey was used to collect the data as a method of exploratory research. 10-point response scale was used for evaluation of each item capturing employees' attitudes about the actual employment experience in the particular business company. Respondents were asked to assess *how important is* the statement about actual employment experience as the feature of *organizational attractiveness*, with "1" used to indicate "least important" (lowest perceived value) and "10" – "most important" (highest perceived value).

4. RESULTS

The survey was carried out during the period of June-July, 2016. Table 3 below shows demographic characteristics of the sample (N = 1020).

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the sample

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Females	645	63.2
Males	375	36,8
Age < = 25	95	9.3
Age 26-35	361	35.4
Age 36-45	262	25.7
Age 46-55	184	18.0
Age > 55	118	11.6
Non-managers	476	46.7
Managers	544	53.2

Research results analysis allowed ranking dimensions of organizational attractiveness as perceived by the existing employees of the surveyed business companies from most important to least important, or, presumably most and least manifested employment experiences in current organizations.

Table 4 reports descriptive statistics – means and standard deviations for employee attitudes towards dimensions of organizational attractiveness of Lithuanian business companies in descending order. The total mean of responses ($M = 8.44$) as a threshold was calculated to facilitate the interpretation of results. As Table 4 demonstrates, 19 dimensions were found above the threshold, indicating, that Good working atmosphere ($M = 9.65$) is the most appreciated organizational attractiveness dimension in Lithuanian business sector, followed by Adequate (satisfactory) salary ($M = 9.63$) and Interesting job ($M = 9.61$). It could be presupposed that these features are key to the attractiveness as an employer of business companies in Lithuania as perceived by their employees.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for employee attitudes towards dimensions of organizational attractiveness in descending order

Dimensions	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Good working atmosphere	1020	3	10	9.65	.762
Adequate (satisfactory) salary	1020	1	10	9.63	.824
Interesting job	1020	5	10	9.61	.827
Personal development	1020	1	10	9.53	.883
Good relationship with supervisor	1020	1	10	9.47	.937
Good relationship with colleagues	1020	4	10	9.44	.961
Supervisor support	1020	1	10	9.37	1.021
Professional knowledge improvement	1020	4	10	9.31	.967
Self-fulfilment and self-realization	1020	1	10	9.19	1.178
Employee incentives	1020	1	10	9.09	1.413
Long-term employment guarantees	1020	1	10	8.97	1.529
Good working conditions	1020	3	10	8.95	1.297
Meaningful job	1020	1	10	8.88	1.380
Independence in work-related decision making	1020	1	10	8.81	1.293
Possibility to use technological innovations	1020	1	10	8.68	1.430
Career possibilities	1020	1	10	8.65	1.696
Work-life balance	1020	1	10	8.56	1.838
Participation in strategic decision making	1020	1	10	8.52	1.477
Good image of organization in society	1020	1	10	8.46	1.681
Teamwork	1020	1	10	8.17	1.770
Additional benefits	1020	1	10	8.10	1.880
Social responsibility of organization	1020	1	10	7.95	2.115
Job variety	1020	1	10	7.90	1.719
Flexible work schedule	1020	1	10	7.84	2.167
Organizations location (close to home)	1020	1	10	7.73	2.233
Work-related travel options	1020	1	10	7.43	2.028
International profile of organization	1020	1	10	6.94	2.603
Job enrichment and enlargement	1020	1	10	6.37	2.125
Possibility to work from home	1020	1	10	6.17	2.547
Popularity of organization in social networks	1020	1	10	5.84	2.530
Total	1020				

Further we find Personal development ($M = 9.53$), Good relationship with supervisor ($M = 9.47$) and Good relationship with colleagues ($M = 9.44$) perceived as very important features, determining organizational attractiveness of business organizations. The last dimensions found above the total mean of responses, are Good image of organization in society ($M = 8.46$) and Participation in decision making ($M = 9.52$), which still play a very important role for the attractiveness of organizations and without doubts are worth considerable attention being or becoming a good place to work.

Obviously, such employment experiences as *International profile of organization* ($M = 8.46$), *Job enrichment and enlargement* ($M = 8.46$), *Possibility to work from home* ($M = 8.46$) and *Popularity of organization in social networks* ($M = 8.46$) could pose a possible risk to perceived organizational attractiveness.

Analyzing the data derived from the question about *the overall organizational attractiveness* of present workplace, it was found that respondents evaluate their current workplaces as a fairly attractive employer ($M = 8.51$; $SD = 1.531$). It can be seen from the data in Table 5, that only 2% (20) of employees gave their employers the score from 1 to 4 in a 10-point response scale (with 1

meaning "not attractive" at all and 10 meaning "very attractive"), percibing them as not attractive working places. 16.1% (165) of respondents evaluated their employers from 5 to 7 indicating that their attitudes towards business company they work for are mediocre and they are not appreciating their employment experience to a larger extent. 81.9% (835) of employees gave their companies a rating from 8 to 10, meaning that the majority of the sample is happy with their current workplaces and perceive them as an attractive employers.

Answering the question *whether employees would recommend current organization to others as a good place to work* most of them were pretty positive and said that they mostly would recommend their employers to the friends as a good place to work for ($M = 8.48$; $SD = 1.720$). As it is visible from Table 6, only 3% (30) would probably not recommend their employers to others, 17.2% (175) would be hesitating to recommend, although 11.5% gave their working places 7 points, meaning that their attitudes are not negative, but a number of employment experience improvements would be expected. Finally, 79.8% (815) have shown a strong confidence in their employers and expressed willingness to recommend them to potential employees.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of employees' attitudes towards employers attractiveness

Evaluation		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	.3	.3	.3
	2	4	.4	.4	.7
	3	5	.5	.5	1.2
	4	8	.8	.8	2.0
	5	34	3.3	3.3	5.3
	6	39	3.8	3.8	9.1
	7	92	9.0	9.0	18.1
	8	273	26.8	26.8	44.9
	9	232	22.7	22.7	67.6
	10	330	32.4	32.4	100.0
Total		1020	100.0	100.0	

The Spearman correlation coefficient was used as a nonparametric measure to test the strength and direction of association between the evaluation of employer attractiveness and willingness to recommend it to others. Based on the results of the study (see Table 7) the more attractive employer is perceived by existing employees they will be more to recommend it as a good place to work for others

$$r_s = .663, \ p < .05.$$

Table 6. Frequency distribution of employee's recommendations of the current employer as a good place to work

Evaluation		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	9	.9	.9	.9
	2	6	.6	.6	1.5
	3	6	.6	.6	2.1
	4	10	1.0	1.0	3.0
	5	36	3.5	3.5	6.6
	6	32	3.1	3.1	9.7
	7	107	10.5	10.5	20.2
	8	274	26.9	26.9	47.1
	9	147	14.4	14.4	61.5
	10	393	38.5	38.5	100.0
Total		1020	100.0	100.0	

Table 7. Correlations

	Evaluation		Perceived employer attractiveness	Willingness to recommend it to others as a good place to work
Spearman's rho	Perceived employer attractiveness	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	.663**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	1020	1020
	Willingness to recommend it to others as a good place to work	Correlation Coefficient	.663**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	1020	1020

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

We are living in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world with the complex, segmented and ageing society, with companies soliciting candidates and not vice versa, targeting individuals based on their personal values, with the new generation of employees who are creative, innovative, fast-moving and who are comfortable with new technology and waiting for future leaders – culturally dexterous, knowing how to motivate and reward people of different backgrounds.

Organizational attractiveness as an employer – the degree to which potential and current employees perceive organization as good place to work – is surely no more a trend or a fad of HR as it was hesitated some years ago, but a paradigm shift changing the way of thinking and doing in attracting, retaining and motivating best employees. Organizations are starting to do it in new and different way. Firstly, discovering their labor-market identity, authenticity, philosophy, uniqueness, and the way of employment experience they are offering to existing and potential employees. And, secondly looking for people, who

would be attracted and motivated by this package of values and would devote them for living their employer's brand.

Organizational attractiveness as an employer becomes a competitive strategy and even few would be opposing that, companies still lack knowledge what features would make them attractive as employers and practice how to embed these features to the daily HR practices.

The overview of conceptualization and operationalization of organizational attractiveness construct revealed its complexity and ambiguity. Although organizational attractiveness stems from perceived employment experience and is by nature an emergent phenomenon, deliberate efforts offering a compelling and unique package of benefits to its existing and potential employees, would definitely facilitate perception of organization as a good place to work.

For as much as previous research has put an emphasis on the potential applicant's perspective (e.g. Berthon et al., 2005; Ehrhart and Ziegert, 2005, etc.) and very few studies have involved actual employees (e.g. Turban, 2001; Lievens et al., 2007) which could help to explore an "experienced" opinion and make an attempt to answer, why individuals who were attracted and selected consequently retain this study tried to overcome this limitation of organizational attractiveness research, (Nadler et al., 2010; Ehrhart and Ziegert, 2005; Jiang and Iles, 2011) and examined perceptions of workforce population.

The scale to measure employee attitudes and to determine the dimensions of organizational attractiveness was developed and administered in Lithuanian service business companies (N=1020).

Data analysis revealed that 19 employer attributes are positively linked to organizational attractiveness with *good working atmosphere*, *adequate salary* and *interesting job* being the key to the attractiveness as an employer of business companies in Lithuania as perceived by their employees. Further *personal development*, *good relationship with supervisor* and *good relationship with colleagues* were perceived as very important features, determining organizational attractiveness of business organizations by existing employees.

In comparison, it was found before (Bakanauskienė et al., 2016; Bendaravičienė, 2015), that in higher education sector employees place most emphasis on *supervisor relationship, job satisfaction, fairness* and *trust, academic environment* and *working conditions*.

Yet, surprisingly *international profile of organization, job enrichment and enlargement, possibility to work from home* and *popularity of organization in social networks* were not given considerable attention as drivers of employer's attractiveness. It could be speculated that these dimensions were not perceived by employees as crucial to employer's attractiveness because they are still rarely exploited by business organizations (e.g. in the case of *possibility to work from home)*, or influenced by conditionally small representation of young generation <=25 among respondents, who probably would pay more attention to the *popularity of organization in social networks*. Further, *job enrichment and enlargement* is not new concept, though an uncommon practice in business companies requiring additional resources purposefully increasing job tasks and responsibilities, and making positions more challenging. Therefore, it could still not be properly recognized both by the employees and business organizations.

Finally, the *international profile* of the business company found really much below the total mean and simply, in the end of the list of determinants of organizational attractiveness, could be explained by the modernization of national companies adapting best international human resource practices, creating innovative and inclusive organizational cultures and employment experiences, making no difference of it being national or international.

All in all, creating a positive working environment, providing recognition and reward, involving and engaging employees and developing their skills and potential, giving feedback on their achievements and improvement could be a universal rule for the business companies attracting, keeping and motivating their employees.

More specifically, organizational attractiveness as an employer should be embedded in its employer brand and well-founded on the *uniqueness, distinctiveness and authenticity of employment experience* offered by the company to the existing and potential employees. It means that even though the study has identified a number of dimensions of organizational attractiveness of Lithuanian business companies as perceived by the existing employees as it was shown and discussed the above, the understanding, perception and manifestations of good *working atmosphere* or *personal development* or *good relationship with supervisor* may mean different things to different companies, it may have many names and faces. From the employee perspective different people choose and stay with companies for very different reasons, and are not sharing the same definition of 'success' (Marston, 2007).

Therefore, the main message for business companies is to use the knowledge about the drivers of organizational attractiveness as a guide, but not a pattern identifying and articulating the *particular* human resource practices employees can expect – from training, performance management, and compensation to rewards, promotion and communication. This would "guide the firm in selecting particular types of people with particular kinds of aptitudes and abilities to pursue particular goals in particular kinds of ways, motivated by particular kinds of rewards" (Baron, 2004), and would make them distinctive and attractive as an employer.

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