

## IDENTIFICATION OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT COMPONENTS APPLIED IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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**Abstract:** Many research studies on personnel management are focused on commercial enterprises. This study seeks to understand the components of personnel management that are applied in social enterprises. The main aim of the study is to identify the components of personnel management used in social enterprises based on the obtained data and to propose possible solutions for the given enterprises in this area. The research used the qualitative method of a structured interview in social enterprises in the Slovak Republic; while evaluating the interview, a phenomenographic approach was employed, hence the answers were analyzed, then interpreted and a specific system was created in the obtained set of opinions and knowledge. A difference was assumed in the components of personnel management in social enterprises compared to ordinary commercial enterprises, especially in the components such as motivation, education and remuneration. The results of the research will contribute to the knowledge and proper implementation of the personnel components that are needed in social enterprises, which play a large role in their development and success.


**Keywords:** components, personnel management, social enterprises


**JEL Classification:** B55, L31, M12

### Introduction

With the increase in the number of enterprises that aim to create a social and environmental impact in recent years, the idea of social entrepreneurship has gained

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importance. Politicians, companies, and individuals in the Slovak Republic are increasingly interested in social entrepreneurship as its popularity is rapidly increasing. Understanding the individual components of personnel management or the HR policy of social enterprises is crucial to support their growth and success as the sector is constantly expanding and changing.

There are many research studies focused on social enterprises focused on the presentation of their legal status, economic, financial, and social effects, and other topics. The topic of personnel management in social enterprises is not widely elaborated within the literature. This paper will cover the research gap related to the issue of applying personnel management in social enterprises.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The section of the Literature review provides a brief insight into the issue of the main aspects of personnel management, social enterprises, and the use of human resources in this form of business. The second section, the Research methodology, describes the procedure of preparing the paper and the used methods. The third section contains the main results. The paper finishes with conclusions that contain the main implications for future research.

## **Literature review**

The essence of personnel management is the aspect concerned with managing an organization's workforce. Personnel management is a business administration function that exists to provide the personnel needed for the purposes of organizational activities and to manage employee-owner relations. Personnel management oversees the acquisition, use, and retention of employees (Aini et al., 2021). The personnel management system consists of two large subsystems: the first is direct personnel management, the second is the planning and forecasting of the personnel policy in an enterprise, as well as the analysis and planning of trends in the formation of a personnel structure. Both subsystems include extensive complexes and variants of personnel policy in the organization (company) (Makhamadaliev, 2019).

A basic prerequisite for effective personnel management is a properly developed and implemented personnel strategy, which is based on the goals of the enterprise strategy. Enterprise strategy is the suggested mechanism and a relevant strategy process for incorporating societal and stakeholder expectations, values, norms, and standards into the organization's strategy development processes (Steyn & Nieman, 2010). Within the creation of enterprise strategy, the enterprise's vision, and mission play an important role, which should not be absent even in social enterprises. Vision and mission statements are the highest level of communication that an organization has, and its performance is often evaluated or audited in terms of the fit with the vision and mission statements; these statements are formal communication of an organization regarding its purpose and future position (Sengupta & Sahay, 2017).

A characteristic feature of the contemporary development of personnel management is the tendency towards the delegation of authority from personnel specialists to performance management, which thus assumes responsibility for the area of personnel and for creating work motivation (Beck, 2015). Enterprises need proper mo-

tivation inputs as a source of energy to produce outputs (Bushi, 2021). The next factor that affects employees is education. Rivaldo and Nabbela (2023) confirmed in their study that education, training, experience, and work discipline simultaneously certainly provide an increase in employee performance.

Every enterprise should try to acquire and retain qualified and loyal employees, support their education, develop their potential to better meet their needs, increase their motivation by rewarding them and help create a favorable working environment with harmonious working relationships. A necessary condition for the management of human resources in the organization is the existence of true, detailed, and up-to-date information regarding individual employees. These data are provided by the personnel agenda maintained by the employer. Its basis is the employee's personal file.

In recent years, especially considering COVID-19, attention has turned to the social economy and social enterprises. They are perceived as a means of solving socioeconomic problems, such as market failure, increasing unemployment, poverty, and many other unfavorable situations that affect excluded classes or groups (Pčolinská, 2021). The many impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were also reflected in the economic performance of the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise sectors, which included social enterprises. The pandemic presented many problems, but on the other hand, it also brought various opportunities in its own way (Slovak Business Agency, 2021).

The role and meaning of social entrepreneurship are expanding and are considered positive responses to many economic, social, or environmental problems (CEEDR, 2021). The social economy is a driving force that creates impactful economic activity and new jobs. In OECD member states, estimates range from 2 to 10% of national GDP (OECD, 2022). According to the most thorough data set ever compiled, published in a study by the British Council and Social Enterprise UK, the number of social enterprises from a global perspective is approximately 11 million (Pybus, 2022). A positive example of the benefits of social enterprises and their impact on national economic indicators can be seen, for example, in Great Britain. According to the report on the state of social entrepreneurship 2021, there are currently more than 100 000 social enterprises in the UK, which together contribute approximately £60 billion a year to the national economy and employ 2 million people (Ricketts, 2021). It can be claimed that social enterprises or the spectrum of enterprises of this legal form can have an impact on the regional, national, and transnational levels. Through their activities, social enterprises can cause external effects on all the mentioned levels (Chreneková, 2019). Although social enterprises are becoming ever more noticeable, public awareness and understanding of social entrepreneurship are still low, e.g. in countries such as Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia (Borzaga et al., 2020). Favorable political, operational, and legal conditions are necessary to achieve the development of social entrepreneurship. Consequently, the European Union and its member states must ensure and respect the diversity of economic entities and business practices within the EU (Chaves-Avila & Monzón, 2018).

On the other hand, also the propagation of social enterprises is needed. One of the possibilities to get noticed in society is to use social media. Entrepreneurs use

social media platforms for various purposes (expecting different outcomes): marketing, information search, business networking and crowdfunding (Olanrewaju et al., 2020). The research of Ali et al. (2022) showed three key clusters that affect the performance of social enterprises: social media, social collaboration, and social marketing, social media and crowdfunding, and social media and crowdsourcing. Melao and Reis (2021) declared that employers also increasingly use social media to support hiring decisions, and yet the knowledge of their practice patterns remains limited.

The primary goal for social enterprises is not to make a profit but to bring new values and achieve socially important goals. Due to the competitiveness of the company, the social value of business supports creative ideas and thinking (Sovíková, 2018). Having the status of a social enterprise encourages the subject to focus on a higher principle such as profit or yield (Bersin, 2018). If these enterprises want to increase social performance, they should focus on social benefits and reduce entrepreneurial orientation (Cheah et al., 2019).

In addition, social entrepreneurship helps build the country's environmental system, which in the future can be a great competitive advantage over less developed countries in this area (Giudice et al., 2019). Among the changes that have taken place in the economic system, we can include the change in the position of human resources as a key production factor and realizing the fact that investments in human capital are more effective than other production factors. Social innovation, but also sustainable and dynamic socio-economic progress, are among the main sources of new trends transforming into strategies and visions of individual economies. Innovative technologies contain a wide range of social solutions, and due to this fact, emerging companies around the world are focusing their activities on social problems by establishing new social enterprises to solve them (Akbulaev et al., 2019).

The aim in the research work of Wilton and Evans, (2019) was to better understand social enterprises as an organizational context for employees with mental illness. The results of this work were the findings that there are significant differences between social enterprises despite many similarities. They include differences in size, working time, wage rates, economic activity, etc. Other main findings in the mentioned research work are that understanding the differences between social enterprises is important for thinking about the future growth of the business, and the ability of such organizations to create meaningful jobs for people with mental illness is also important. Mikolajczak (2022) focused on the issue of the precarious employment in social enterprises based in developing countries. The findings show that the degree of using flexible forms of employment in the organization is a significant factor influencing the issue. From the point of view of the state, the authors appeal for a reduction of bureaucratic obstacles and so on. Another study deals with responsible practice in the field of human resources. The author claims that such an approach can ensure a rise in employment of persons with disabilities with the help of, e.g. providing workplace accommodation or an environment that is oriented in one direction to business and in the other to care (Kwan, 2020).

The results of the study by Nicolás-Martínez and Rubio-Bañón (2015) show that human resource practices in social enterprises differ from those used in non-social

enterprises. Napathorn (2018) also reports on the difference in human resource packages used in social enterprises compared to ordinary enterprises. According to the latest studies, the business ecosystem of a standard nature differs significantly from the ecosystem of social entrepreneurship in terms of motivation. The influence of motivation also varies with the country's level of development. This means that standard business ecosystems have a different motivation to do business than social business systems (Carriles et al., 2021).

According to Harris and Kor (2013), human capital strategies in the acquisition, development, and retention of human resources can significantly help social enterprises in achieving viability, prosperity, and the realization of goals. Pongracz (2022) analyzed the current situation in the labor market in the Slovak Republic in the field of social entrepreneurship, while evaluating its contribution and paying great attention to disadvantaged job seekers. It was found that, despite the favorable results, several problems persist in its structure. The unemployment rate of recent university graduates, young people, and people over 50 who have no education or work experience, is among the most critical problems.

The establishment of successful social enterprises and the growth of part of the social economy are supported by the implementation of educational programs in practice, and the establishment of departments and programs at the level of higher education (Slovak Business Agency, 2019). One of the main obstacles to the growth of education is the lack of knowledge and general promotion of social entrepreneurship in the Slovak Republic, as indicated by a case study that offers an overview of the current situation regarding education in the field of social entrepreneurship in the Slovak Republic. Since the systematic idea of integrating social entrepreneurship into education in the Slovak environment is currently in a period of gradual creation, the conclusions are based on the limited experience of education providers in the field of social entrepreneurship (Polonyová & Pongrác, 2022). Based on the research of Wilton and Evans, (2019) we can transfer the findings in the solved issue to the territory of the Slovak Republic.

We are currently experiencing an expansion of the social economy and the associated growing number of social enterprises that are created and developed over time. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the creation of jobs that have a vision and perspective for the future. The meaning and perspective of the newly created job is the main essence for both parties involved, i.e. the employer and the disadvantaged job seeker. The main idea, hence, remains to create promising and prosperous jobs that will help social enterprises in the Slovak Republic to grow.

## **Research methodology**

The main aim of the study is to identify the personnel management components in social enterprises based on the obtained data and to propose possible solutions for the given enterprises in this area. To achieve the set aim, the results of the analysis of examples of good practices of social enterprises in the Slovak Republic were used.

We use the qualitative method of a structured interview. There were more than 500 social enterprises in the Slovak Republic in 2022 in the eight self-governing

regions. Most social enterprises in the Slovak Republic are Ltd. companies, which represent almost 90% of all social enterprises. From the point of view of the economic branch in which the social enterprises carry out their activities, the industrial production sector predominates, in which 146 social enterprises operate. The second sector is administrative and support services, in which 120 enterprises operate. Based on the results of the structured interview with these social enterprises, we identified two subjects that are considered as examples of best practices in the field of social entrepreneurship. The first social enterprise is Hrhovské služby, Ltd., and the second is the social enterprise “People and Perspective – civil association”. These two social enterprises were subjected to further investigation to gain more detailed information about the selected components of personnel management. We focused on the following components: the mission and vision of the social enterprise, motivation methods, employee training, the use of social media for propagation of the enterprise, and the implementation of the personnel agenda in the field of employment.

## **Results**

### **Vision and mission**

The results of our research showed a significant difference between commercial companies and social enterprises, which is also confirmed by the authors Carriles et al. (2021). In the field of mission and visions, Hrhovské služby Ltd has a clear mission to advance and offer opportunities to other disadvantaged people and their vision is to create more jobs for women. The mission of the enterprise People and Perspective – civil association is also to provide opportunities to those who need it; this was said by the main manager of the social enterprise when referring to a clearly defined vision based on the law. Here we can evaluate the vision of the first mentioned company as clearly better and exemplary since it is clearly defined with a specific goal.

### **Employees**

In the area related to the recruitment of employees, Hrhovské služby clearly defined the methods of recruiting employees, adding that they try to provide an opportunity to everyone who needs it. We perceive this positively, especially from the personnel management side. In the case of the enterprise People and Perspective, the answer was not clear, and the main manager based his claims on the fact that the issue should be resolved at a common meeting in the form of a conference.

In the part of requirements for potential employees, they answered the same, and thus the requirements are depending on the job, which we evaluate positively from this point of view due to the fact that it is a very important personnel agenda.

In the part concerning the use of motivation methods, the social enterprises gave us different answers. The enterprise Hrhovské služby stated that they use not only methods of financial reward and praise, but also career advancement, while the other social enterprise People and Perspective was not able to state what methods it uses.

Here we observe a significant difference in the answers of both respondents when it concerns basic personnel activities. In the case of the enterprise Hrhovské služby, we evaluate the answer in a positive sense, but of the enterprise People and Perspective, we do not consider this personnel area to be a good example for other social enterprises in the Slovak Republic.

In the field of employee training, Hrhovské služby focuses on training in the case of a need for desirable qualifications in the field, while the other enterprise People and Perspective also mentioned career growth and potential, which means that they offer staff the opportunity to improve. However, the main manager of People and Perspective stated that he does not use formal and non-essential education, which we cannot evaluate and describe since education is necessary and important in every way, also in terms of personal growth and self-confidence.

We assume that social enterprises will use a certain form of education only if it is unavoidable for the performance of the job position.

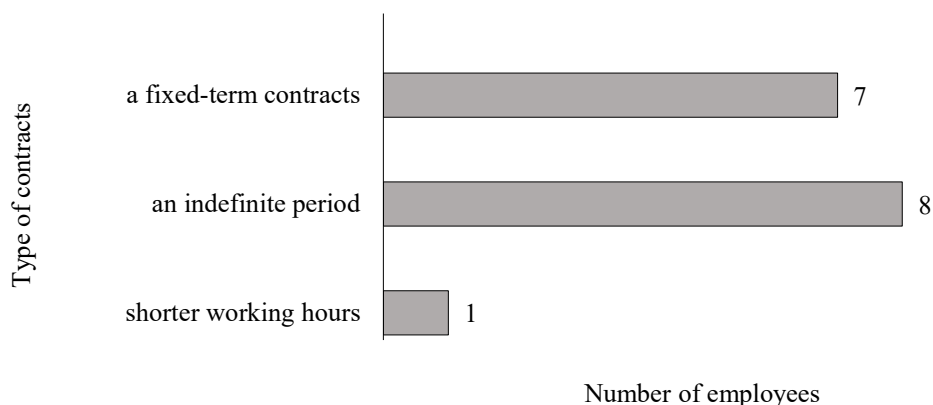
Both enterprises overcome barriers “in-time”, which may not always be the best method. That is why it is important to plan and avoid threats, whether external or internal. Of the two observed best-practice enterprises, we evaluate more positively the company known as Hrhovské služby because in the answers to the questions, we noted that several personnel questions were well handled, which is the basis for the company's progress. Nevertheless, in the second observed company People and Perspective, we observe only a few personnel activities that are precisely defined and clearly used. This is precisely the problem that most social enterprises have, which we can also conclude from communication outside of the structured interview and also from the fact that most social enterprises are located in micro, or small enterprises in terms of their size structure. Furthermore, for this reason, we do not assume that these enterprises have their own personnel departments or individual staff members dealing with personnel management.

### **Social media**

The use of social media to promote the enterprise is better managed by Hrhovské služby, which uses a variation of methods for promotion, but the second enterprise People and Perspective does not employ any similar methods, which we do not evaluate positively in the area of this personnel agenda. Despite the arguments of the second enterprise, that despite the lack of use of these methods, their social enterprise is well known, the company's potential by using social media could be much higher than it is now.

### **Personnel agenda**

Since, in our subjective opinion Hrhovské služby Ltd has better results in the implementation of a personnel agenda, we decided to conduct an additional interview. We drafted the questions in such a way as to record the personnel policy of the mentioned enterprise within the framework of the specific rules of the social economy to the greatest extent possible. Figure 1 shows data on the number and type of contracts based on which the social enterprise employs individual workers.



**Figure 1. Types of employment contracts in Hrhovské služby Ltd**

Source: Authors' own compilation based on interview

From Figure 1, it is clear that the highest number of employees, 8, is employed for an indefinite period. The second highest number of employees is employed on fixed-term contracts and one employee is employed for shorter working hours. The interview also revealed that fixed-term contracts are mainly intended for disadvantaged employees owing to the fluctuation and seasonality of work. On the other hand, employees who work in positions such as accountant, manager, director, etc., have contracts for an indefinite period of time. The social enterprise gave a clear answer to the question regarding working hours, stating that the working hours are fixed. In this case, we find an analogy between the ordinary labor market in connection with the employment of workers and the labor market in the social economy. We consider this approach correct since disadvantaged employees can thus integrate into society with the help of a permanent work routine, such as we can observe in ordinary jobs. Hrhovské služby Ltd set working hours to 8 hours a day. Once again, we can state that a working life routine is important for disadvantaged people in terms of inclusion among minority groups of the population and also for building their personal development and self-confidence. When asked about motivation, the social enterprise answered that they provide employees with a financial reward worth €150 per quarter as a means of motivation. Here we can observe the asymmetry between the developed policies of ordinary market enterprises and social entrepreneurship. In enterprises that operate in areas outside of social entrepreneurship, it is common practice to have defined remuneration and to motivate employees in a variety of ways. Nevertheless, we do not observe other motivational incentives here, except for financial ones. We do not evaluate this fact from a negative point of view because the area of motivating employees in social enterprises is not sufficiently researched.

Since social entrepreneurship is in the early stages of development in our country, we assume that in the coming years, the personnel policy of enterprises in this area of the economy will continue to develop.



## Conclusions

Personnel management and the management of many personnel components form a major basis for the company's progress. From the acquired experience and results, we can conclude that many social enterprises do not have well-managed personnel activities, or they clearly do not use them. We assume that social enterprises do not have human resources departments, or an employee trained in the field of HR because most of them are micro or small enterprises in terms of their size structure. Therefore, our main recommendation is that social enterprises should give more weight to education in this area because it can be an important factor in the development and fulfillment of the goals of the social enterprise.

Based on the obtained results of the research, we conclude that a suitable solution to controversial issues from the point of view of the personal agenda in the field of social entrepreneurship, such as motivation, remuneration, and others, it is necessary to conduct general meetings at regular intervals. Entrepreneurs in the field of social economy, experts and researchers in these fields, and representatives of the state should participate in these conferences. Because many questions on the issue of the personal agenda remain unresolved, or specifically undefined, it is necessary to bring together the opinion spectrum of people from all the mentioned areas so that social entrepreneurship in the Slovak Republic moves forward in the right direction and increases the positive social impact.

We have noted several differences that differentiate social entrepreneurship from non-social (ordinary) enterprises. How to implement individual personnel policies into practice in social enterprises is still an issue that requires a great deal of attention, as well as the point of future research.

It is necessary to realize that in social entrepreneurship there is a specific group of workers who require different methods of motivation, remuneration, etc. than employees in ordinary enterprises. In these statements, we also agree with the authors (Carriles et al., 2021), who in their studies talk about the specificity of motivation in social entrepreneurship, compared to ordinary enterprises in the labor market.

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**Authors' Contribution:** The authors confirm contribution to the paper as follows: study conception and design: Lukrécia Hunková, Katarína Havierniková; data collection: Lukrécia Hunková, Katarína Havierniková; analysis and interpretation of results: Lukrécia Hunková, Katarína Havierniková; draft manuscript preparation: Lukrécia Hunková, Katarína Havierniková. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

**Conflict of Interest:** No conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest.

**Acknowledgements and Financial Disclosure:** This study is the part of the project Vega no. 1/0718/22 Human resources development in small and medium-sized enterprises in the context of the 21st century challenges.

## IDENTYFIKACJA ELEMENTÓW ZARZĄDZANIA PERSONELEM STOSOWANYCH W PRZEDSIĘBIORSTWACH SPOŁECZNYCH W REPUBLICIE SŁOWACKIEJ

**Streszczenie:** Wiele badań dotyczących zarządzania personelem koncentruje się na przedsiębiorstwach komercyjnych. Niniejsze badanie ma na celu zrozumienie elementów zarządzania personelem, które są stosowane w przedsiębiorstwach społecznych. Celem głównym opracowania jest identyfikacja elementów zarządzania personelem w przedsiębiorstwach społecznych na podstawie uzyskanych danych oraz zaproponowanie możliwych rozwiązań dla danych przedsiębiorstw w tym obszarze. W badaniach użyto jakościowej metody ustrukturyzowanego wywiadu z przedsiębiorstwami społecznymi w Republice Słowackiej; podczas oceny wywiadu użyto podejścia fenomenograficznego, zatem przeanalizowano odpowiedzi, następnie zinterpretowano i stworzono określony system w uzyskanym zbiorze opinii i wiedzy. Założono różnicę w komponentach zarządzania personelem w przedsiębiorstwach społecznych w porównaniu ze zwykłymi przedsiębiorstwami komercyjnymi, szczególnie w komponentach takich jak motywacja, wykształcenie i wynagrodzenie. Wyniki badań przyczynią się do poznania i właściwego wdrożenia komponentów kadrowych potrzebnych w przedsiębiorstwach społecznych, które odgrywają dużą rolę w ich rozwoju i sukcesie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** komponenty, zarządzanie personelem, przedsiębiorstwa społeczne

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