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Workplace Innovations as Reflected in the Romanian Economic Press

Abstract

Workplace innovations are designed to optimize production processes in firms and improve employees' working conditions; few researches on this topic have shown that workplace innovations increased employees' job satisfaction, as well as a sense of responsibility and autonomy, but also employees' overall well-being, especially regarding to work-life balance and health. Workplace innovation includes aspects regarding work organization (job autonomy, self-managed teams, flexible working etc.), organizational structure and systems (devolution of decision-making to employees, fairness and equality, supporting employee initiative etc.), learning and development (high involvement innovation, staff learning and development, shared knowledge and experience etc.), workplace partnership (social dialogue, representative participation, involvement in change, openness and communication, integrating tacit and strategic knowledge etc.). This paper aims to highlight the main characteristics of workplace innovations in Romanian firms, as they are presented in some economical, business and academic, journals in our country. The research methodology consisted of a content analysis performed on four Romanian economic journals two from academic area (*Management and Marketing* and *Management Dynamics in Knowledge Economy*) and two from business area (*Cariere* and *Biz*). The dimensions of content analysis included the different types of workplace innovations and their effects on organizational performance as well as on employees' quality of life at the workplace, the size and the source of capital and economic sector of firms that innovate in human resource management, barriers and drivers to the implementation of workplace innovations etc. The period for journals content analysis was 1 year, between January 1 and December 31, 2013. The paper contains a case study for each journal, including abstracts of the most relevant articles on the workplace innovations and related topics.

Keywords: workplace innovations, economic journals, knowledge economy.

1. Workplace innovations – the conceptual framework and the situation in other European countries

Workplace innovation has been recently defined as social innovation in organizations as “the implementation of new and combined interventions in the fields of work organization, human resource management and supportive technologies” (Pot, 2011, p. 404). Totterdill et al. emphasize the effects of workplace innovations on enterprises' economic growth and on employees' working conditions at the same time: “workplace innovation is related in a positive way to improvements in organizational performance on the one hand and in employee well-being and engagement on the other; it is fuelled by open dialogue, knowledge sharing, exper-

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imentation and learning in which diverse stakeholders (that may include employees, trade unions, managers and customers) are given a voice in the creation of more participative ways of working” (2014, p. 1). Also according to *Dortmund/Brussels Position Paper on Workplace Innovation*, the concept is described as a “social, participatory process which shapes work organisation and working life, combining their human, organisational and technological dimensions. This participatory process simultaneously results in improved organisational performance and enhanced quality of working life” (2012, p. 2). Examples of workplace innovations are: participative job design, self-organised teams, continuous improvement, high involvement innovation, employee involvement in corporate decision making, etc.

Other authors use relatively synonymous terms, such as organizational innovation (Armbruster et al., 2008; Lam, 2011; Mako, 2013; OECD, 2005) or high performance work practices (HPWPs) (Cox et al., 2012). Armbruster et al. (2008, p. 645) presented organizational innovation as “comprising changes in the structure and processes of an organization due to implementing new managerial and working concepts and practices, such as the implementation of teamwork in production, supply chain management or quality-management systems”. On the one hand, from a theoretical level, Lam (2011) considers that her review of the existing literature in the field reveals no consensus definition of the term “organizational innovation”, because “different researchers have used the term to describe different aspects of the relationships between organization and innovation”, therefore according to her, “there is a great conceptual ambiguity and confusion surrounding this term” (2011, p.138). On the other hand, field researches conducted by Cox et al. (2012, p. 71) showed that employee motivation was improved by the workplace innovations which provided job enrichment, greater responsibilities and autonomy, skill variety and development, enhanced training, increased trust and organizational support, enhanced job security, opportunities for suggestions or challenge. But HPWPs that improved autonomy, task variety, flexibility and decision-making authority also increased job strain through increasing work pressure, workloads and work pace, despite efforts made by management to implement health and safety measures.

Oeij et al. (2012) explore empirical findings about workplace innovation in relation to enterprises’ performance and facets of quality of work on the other. Their central research question was: does workplace innovation have a positive effect on organizational performance and on employee commitment and the absence of work stress risks? Using data from a large-scale survey among companies in the Netherlands, it has been demonstrated that there is indeed a positive relationship between workplace innovation, on the one hand, and quantitative and qualitative organizational performance and commitment of employees, on the other. No relation has been shown between workplace innovation and the risk of work stress as reported by the employer. The conclusion was that workplace innovation matters to performance and to people in organizations.

Workplace innovation includes aspects regarding work organization (job autonomy, self-managed teams, flexible working, integration of technology, etc.), organizational structure and systems (transfer of decision-making to employees, fairness and equality, supporting employee initiative, etc.), learning and development (high involvement innovation, staff learning and development, shared knowledge and experience, etc.), workplace partnership (social dialogue, representative participation, involvement in change, openness and communication, integrating tacit and strategic knowledge etc.).

Unfortunately, workplace innovation is an underexplored resource for European private or public enterprises: the data shows that only 47% of the European workers are involved in

improving work organization or work processes in their department or enterprise, only 47% are consulted before targets for their work are set and of all workers, and only 40% can influence the decisions that are important for their work. Moreover, there are significant differences between countries with regards to the control that employees can exercise over their work tasks and their participation in organizational decision-making: the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) have the highest levels of involvement, while the Southern countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain) and the East-Southern European countries (Bulgaria and Romania) have particularly low levels (Totterdill et al., 2014, p. 1).

Mako (2014) also noted the asymmetry in the distribution of workplace innovation among European states, especially between Western and South-Eastern countries. The table below summarizes the distributions of work organization in the Eastern and Central European post-socialist countries in comparison with the EU-27 average.

Table 1. Frequencies of forms of work organization in the Post-Socialist Countries (%).

Country	Discretionary Learning	Lean Production	Taylorism	Traditional or simple	Total
Bulgaria	20,6	27,2	32,7	19,5	100
Czech Republic	28,0	26,7	22,5	22,9	100
Estonia	40,7	33,4	11,2	14,7	100
Hungary	38,3	18,2	23,4	20,1	100
Lithuania	23,5	31,1	22,0	23,4	100
Latvia	33,4	34,5	17,1	15,0	100
Poland	33,3	32,6	18,9	15,2	100
Romania	24,0	33,4	27,6	14,9	100
Slovenia	34,9	32,1	16,7	16,3	100
Slovakia	27,2	21,0	33,8	18,1	100
EU-27	38,4	25,7	19,5	16,4	100

Source: Valeyre et al., 2009, p. 22.

The Discretionary Learning (or Innovative) Organization is characterized by the overrepresentation of job features as autonomy in work, learning and problem solving, task complexity, assessments of the quality of work, autonomous teamwork. Lean Production forms of work organization (limited innovation capability) is characterized by the overrepresentation of both autonomous and non-autonomous teamwork, job rotation and multi-skilling. Jobs include the self-assessment of quality as well as the indirect variable of just-in-time production, measured by demand-driven constraints on work pace. This type of work can be labeled “controlled autonomy”, reflecting the employers’ intention to “trade-off” direct control over the employee and the benefits of employee involvement in work related decisions. Taylorist forms of work organization (no need for innovation capability) characterizes the typical mass production job, including minimal autonomy in work with low task complexity along with weak learning possibilities. Teamwork and job rotation are nearly at an average level. Traditional and simple structure version of the work organization includes working methods that are not essentially formalized, presenting difficulties in accurate description (Valeyre et al., cited in Mako, 2014, p. 2).

As the table shows, in Romania, the presence of “discretionary learning” organizations (with the strongest innovation capabilities) is below the EU average: 24,0% in our country versus 38,4% in the EU-27. Discretionary learning forms of work organization are least diffused in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania. The share of the less innovative lean production type is well above the European average: 33,4% in Romania versus 25,7% in the EU27. Also the Taylorist form of work organization is above the average: 27,6% in Romania compared to 19,5% in EU-27.

2. Research methodology

In this context, the present paper aims to examine the current situation of workplace innovation in Romanian companies, as they are presented in some economical, business and academic, journals in the country. The research methodology consisted of a content analysis performed on four Romanian economic journals two from the academic area – *Management and Marketing* (MNMK) and *Management Dynamics in Knowledge Economy* (MDKE) and two from the business area – *Cariere* and *Biz*.

The dimensions of content analysis included different types of workplace innovations and their effects on organizational performance, as well as on employees’ quality of life at the workplace, areas of workplace innovations, the size and the source of capital of firms that innovate in human resource management, the fields in which the companies that practice these innovations activate, barriers and drivers to the implementation of workplace innovations.

We have content analyzed the selected journal for a 1-year period, between January 1 and December 31, 2013. The paper will contain a case study for each journal, including abstracts of the most relevant articles on the workplace innovations and related topics. The research question which represented the basis of this current empirical approach was: how is the situation of workplace innovations in Romanian companies, as it is presented in the Romanian economic press?

Based on consultation of a few issues from each of the four journals (on which the content analysis has been performed), significant dimensions for the research topic have been identified and will be observed in the articles from the economic mentioned journals, therefore creating the research instrument – the content analysis grid. These workplace innovations are the following: practices that structure work organization and job design, practices ensuring high-level skills are an input into the production process, evaluation and performance management processes, practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and/or influence decision-making through direct or indirect methods, practices that provide rewards for performance.

All issues of the four publications included in the analysis period (12 months, between January 1 and December 31, 2013) have been checked; from these, all articles significant (according to their title) for the research topic have been identified and then analysed using the content analysis grid included in the appendix. The articles selected for further analysis are those that include / suggest, in their title or the section which they belong to, the terms that can be subsumed under the five areas of workplace innovations mentioned before (e.g.: autonomous teams, job autonomy, job enrichment, flexible time arrangements, training, knowledge activities, communication between managers and employees, social dialogue, recruitment, selection, motivation, job security, work-life balance, professional development etc.).

3. Research results

3.1. A synthetic overview on the analysed journals

As for the distribution of the articles related to organizational innovation in the four Romanian journals that were analysed (according to the “No. articles/issue” indicator), we noticed differences in the four magazines (from a high distribution in *MDKE*, *MNMK* and *Cariere*, of over 2 articles/issue related to organizational innovation, to a very small one in *Biz*).

Table 2. Articles distribution for each journal.

Publication	No. of issues	No. articles related to organizational innovation	No. articles/issue
<i>Cariere</i>	11	27	2,45
<i>Biz</i>	16	13	0,81
<i>Management & Marketing (MNMK)</i>	2	5	2,5
<i>Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy (MDKE)</i>	3	11	3,66
Total	32	56	1,75

When it comes to article distribution in the economic journals according to the geopolitical area they refer to, the data shows that articles related to organizational innovation in Romanian companies are predominant in three journals (43 articles – 76,8%), except one (MNMK, because authors from other countries whose work has been published by this journal). Furthermore, there are fewer articles related to organizational innovation in the countries outside the EU (8 articles – 14,3%) or in the EU companies (5 articles – 8,9%).

Table 3. Articles distribution in journals, according to the geopolitical area they refer to.

Publication	Romania	EU	Other countries	No. articles
<i>Cariere</i>	22	0	5	27
<i>Biz</i>	12	0	1	13
<i>MNMK</i>	1	2	2	5
<i>MDKE</i>	8	3	0	11
Total	43	5	8	56

Regarding article distribution in the Romanian journals according to how the situation was approached overall/in particular companies, we notice that articles about general situation are dominant (38 articles – 67,8%); a similar case can be seen when it comes to each of the journals: 81,8% in *MDKE*, 70,3% in *Cariere* and 61,5% in *Biz* (*MNMK* is an exception due to the low number of relevant articles – out of 5 articles, 2 refer to the overall situation, while 3 focus on particular situations). They present either various successful situations of organizational innovations in Romanian companies, in case of business journals, or surveys related to organizational innovations, conducted in various firms, in academic journals.

Table 4. Articles distribution in journals, according to how the issue was approached overall/in particular companies.

Publication	Overall situation	The situation in the case of particular companies or natural persons	No. articles
<i>Cariere</i>	19	8	27
<i>Biz</i>	8	5	13
<i>MNMK</i>	2	3	5
<i>MDKE</i>	9	2	11
Total	38	18	56

With regard to the size of the company where the organizational innovation was identified, in most of the articles (64,2%) the size of the firm is not mentioned by the authors. However, when the size is mentioned, references to large enterprises are most frequent, followed by medium organizations. This can be explained by the fact that if the enterprise is larger, it has more money to invest in any type of innovation, implicitly in the organizational innovation.

Table 5. Articles distribution in journals, according to size of the innovative company.

Publication	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	It is not the case	No. articles
<i>Cariere</i>	0	0	1	5	21	27
<i>Biz</i>	0	1	3	3	6	13
<i>MNMK</i>	0	0	0	3	2	5
<i>MDKE</i>	0	0	1	3	7	11
Total	0	1	5	14	36	56

Another criterion we considered in our analysis was the source of capital of the innovative company. From this point of view, in most of the articles, the firms that introduced forms of organizational innovations had private capital (55,3%). In many other cases, this fact was not mentioned by the author. In 2 articles only, it was mentioned that innovations were developed in budgetary institutions.

Table 6. Articles distribution in journals, according to source of capital of the innovative company.

Publication	Private	Public	It is not the case	No. articles
<i>Cariere</i>	13	0	14	27
<i>Biz</i>	11	0	2	13
<i>MNMK</i>	3	0	2	5
<i>MDKE</i>	4	2	5	11
Total	31	2	23	56

With regard to the economic sector of the innovative company, we observed that in most of the articles (30 articles – 53,7%) this detail is not mentioned, followed by the articles that

present different organizational innovations in services sector (20 articles – 35,7%), and with only few cases in industry (4 articles), constructions or trade (1 article for each of them).

Table 7. Articles distribution in journals, according to economic sector of the innovative company.

Publication	Industry	Constructions	Services	Trade	Agriculture	not mentioned	No. articles
<i>Cariere</i>	2	0	5	1	0	19	27
<i>Biz</i>	1	0	7	0	0	5	13
<i>MNMK</i>	0	1	2	0	0	2	5
<i>MDKE</i>	1	0	6	0	0	4	11
Total	4	1	20	1	0	30	56

Key conditions facilitating workplace innovations is another criterion used in our content analysis. Thus, in a third of the articles (20 articles – 35,7%), this aspect is not stated, not even indirectly; in 16 articles (28,5%) the leadership facilitates the organizational innovations, followed by the organizational culture (17,8%) and the broader organizational approach (14,2%).

Table 8. Articles distribution in journals, according to main conditions facilitating workplace innovations.

Journal	Employee support mechanisms	Organizational culture	Leadership	The broader organizational approach	Social dialogue	Not mentioned	No. articles
<i>Cariere</i>	1	5	8	4	0	9	27
<i>Biz</i>	1	3	3	3	0	3	13
<i>MNMK</i>	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
<i>MDKE</i>	0	2	5	1	0	3	11
Total	2	10	16	8	0	20	56

“Obstacles to workplace innovation” is another item that we have used in the content analysis. In most of the analyzed articles, this detail is not found, not even implicitly (44 articles – 78,5%). There are only few articles in which we could identify obstacles such as: “unwillingness of middle managers to delegate responsibility and give up power” and “lack of enthusiasm and skills among line managers to put HPWPs into practice” (3 articles for each of the two identified obstacle), “incompatibility with organizational strategy” and “time and costs of implementation” (2 articles for each of them), “difficulty in measuring impact and value” and “reluctance among employees to take on responsibilities, particularly if the rewards and opportunities for influence are not clear” (1 article for each of them).

Table 9. Articles distribution in journals, according to main obstacles to workplace innovations.

Journal	Reluctance to change	Incompatibility with strategy	Difficulty in measuring impact	Unwillingness of middle managers to delegate	Lack of enthusiasm and skills among line managers	Reluctance among employees	Time and costs	Not mentioned	No. articles
<i>Carriere</i>	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	22	27
<i>Biz</i>	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	12	13
<i>MNMK</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	5
<i>MDKE</i>	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	6	11
Total	0	2	1	3	3	1	2	44	56

Procedural (incremental) innovations are those that enhance/improve what already exists and they are the most frequent types of innovation, because they are not so risky. On the other hand, structural (radical) innovations, which are those that produce breakdowns, destroying what already exists, are very rare. Our analysis confirmed this fact: with regard to distribution of the articles based on type of workplace innovation, according to the degree of novelty, all articles (55 articles – 98,2%) refer to procedural organizational innovations, with only one exception.

Table 10. Articles distribution in journals, according to type of innovation, according to implied degree of novelty.

Journal	Structural	Procedural	No. articles
<i>Carriere</i>	0	27	27
<i>Biz</i>	0	13	13
<i>MNMK</i>	0	5	5
<i>MDKE</i>	1	10	11
Total	1	55	56

Innovations can be classified also according to the place where they occur, accordingly, they can be intra-organizational or inter-organizational. In our analysis, articles referring to organizational innovations that affect the firm at the internal level represent the overwhelming majority (55 articles – 98,2%); the same situation applies to each journal.

Table 11. Articles distribution in journals, according to type of innovation, according to place where it occurs.

Journal	Intra-organizational	Inter-organizational	No. articles
<i>Carriere</i>	26	1	27
<i>Biz</i>	13	0	13
<i>MNMK</i>	5	0	5
<i>MDKE</i>	11	0	11
Total	55	1	56

Regarding the effects of workplace innovations on organizational performance, in the majority of articles (34 articles – 60,7%), this aspect is not mentioned. However, when it is present, it refers more to competitiveness and productivity growth of that organization (16 articles), and less to gaining new customers or to ensuring the already gained customers' satisfaction (6 articles).

Table 12. Articles distribution in journals, according to effects on organizational performance.

Journal	Competitiveness, productivity growth	New customers, customers satisfaction	Not mentioned	No. articles
<i>Cariera</i>	8	0	19	27
<i>Biz</i>	3	5	5	13
<i>MNMK</i>	3	1	1	5
<i>MDKE</i>	2	0	9	11
Total	16	6	34	56

Workplace innovations affect (in most of the cases, they also improve) employee working conditions. The articles that contain no information about this aspect are, again, the most frequent (34 articles – 60,7%). When this information is present, it is often about enhanced motivation (7 articles), job satisfaction (6 articles) and loyalty/organizational commitment (5 articles). Other effects are rarely mentioned.

Table 13. Articles distribution in journals, according to effects on employee working conditions.

Journal	Stress due to poor control	Loyalty, commitment	Enhanced motivation	Job satisfaction	Lack of absenteeism due to illness	A good work-life balance	Not mentioned	No. articles
<i>Cariera</i>	0	2	3	2	0	2	18	27
<i>Biz</i>	1	2	4	2	0	0	4	13
<i>MNMK</i>	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	5
<i>MDKE</i>	0	1	0	1	0	0	9	11
Total	1	5	7	6	1	2	34	56

When it comes to distribution of the articles in the four economic journals, based on the areas of workplace innovations they approached, we have noticed that the articles about the 4th area “practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and/ or influence decision-making through direct or indirect methods” are predominant (18 articles – 32,1%), followed by articles about the 2nd area “practices ensuring high-level skills are an input into the production process” (17 articles – 30,3%) and articles about the 1st area “practices that structure work organization and job design” (12 articles – 21,4%); further down the list are articles from the 6th area “practices that provide rewards for performance” (6 articles) and the 3rd area “appraisal and performance management processes” (only 3 articles).

Table 14. Articles distribution based on areas of workplace innovations.

Journal	Practices that structure work organization and job design	Practices ensuring high-level skills are an input into the production process	Appraisal and performance management processes	Practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and/or influence decision-making	Practices that provide rewards for performance	No. articles
<i>Cariere</i>	4	8	3	8	4	27
<i>Biz</i>	4	4	0	3	2	13
<i>MNMK</i>	4	1	0	0	0	5
<i>MDKE</i>	0	4	0	7	0	11
Total	12	17	3	18	6	56

3.2. Case studies

3.2.1. *Cariere* (Leadership Journal)

This is a monthly business magazine (“business lifestyle”), with a nationwide outreach. All 11 issues published in 2013 have been analyzed (no. 193-203; for the August issue, we consulted the online version); the content analysis scheme was used to examine the articles relevant to our research topic, based on their title.

We have identified 27 articles related to organizational innovation topic. Regarding the areas of organizational innovation, as presented in the articles, most articles referred to “practices ensuring high-level skills are an input into the production process” and to “practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and/or influence decision-making through direct or indirect methods” (8 articles for each of them). Next, in a decreasing order of the frequency, there are articles that contain information about “practices that structure work organization and job design” and “practices that provide rewards for performance” (4 articles for each) followed by articles referring to “evaluation and performance management processes” (3 articles).

The key terms (phrases, ideas) used in the articles are listed in this paragraph. For the “practices ensuring high-level skills are an input into the production process”, predominant ideas are related to training and professional development including on-the-job and off-the-job training using any means of development such as formal courses, self-study, workshops, mentoring etc. For the area “practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and/or influence decision-making through direct or indirect methods”, the most often found idea is informal and formal dialogue and face to face communication between managers and employees. Regarding “practices that structure work organization and job design” area, key ideas are related to redesign of jobs to enlarge or enrich their content (job enrichment, task variety, greater responsibilities, job rotation etc.) or working time arrangements including flexible start and finish times and flexible total number of hours, home or teleworking. For “practices that provide rewards for performance”, main ideas refer to employee benefits that may be financial or non-financial including access to sources of support for health and well-being.

Some articles are more consistent when it comes to their ideas, and we will briefly outline the main ideas of these articles. In the article “How important are soft skills for employment?” of issue no. 193 (January-February 2013), the author Marius Dobre points out to a

certain innovation in the field of recruitment and selection, highlighting the fact that abroad, companies hire people who have excellent *soft* skills abilities (interpersonal abilities, diplomacy, tactfulness, politeness, sobriety, oriented towards the others, emotional balance) and are willing to invest afterwards in trainings which would help employees develop the *hard* skills abilities, which are necessary to do their everyday job. According to a study done by the Labor Department of the United States of America and mentioned in Dobre's article, the five required qualities for new employees are: identifying and directing resources, teamwork, acquiring and using information, understanding complex relations, working with a variety of technologies (p. 26). The article "For the ladies: mentoring, trainings, teamwork", from issue no. 194 (March, 2013) approaches organizational innovation in the field of training, as well as motivation given by the work-life balance, by providing the readers with the example of the Hewlett-Packard company, which has also a Romanian branch. The company encourages manager women through special training programs, such as the "Open mentoring program for women", a special mentoring program dedicated to those who wish to develop their career under the guidance of a mentor. The HP company has also a re-integration program for young mothers upon returning from their maternity leave. These mothers receive special induction sessions preparing them for continuing their work in the most natural manner after the long absence (p.54). The innovation of work organization by flexible working arrangements is approached in the article "How to be successful when you work in a job-sharing arrangement" of issue no.201 (October 2013), where author Amy Gallo approaches the practice of job-sharing (dividing a full-time position into two part-time jobs) which allows employees to enjoy a flexible working time: "there are several reasons for choosing such an arrangement: one might need time to take care of someone, to work on another job, or to continue his/her education" (p.54). The practices of offering employees rewards are discussed in the article "How are companies to keep their employees happy?" of issue no. 203 (December 2013) where author Marius Dobre lists such new practices of support health and well-being in Romanian companies: offering shares to those employees working for at least 1 year in the company and not only to those from the top-management level; providing employees with special areas where they can relax – play ping-pong, enjoy massages, high-tech rooms where they can play with and test the latest technology discoveries; some companies hire their own chef in order to provide employees with fresh food and new menus to choose from every day; paying for some courses which are not related to their professional activity, but more likely related to the employees' hobbies – driving lessons, studying a foreign language etc. (pp. 38-39).

3.2.2. Biz magazine

Biz is a journal belonging to the "business lifestyle" category (according to the Romanian Audit Bureau of Circulation), available nationwide and printed twice a month. All 16 issues of *Biz* magazine published in 2013 were analysed (no. 243-258); the content analysis grid was used on articles relevant to our research topic.

We have identified 13 articles related to organizational innovation theme. Regarding the areas of organizational innovation, as presented in the articles, most articles referred to "practices ensuring high-level skills are an input into the production process" and to "practices that structure work organization and job design" (4 articles for each of them). In a decreasing order of the frequency of articles, then there are those that contain information about "practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and/ or influence decision-making

through direct or indirect methods” (3 articles) and then “practices that provide rewards for performance” (2 articles).

The key terms used in the articles are listed below. For the “practices ensuring high-level skills are an input into the production process”, all ideas are related to training and professional development including on-the-job and off-the-job training using any means of development such as formal courses, self-study, workshops, mentoring etc. Regarding “practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and/ or influence decision-making through direct or indirect methods” area, key ideas are related to informal and formal communication between managers and employees and to employee attitude surveys. For the “practices that structure work organization and job design”, the most often used idea refers to redesigning of jobs to enlarge or enrich their content. For “practices that provide rewards for performance”, the significant ideas are related to employee benefits that may be financial or non-financial including access to support for health and well-being or to career progression opportunities.

Some articles are more relevant for our research subject and we will include a summary of these articles. In the article “A new beginning” of issue no. 253 (15-30 September 2013, author Loredana Săndulescu approaches a topic of work organization and job design in a professional services’ Romanian company, namely the re-organization of the Centrade Saatchi&Saatchi advertising agency 20 years after its establishment. The reorganization plan involves the entire top-management team and intends to offer integrated services to the clients, at a time when the discussion in the field no longer refers to the ATL, BTL, online and offline: “clients are confronted with great pressure on budgets, time and decision and can no longer reason in terms of expertise, as they are focused on how the agency manages to find a solution that would solve their business problem. The new model consists of integrating services and requires firstly, the creation of a client service structure with multidisciplinary managers, having multi-domain and communication channels knowledge which are likely to become curators to the client’s needs. The new managers are not to be experts in all fields, but need to have sufficient knowledge to facilitate access to the best solutions. Based on the project, they will choose their team of experts from various specializations as well as from all the companies belonging to the same group. There will be mixed teams and ideas shall be sent through multiple channels, just as communication strategies are currently performed: moving between online and offline, enjoying transparency and being disseminated through social media” (p.20). Another article mentioning innovations in job design is that of Ovidiu Neagoe – “The power of name” of issue no. 258 (15 December 2013-20 January 2014). The author refers to the courier company Sameday, which has introduced new concepts of jobs, which led to an increase in the degree of employee motivation and loyalty, at the same time as increasing customer satisfaction: a Financial Health Manager is in charge with supervising the company’s financial health, the employees of the call center are called Client Lover and the Client Happiness Manager is some of in-house *lawyer*, but one working to the benefit of the client (p.58). The same key-idea on workplace innovation (referring to the redesigning of jobs which can enlarge or enrich their content – job enrichment, task variety, greater responsibilities, job rotation, etc.) is approached in the same issue, by the same author in a different article entitled “Playing the corporation”. It introduces the concept of *gamification* in the organizational environment, as a means of applying game mechanisms in activities which are not related to games. Thus, employees are stimulated to achieve their best results through mechanisms which are related to gaming: “for sales agents, the Charisma Mobile Gamification for Sales”

challenges one to provide real-time information, in the most complete manner, awarding one's effort with points, medals, stars (for each of the following positions: lieutenant, captain, general). The better a player one is, meaning the more one accomplishes his/her tasks in a very accurate manners, the more points one gets within the game. It is a competition, but a pleasant and exciting one" (p.69).

3.2.3. Management & Marketing (*Academic journal*)

This is a biannual scientific journal, IDB indexed, edited by the Faculty of Economics and Business Management, University of Craiova. All articles are published in English. We consulted all journals in the analysis interval, that is 2 issues (volume XI, no. 1 and 2/2013).

We have identified 5 articles related to the organizational innovation topic. Regarding the areas of organizational innovation, as presented in the articles, most articles refer to "practices that structure work organization and job design" (4 articles), followed by those which have information about "practices ensuring high-level skills" (1 article).

We present below the key terms (phrases, ideas) used in the articles. For the "practices that structure work organization and job design", relevant themes for our research are related to use of (autonomous) teams, job autonomy; redesign of jobs to enlarge or enrich their content (job enrichment, task variety, greater responsibilities, job rotation etc.); working time arrangements including flexible start and finish times and flexible total number of hours, home or teleworking; improving physical conditions for health safety (1 article for each). Regarding "practices ensuring high-level skills", important ideas are related to careful recruitment and selection. The other areas of workplace innovations were not found in selected articles.

There is a single article which is very relevant for our research theme. Its title is "Team selling and customer satisfaction in the mission critical sector: a case study of Eyp mission critical facilities Inc." and it is written by Timothy J. Crader and Stephen M. Brown in issue no. 2/2013. They approach the use of autonomous selling teams, as innovative practice of work organization that leads to sharing knowledge: "The selling team is a model that is built on the premise that combining the knowledge of both the technical team and the commercial team will add value to both the client and the firm that uses it. Team selling at EYP Mission Critical creates the following characteristics: the sales organization differs from the traditional structure, a pooled effort will offer value in the marketplace, the customer receives more focus and an increase in relationship commitment, a learning organization is created, a platform for goal sharing is provided, and the model creates efficiencies through increased knowledge utilization that will be reflected in lower costs to EYP Mission Critical's most strategic accounts" (p. 250).

3.2.4. Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy (*Academic journal*)

This is a tri-annually scientific journal, IDB indexed, edited by the Faculty of Management, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration Bucharest. All articles are published in English. We consulted all 3 issues published in the analysis interval, (volume 1, no.1, 2, 3/2013).

We have identified 11 articles related to organizational innovation theme. Regarding the areas of organizational innovation, as presented in the articles, most articles refer to "practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and/or influence decision-making through direct or indirect methods" (7 articles), followed by those which have information about "practices ensuring high-level skills" (4 articles).

The key terms used in the articles are listed in this paragraph. For the “practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and/or influence decision-making through direct or indirect methods“, significant ideas for our research are related to knowledge-sharing activities and knowledge management systems (4 articles) and to informal and formal dialogue and face to face communication between managers and employees (3 articles). Regarding “practices ensuring high-level skills“, important ideas are related to training and development including on-the-job and off-the-job training using any means of development such as formal courses, self-study, workshops, mentoring etc. (3 articles) and to careful recruitment and selection (1 article). The other areas of workplace innovations were not found in selected articles.

There are two papers relevant for our research subject and we will include here a summary of these articles. In the paper “Ignorance management“, in issue no. 1/2013, the authors John Israilidis, Russell Lock and Louise Cooke identify “an alternative perspective on Knowledge Management by definition of the concept of Ignorance Management in multinational organisations“. They discuss “the difficulties employees face in understanding and comprehending what they need to know to do their jobs, and what implications this can have within global technology intensive environments. The key conclusion drawn from the study is to re-examine managerial strategies in multinational organisations by acknowledging and understanding the existence of unknowns which could transform the current inefficient knowledge practices. The critical question is not just managing what is known but also trying to find ways to manage the unknown. This viewpoint of acknowledging ignorance, if successfully incorporated within a company’s KM strategy, will not only facilitate and enhance knowledge storage and transmission processes but will also undoubtedly play a vital role when referring to a company’s efficiency, productivity and overall performance” (pp. 82-83). In the paper “The triple helix of the organizational knowledge“, in issue no. 2/2013, the author Constantin Brătianu brings a new view on organizational knowledge, totally different from classical ones proposed by Nonaka, that is why we included it in structural innovations category. „This new perspective is based on the metaphor that organizational knowledge is a field rather than a stock, or stocks and flows. The organizational knowledge is composed of three different fields: cognitive knowledge, emotional knowledge and spiritual knowledge. These fields lack uniformity and homogeneity and they interact in a dynamic way: cognitive field contains knowledge about what is (is based on the reflective capacity of humans and their language and can be explicit or tacit), emotional field contains knowledge about how we feel (is about our feelings and emotions and it is expressed by the nonverbal and paraverbal language – by our facial expressions, our body language and our voice tone, it reflects how we feel working in a given company and how happy we are about the results of our work, stress is a direct result of all frustrations and unhappiness we may have during our work), and the spiritual field contains knowledge about people’s aspirations and life values (is about our existence as individuals and employees in a given organization; also, it is about the vision and mission of that organization). These three types of knowledge are in a continuous interaction and transformation” (pp. 207, 218).

4. Conclusions

The literature about workplace innovation showed that it brings the improving of employee working conditions, as well as the company's performance growth. Presentation in the economical press of successful stories of managers / companies that have innovated at the organizational level would lead to stimulation and encouragement of this type of innovation (and other entrepreneurs and managers may find the motivation and the courage to introduce workplace innovation). This is one of the reasons for which we have attempted to identify the image that organizational innovation has in the Romanian economic (business and academic) press.

Based on the performed content analysis, we observed that there are similarities in the manner in which workplace innovation is presented in the two business magazines, on the one hand, and in the scientific ones, on the other. These similarities are natural due to the very nature and purpose of the two categories: the first present success stories of managers/companies who/which have introduced various forms of workplace innovation which led to positive results, both as far as an increase in company performance is concerned, as well as employee motivation and loyalty. On the contrary, the academic journals discuss case studies based on field research conducted using questionnaires and employee/manager interviews on the effects of introducing such innovative forms of organization on the employees' life quality or on organizational performance. The two business magazines are dominated by presentations of Romanian companies' cases, while the two scientific journals present case studies from foreign authors' own countries. There are several similarities between the four analysed magazines: in most of the cases, there is no information on the size of the company (should such data appear, they only refer to it as a large or medium-sized company, which means that it can afford to invest in innovation); the financial capital of the innovative companies is a private one and the dominant sector is that of services (this sector is the most inclined towards organizational innovation, probably because the other sectors focus more on product and process innovation); the key element facilitating innovation is represented by the leader and his leadership style, as well as the organizational culture and the overall approach of the organization towards novelty; obstacles are rarely mentioned – when they are indeed mentioned, they refer to the lack of openness of the leader to delegate and share the power; with only one exception, all documented cases of innovation have been considered to be procedural/ incremental innovation (the least risky one) focusing on the inner core of the organization; the most often recorded effects over the organization are connected with an increase in company productivity and competitiveness, followed by the advantages derived from obtaining new clients and ensuring they become loyal clients; the effects on employees are visible in the increase of their motivation, work satisfaction and loyalty towards the company. The most commonly approached areas of organizational innovation are the practices ensuring high-level skills and those providing opportunities for employees to participate in and/or influence decision-making through direct or indirect methods.

It is a noteworthy fact that none of the articles displays explicitly the terms “organizational innovation” or “workplace innovation”. These terms have been considered as such and integrated in various typologies based on the content analysis grid established by the authors of the present article. Expert (journalists, managers) opinions often express the collective mentality on innovation, which is dominant in Romania, and more specific to the industrial stage, and not the one on knowledge economy towards which the companies need to reach. According to the industrial stage, an authentic innovation can only be a technological one (re-

lated to the industrial product and process). As far as the organizational innovation is concerned, it has not received the needed attention. Nonetheless, its positive effects on organizational performance, as well as on ensuring the motivation and loyalty of expert-employees, who are the essential resource of knowledge economy, are considerably high.

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Annex

Content analysis grid

JOURNAL:

DATE:

TITLE OF THE ARTICLE:

AUTHOR:

PAGE:

SIZE:

1. PLACE:

- A) 1. Romania
- 2. European Union
- 3. Another place

- B) 1. focusing on particular cases
- 2. overall

2. SIZE OF THE INNOVATIVE COMPANY: 1. micro

- 2. small
- 3. medium
- 4. large
- 5. it's not the case

3. SOURCE OF CAPITAL OF THE INNOVATIVE COMPANY: 1. private

- 2. public
- 3. it's not the case

4. WORK DOMAIN OF THE INNOVATIVE COMPANY: 1. industry

- 2. constructions
- 3. services
- 4. trade
- 5. agriculture
- 6. it's not mentioned

5. KEY CONDITIONS FACILITATING WORKPLACE INNOVATION:

- 1. employee support mechanisms to enable employees to cope with change and to implement some of the practices;
- 2. organizational culture, which may be particularly important in ensuring that change is embedded and sustained;
- 3. leadership, which may be critical in championing and sustaining participatory innovations;
- 4. the broader organizational approach to change and learning;
- 5. social dialogue and industrial relations systems
- 6. it is not mentioned.

6. OBSTACLES TO WORKPLACE INNOVATION:

1. reluctance to change organizational culture;
2. incompatibility with organizational strategy;
3. difficulty in measuring impact and value;
4. unwillingness of middle managers to delegate responsibility and give up power;
5. lack of enthusiasm and skills among line managers to put HPWPs into practice;
6. reluctance among employees to take on responsibilities, particularly if the rewards and opportunities for influence are not clear;
7. time and costs of implementation
8. it's not mentioned, even implicitly.

7. TYPE OF WORKPLACE INNOVATION, ACCORDING TO IMPLIED DEGREE OF NOVELTY:

1. structural
2. procedural

8. TYPE OF WORKPLACE INNOVATION, ACCORDING TO PLACE WHERE IT OCCURS REGARDING THE ORGANIZATION:

1. intra-organization
2. inter-organization

9. EFFECTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:

1. competitiveness (performance, productivity growth)
2. attract new customers, customer satisfaction
3. it's not mentioned

10. EFFECTS ON EMPLOYEE WORKING CONDITIONS:

1. stress due to poor control over pace/ volume/work tasks
2. loyalty, organizational commitment
3. enhanced motivation
4. job satisfaction
5. lack of absenteeism due to illness
6. a good work–life balance
7. it's not mentioned

11. AREAS OF WORKPLACE INNOVATIONS:

1. Practices that structure work organization and job design
2. Practices ensuring high-level skills are an input into the production process
3. Appraisal and performance management processes
4. Practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and/or influence decision-making through direct or indirect methods
5. Practices that provide rewards for performance

4. KEY TERMS (PHRASES, IDEAS):

1. Practices that structure work organization and job design
 - 1.1. Use of (autonomous) teams, job autonomy

1.2. Redesign of jobs to enlarge or enrich their content (job enrichment, task variety, greater responsibilities, job rotation etc.)

1.3. Working time arrangements including flexible start and finish times and flexible total number of hours, home or teleworking

1.4. Improving physical conditions for health safety

2. Practices ensuring high-level skills 2.1. Careful recruitment and selection

2.2. Training and development including on-the-job and off-the-job training using any means of development such as formal courses, self-study, workshops, secondments, mentoring etc.

3. Appraisal and performance management processes 3.1. Formal or informal one-to-one discussions between each employee and a line manager/supervisor

3.2. A regular more formal review of performance that may or may not be linked to pay increases

4. Practices that provide opportunities for employees to participate in and / or influence decision-making through direct or indirect methods (opportunities for suggestions or challenge)

4.1. Individual working groups to improve quality or solve workplace problems

4.2. Indirect representation through workplace committees or other representative groups as part of social dialogue

4.3. Informal and formal dialogue and face to face communication between managers and employees

4.4. Team/departmental or whole company briefings

4.5. Employee attitude surveys

4.6. Knowledge-sharing activities and knowledge management systems (including those based on intranets)

5. Practices that provide rewards for performance (trust and organizational support)

5.1. Profit-sharing

5.2. Employee share ownership

5.3. Individual performance-related pay

5.4. Employee benefits that may be financial or non-financial including access to sources of support for health and well-being

5.5. Career progression opportunities through vertical or lateral promotion

5.6. Job security

5. SHORT SUMMARY:

(1/2 page, possibly including quotes)