

# EMPLOYER'S ATTRACTIVENESS: EMPLOYEES' EXPECTATIONS VS. REALITY IN LITHUANIA

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## Abstract

The article deals with the topic of employer's attractiveness from the perspective of current employees and presents the results of empirical research as well as theoretical and methodological backgrounds for its accomplishment. The goal of the research presented in this article is to determine whether the attributes of employer attractiveness in Lithuanian organizations are in line with the perceived expectations of their employees.

This goal has been reached by the set of objectives, which allow firstly, to define the concept of an attractive employer through perceived expectations of employees in Lithuania, then to identify what attributes of an attractive employer are inherent to Lithuanian organizations, and finally, to find out and discuss if and how the perceived expectations of employees are matching their real experience about an attractive employer in Lithuanian organizations. Also, the impact of employees' demographical characteristics to the perception and real experience on employers' attractiveness is disclosed.

**Key words:** employer's attractiveness, organizational attractiveness, employer branding.

**Classification JEL:** M12 – Personnel Management.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays human resources are being recognized by increasing number of organizations all over the world as their most important asset. So firstly the ability to select, attract and retain the right employees is crucial to the success of an organization and causes new challenges and higher importance of human resource (*further HR*) professionals in organizations. From the other hand there is also increasing competition among the employers through their reputation and branding (*Gotsi & Wilson, 2001*) when have to look for a "secret sauce" (*Sartain & Schuman, 2006, p. V*), or refer to be an employer of choice (*Sutherland, Torricelli & Karg, 2002*). Some attributes of the competition come from the inside of organization, while the most of them appear in the form of various rankings or award, such as "Fortune Best Companies to Work For", "Great place to Work", "Top employers" etc. Lithuania is a non-exception to the worldwide rule: the awards of "Most Desirable Employer", based on employees survey have been organized since 2005; "Best Employer" awards based on the „Best Employers Study“ methods are being organized since 2012; "Top Employer" disclosing only the opinion of young employees aged 19 – 27, is also taking place in Lithuania. Every single one of these awards or rankings is based on employees' opinions on how the companies meet certain criteria or their expectations or on the evaluation of HR practices.

A research accomplished by Jackson Organization (*Cooper, 2012*) proves that companies that effectively appreciate employee value enjoy a return on equity and assets more than triple that experienced by companies that don't. According to B. Winn (*2013, p. 20*), the brand of the attractive employer is important because of the changes in essential employee's intention – employees identification with and attachment to the organization, turnover intent and how productively they use their discretionary time. Therefore employer's attractiveness has becoming more and more 'hot topic' in the business press and many organizations all over the world focus on the concept of an attractive employer or the best

place to work or Best Employer status striving to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

Thus the employer attractiveness' topic has been highly discussed for the past decades in scientific literature. Most of the attention has been paid to in-depth theoretical discussion on concept of an attractive employer/organization as well as identifying the main attributes of an attractive employer/organization (e.g.: *Highhouse et al., 2003; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Berthon et al., 2005; Joo & Mclean, 2006*). Also there are significant attempts of theoretical and empirical researches to create a conceptual model of attractive employer (*Joo & Mclean, 2006*); to define and disclose the best employer in context of HRM (*Love & Singh, 2011; Figurska & Matuska, 2013*); to explore how demographic characteristic of employees impact the attractiveness of foreign companies (*Newburry, Gardberg & Belkin, 2006*); to measure word of mouth impact on organizational attractiveness (*Uen et al., 2009*) or what characteristics, sectors of organizations are the most attractive for the young applicants to labour market (*Lievens et al., 2001; Aslan et al., 2010*).

However, most of the employers in Lithuania as well as all over the world turn the question around by asking, how to become an employer of choice, if they possess the attributes of an attractive employer. Looking from a global perspective, the perception of an attractive employer or attractive work place is also highly influenced by country context so there is an incentive to find out what criteria are more significant in Lithuania. It is also highly important to be aware of the current employees' perceived expectations, while (*according to Maxwell & Knox, 2009, p. 895*) too often this crucial question is overlooked and only three studies have directly addressed the perspective of current employees in the academic literature on employer branding.

Therefore, *the goal* of the research presented in this article is to determine whether the attributes of employer attractiveness in Lithuanian organizations are in adequacy with the perceived expectations of their employees. The following *objectives* have been set to reach this goal:

- To define the concept of an attractive employer as perceived by employees in Lithuania;
- To identify what attributes of an attractive employer are inherent to Lithuanian organizations;
- To compare the attributes of an attractive employer with an attributes that are perceived as attractive by employees in Lithuania;
- To find out if the demographical characteristics (such as gender, age and education) of employees impact to the perception and real experience on employer's attractiveness.

The *research methods* applied: literature review, questionnaire survey. Frequency analysis and rank-ordering were used for survey data analysis.

## **2. Theoretical and methodological backgrounds for exploring an attractive employer**

For the past decades in scientific and professional literature there have been a significant number of discussions around the concept of an attractive employer as well as attempts to identify and define the main attributes of an attractive employer as attractive place to work.

D. B. Turban & T. L. Keon (*1993, p. 191*) emphasized in attraction to organizations a component of the job decision process and salary information. Another concept of organization's attractiveness is related with individuals' affective and attitudinal thoughts

about particular companies as places for employment (*Highhouse et al., 2003, p. 989*). More recent concepts of employer branding are focused on applying marketing or even branding principles to HR practice (e.g.: *Wilden et al., 2010; Tsai et al., 2010; Maxwell & Knox, 2009; Berthon et al., 2005*). Most common for them is idea that employer attractiveness refers to an entire organization, but not to a concrete job (*Ritz & Waldner, 2011, p. 293*).

I. Bakanauskienė et al. (2011a, p. 7) suggest that employer's attractiveness is the set of organization's features that should be of focal attention to its leadership while striving for a competitive advantage. The most often such concepts are concentrated to leadership, essential organizational core values such as honesty, integrity, respect, collaboration, trust, providing on-going open two-way communication to all employees (*Love & Singh, 2011, p. 178*). Also it could be find ideas to build distinctive employee value propositions, including customized or idiosyncratic messages, deals, rewards and benefits packages, for different sub-segments of employees (*Martin, 2009, p. 230*). Some scholars (*Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, pp. 501–502*) state that application of branding principles is a reason to apply the term "employer branding" and suggest that it gives the possibility to differ a firms' characteristics as an employer from those of its competitors. To summarize these concepts it can be noticed, that a concept of an attractive employer (organization) is focused almost exclusively as a good place to work from organizational perspective and for potential employees.

Due to the goal of this research to explore the aspects of employer's attractiveness from employees' perspective it's reasonable to find out the attempts of scholars to identify and define what attributes and characteristics make an organization attractive for the employees. B. K Joo & G. N. Mclean (2006, pp. 252–253) completed an in-depth literature analysis on best employers and criteria for employers of choice as well as 100 best companies research and Hewitt's case study. They determined that the key differentiators of best employers are: organizational culture, learning and development (or employee development), diversity initiatives, a fun work environment, opportunity for career growth, meaningful work, involvement and the opportunity to make difference. L. F. Love & P. Singh (2011, pp. 178–179), reviewed the criteria ratings for the five studies (Canada's Top 100 Employers, 50 Best Employers in Canada, Canada's Most Admired Corporate Cultures, Fortune's 100 Best Companies in America, and 50 Best Small and Medium Companies to Work for In America) and defined eight dimensions which identify the best employer: inspired leadership; strategic plan that promotes "Best Employer HR practices"; employee communication; performance management; training & development; benefits-based on "best practices"; physical workspace; corporate citizenship.

Probably the most extensive list of attributes of an attractive employer has been accomplished by summarizing 8 international methods (Great Place to Work; The Chronicle of Higher Education, Great Colleges to Work For, Modern Think Modern Education Insight Survey; The Scientist, Best Places to Work Academia; Gallup Great Workplace Award, Q12; Canada's Top 100 Employers; Britain's Top Employers; Aon Hewitt Best Employers, Australia and New Zealand; „TNS Gallup's Index of the Most Attractive Employer 2006“) named the following 26 attributes of an attractive employer: fairness; organizational culture; supervisor relationship; job satisfaction; training and development; working conditions; commitment to quality; trustworthiness; compensation & benefits; teamwork; work/life balance; strategic management; effective leadership; career development; performance management; reputation; employee engagement; respect and recognition; work & social atmosphere; teaching environment; social security; diversity; research resources; organizational integrity; financial success; social activity & responsibility (*Bakanauskienė et al., 2011a, p. 15*).

R. Maxwell & S. Knox (2009, p. 899) studies, besides others, have directly identifies the attributes of attractive employer from the perspective of current employees, such as: employee rewards (salary, benefits, skills training and opportunities for career advancement); style of management (politics of rewards, managers' expectations of employees, managers' responsiveness to the needs and ideas of employees, level of bureaucracy); manager-workforce relations (managers' attitude toward employees and employees' attitude towards managers – the levels of trust and respect); type of work (variety and level of challenge); work environment; attributes of workforce; attributes of the work.

Summarising the examples above, it could be mentioned that scholar findings about dimensions and main attributes of organizational attractiveness are based mainly on criteria for the well-known awards or ranking of the companies. It is also confirmed with the reports and information that can be found on their website. According to the Great Place to Work Institute approach (<http://www.greatplacetowork.com/>) from the employee's perspective a great workplace is one in which you trust the people you work for, have pride in what you do, and enjoy the people you work with (Levering, 2012). The Top Employers Institute (<http://www.top-employers.com>) which globally certifies employers according the highest standards of excellence in employee conditions, names the following criteria: a forward-thinking HR environment; the exceptional employee conditions; development of employees; nurturing and developing talent throughout all levels of the organisation; demonstrating leadership status in the HR environment, striving to optimise employment practices. Business consultants and practitioners argue that an attractive organization cannot be distinguished from other by one or few general attributes. Hewitt Associates LLC uncovered the following list of organizational attractiveness' attributes – five common characteristics of Best Employers: inspired leadership; unique company culture; focus on growing talent; strong sense of accountability; aligned HR practices and excellent execution (Looi et al., 2004, p. 2).

The awards and rankings in Lithuania are also based on particular criteria for defining, measuring and evaluating attributes of employer's attractiveness. The “Best Employer” awards are based on the “Best Employers Study” methods created by Aon Hewitt. It includes the following criteria (<http://ovc.lt/en/bes-2/5-indexes.html>): people (engagement, people focus, satisfaction, senior leadership, line managers, colleagues); work (work activities, sense of accomplishments, autonomy, resources, processes); recognition (pay, benefits, recognition); opportunities (career opportunities, learning and development); company practices (performance management, company reputation, brand alignment); quality at life (work/life balance, physical work environment). “Top Employer” is being elected based on the following criteria (<http://www.cvonline.lt/content/?id=737>): being a leading organization, good organizational image and reputation, modern and innovative organization, career opportunities, good working environment. The competition “Most Desirable Employer” (<http://www.cv.lt/darbdavys2013>), based on employees survey allows to identify the expectations of employees as they are being asked to name the attributes or qualities of an attractive organization based on their personal experience. This method allows determining that the key attributes of an attractive organization are: competitive salary, interesting work content, career opportunities, learning and development, social guarantees, appreciation of employees.

### 3. Methodology

A qualitative research method – questionnaire survey – has been used to identify what attributes make an attractive employer in Lithuania and what are the perceived expectations by individuals on the attractive employer. Organizational Attractiveness Extraction Scale (OAES), originally co-developed by one of the authors of this article was adopted as the tool

for questionnaire survey. The original OAES was intended to identify and measure particular most valued and significant features of university's employer/organizational attractiveness as well as to discover an employer branding. This OAES has been chosen for the following reasons. When developing this tool, for building the theoretical construct of an employer's attractiveness the review of the widely-acknowledged scholar methods of defining "best employer" has been accomplished. Taking into the account the purpose of the research 7 international methodologies were chosen. All they are the result of thorough and purposeful scientific research and so are reliable in the measurement of an organizational attractiveness. Also the face validity, 2 step content validity and series of pilot surveys were conducted to clarify and refine the dimensions and formulations of items used for measurement of an organizational attractiveness in Lithuanian context (more detail the development and validation of OAES see in: *Bakanauskiene et al., 2011a; Bakanauskiene et al., 2011b*).

To meet the key requirements of the present research the following changes in OAES were implemented. While this research aimed to measure the employees actual perception on employer/organizational attractiveness, thus the dimensions and items related to the employee branding and university's specific have been eliminated. Since the research is accomplished in Lithuania, the list of attractive employer's attributes has been complemented with the attributes of reward and motivation techniques generally used when describing Lithuanian most attractive employers. F. Herzberg (1986) provisions – the most obvious and comprehensible approach – arguing that job satisfaction is influenced by the characteristics of job itself and its environment – also were taking into the account. Therefore after the adaptation for the aims of this research the questionnaire with 30 attributes (they are listed in table 3) divided into 3 dimensions was compiled:

1. *Job and job related factors* have been listed as the first dimension and consists of 12 attributes, revealing the characteristics of the job content and key/closest factors related to its performance.
2. Dimension *Organizational job environment* consists of 12 attributes, including the values, policies and behaviour norms, which disclose the common job environment characteristics of organizations.
3. Dimension *Rewards and motivation* constitutes of 6 attributes that identify the main groups of rewards (presented in motivation manner) in organizations.

An open question has been included in the questionnaire to define the concept of a desired attractive employer as perceived by employees.

The questionnaire was formed in a particular structure, in order to ensure the logic of the research. Seeking not to influence the opinion of respondents, they have been firstly asking to describe an attractive employer by given an open question. The respondents are then presented with a table that includes 30 items describing an attributes of attractive employer. Aiming to identify the perceived actual experience of employees, each item was elaborated through the short scenario-based explanation of attribute or example, such as a list of attractive benefits, financial incentives or techniques of non-financial motivation. The list of items presented in the survey was mixed and the attributes and any of the 3 groups were not named seeking to prevent the respondents from associating the item with a particular attribute and dimension and avoiding bias and inertia.

3 point response scale was used to evaluate each item. Each respondent was asked to confirm or deny each item, with "3" used to indicate "agree", "2" for "unsure", "1" for "disagree". Therefore 3 and 2 points indicated that the attribute is more or less inherent to the organization, while 1 point indicated that the attributes cannot be assigned to the particular organization. Questions on employees' demographic characteristics also were included.

The pilot survey with 15 respondents was conducted to validate the content of the questionnaire, which allowed clarify formulations of items presented for the survey. The sample size for the research was determined using V. I. Paniott's formula. According to this formula, including the number of employees in Lithuania in 2012 and acceptable 5 percent margin error and confidence level at 0.95, the size of the survey sample equals  $N = 384$  (by: <http://www.apklausos.lt/imtys-dydis>).

The results of the questionnaire survey have been collected during the period from 18th of March to the 15th of April. One part of the questionnaire survey has been conducted by presenting the questionnaire to individuals working in various locations in Lithuania seeking to form a representative sample. Other part of the survey has been sent by email or via social media. These two methods allowed to form a representative sample for the study ( $N = 420$ ).

Table 1 represents the demographic characteristics of the sample, according to groups formed for exploration of the research results.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample (own study)

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Males	273	65
	Females	147	35
Education	Lower than bachelor degree (< BD)	156	37
	Bachelor degree (BD)	190	46
	Master degree and higher (BD <)	74	17
Age	$\leq 25$	227	54
	26 – 35	88	21
	$36 \leq$	105	25

## 4. Results of the research

The data collected was registered and processed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 18 for Windows software package. Frequency analysis of responses and rank-ordering were used for data analysis. When examining the correlation between variables, Pearson correlation coefficient has been calculated. According to the result it can be stated that the estimated correlation is statistically significant as the probability of error equals  $p < 0.05$ .

### 4.1. The results of the research about employees perceived expectations on the employer's attractiveness in Lithuania

The overall results of employees' perceived expectations which disclose the attributes of attractive to them employer listed by respondents are presented in Table 2. The attributes are ranked by the frequency in respondent's answer to open question. Table 2 represents both the total results of all surveyed employees as well as opinions according to gender, age and education groups.

These results allow describe an attractive Lithuanian employer perceived by employees as a set of particular organizational attributes and evaluate how these are influenced by demographical characteristics. Therefore according to respondents' opinions, the most important attribute is the *attractive salary*, which should meet their expectations, stable, not related to employee's performance and paid on time. The analysis of this attribute based on gender, age and education levels reveals that this attribute is more important to women, employees with lower level of education and those less 25 years compared to men, elder

employees and with master's degree or higher level of education. These results confirm the existing salary differences and influencing factors in Lithuania. Women continue to lag behind men in terms of earning power as women's earnings are lower than men's (*Haussman et al., 2012, p. 8*) and employees with higher education are getting paid better. *Good working conditions* have been ranked in the second place. According to respondents' opinions good working conditions include safe and comfortable workplace, proper conditions for rest and hygiene, etc. and all work-related tools and resources.

Table 2: Rank-ordered perceived expectations of employees on employer's attractiveness in Lithuania, % (own study)

Rank	Attribute	Attribute frequency, %								
		Total	Gender		Age (year)			Education		
			F	M	≤ 25	26–35	36 ≤	< BD	BD	BD <
1.	Attractive salary	69	73	62	73	59	59	79	69	46
2.	Good work conditions	61	68	47	60	41	79	69	56	64
3.	Respect for employee	60	71	41	60	45	72	36	49	75
4.	Encouraging creativity	56	61	47	70	49	30	10	89	64
5.	Clearness of job	56	63	43	47	42	87	14	52	75
6.	Career opportunities	56	58	52	64	81	16	45	76	73
7.	Social security and stability	47	51	39	31	45	83	28	47	71
8.	Friendly team	40	50	23	51	20	34	25	69	51
9.	Flexible working hours	39	42	33	36	83	9	23	43	63
10.	Feedback	37	40	31	30	80	16	14	48	67
11.	Employees' equality	27	34	14	43	13	4	45	75	26

The further analysis based on respondents' demographic characteristics highlighted that these are highly important to employees older than 36 years compared to the age group of 26 – 35 years old. The analysis has also revealed that women tend to give a higher importance to this attribute than men. *Respect for employees* ranks in the third place. This attribute is described as an appreciation for good performance from supervisor also support and understanding, as well as employee recognition. Importance of this attribute was more common among the employees over 36 years old, with the highest level of education as well as for women and employees without bachelor's degree.

The results presented in Table 2 also disclose that Lithuanian employees are expecting an attractive employer to encourage their creativity at work, provide them with clear job content and terms for it performance as well as ensure promotion opportunities. According to employees' perceived expectations, *encouraging creativity* includes "out-of-the-box" thinking style, using innovative ideas. As the analysis shows, women and employees from the youngest age group, as well as employees with bachelor's degree are significantly more likely to place this attribute among their top priorities compared to the man or employees with the lowest level of education. *Clear job content*, identified as providing clear job expectations, day-to-day duties, deadlines, responsibilities and control, is mostly valuable to employees over 36 years old and with the highest level of education. The employees with lowest education level tend not to care about this attribute as the survey reveals. Such gap in attitudes

could be explained with the complexity level of different jobs and roles of these groups. *Career opportunities* are clearly perceived by employees in Lithuania as opportunities of promotion. Promotion opportunities remain one of the important attributes for the employees aged 26 – 35 also with bachelor's degree and are at least important for the employees over 36 years old.

All other attributes of an attractive employer in Lithuania, listed in Table 2, provide valuable information about the differences of desires in separate groups of employees. Thus *social security and stability* discloses influence of employee's age and education. Employees aged 36 and more, also with master's or higher degree indicated this attribute as a very attractive, since it allows them to feel secure, trust the organization they work for, perceive this organization as a stable and reliable. According to respondents' opinions, good relationships with colleagues and supervisor, their support and help at work would be assigned to the attribute of *friendly team*. And employees with bachelor's degree find this attribute attractive. Women are also grand a higher value to this attribute compared to men, or employees aged 26 – 35 and with lowest education level. *Flexible working hours* are more important to middle-aged group (26 – 35 years) than to the employees over 36 years old. The findings also show that the *feedback* on employee's performance and results is mainly influenced by age and education. Receiving a constant feedback is of great desire to the employees between 26 – 35 years also with master's or higher degree. Another very desirable attribute of an attractive employer perceived by employees with bachelor's degree is *employees' equality* – perceived as an equal opportunity to be hired by the particular organization. This reflects the current situation in Lithuanian labour market as the employers tend not to hire graduates without work experience.

#### **4.2. The results of an attractive employer's attributes inherency in Lithuanian organizations**

The results of the survey on perceived actual experience of employees about the attractiveness of organizations they work for are presented in the table 3. When analysing the findings of the survey it has been noticed that the ranking of an attractive employer attributes differs if considering only the frequency of respondents' agreements with the item or if considering only the frequency of their disagreements to the same item. While ensuring with the item demonstrates that respondent has no strong opinion whether the particular attribute is inherent to the organization, it has led to decision to rank the inherency of an attractive employer attributes in Lithuanian organizations according to respondents' disagreements that the particular item is inherent to the organization they work for. Besides that, as it could be seen from table 3, the rank-ordered attributes of an attractive employer have been assigned to 3 different groups of attributes in order to clarify what group of attributes of an attractive employer are mostly inherent in Lithuanian organizations.

According to data presented in Table 3, a presumption can be made that employees find the Lithuanian employers to be mainly focusing on the attributes of an attractive employer related to the content of work and factors of it direct-influencing. Lithuanian employers are firstly focusing on providing good working conditions, to avoid employees' dissatisfaction when performing their day-to-day duties (attribute *attractive work conditions*). The *goodwill of colleagues and supervisor* is ranked in second place, while only a small percentage of employees disagreed with the statement that they receive support and understanding from their colleagues or supervisor if they make mistakes at work.



Table 3: Rank-ordered perceived actual experience of employees about Lithuanian employer's attractiveness, % (own study)

Rank	Attribute	Frequency of attribute non-inherency, %								
		Total	Gender		Age (year)			Education		
			F	M	≤ 25	26 – 35	36 ≤	< BD	Bachelor degree (BD)	BD <
<b>Job and job related factors</b>										
1.	Attractive work conditions	2.9	3.7	1.4	3.1	7.4	0.0	1.6	3.1	4.3
2.	Goodwill of colleagues and supervisor	5.0	5.5	4.1	4.8	2.9	6.4	4.0	5.8	4.3
3.	Team work	8.8	7.3	11.6	8.4	8.8	9.6	8.1	9.3	8.6
4.	Decision-making possibility	10.7	12.1	8.2	10.6	14.7	8.8	8.1	11.5	12.9
6.	Independency at work	13.3	13.9	12.2	14.5	11.8	12.0	12.9	14.2	11.4
7.	Opportunity for self-expression	14.0	17.2	13.6	18.5	16.2	11.2	18.5	12.4	22.9
9.	Safe and comfortable work place	15.0	13.6	17.7	15.9	16.2	12.8	16.1	16.4	8.6
10.	Provision with necessary resources	16.9	17.9	15.0	16.3	17.6	17.6	12.1	19.5	17.1
12.	A balance between workload and deadlines	17.9	17.9	17.7	15.0	17.6	23.2	14.5	16.8	27.1
14.	Interesting and satisfying job	18.3	19.0	17.0	16.3	14.7	24.0	15.3	16.8	28.6
21.	Reasonable job control	21.7	23.1	19.0	21.6	23.5	20.8	23.4	20.4	22.9
27.	Flexible job schedule	57.9	57.9	57.8	55.9	55.9	62.4	56.5	59.3	55.7
<b>Organizational job environment</b>										
5.	Informing about organizational changes and decisions	11.0	12.1	8.8	10.6	8.8	12.8	10.5	10.6	12.9
8.	Social security and stability	14.5	15.0	13.6	13.2	16.2	16.0	12.9	15.5	14.3
11.	Appreciation of employee	17.2	15.8	19.7	19.8	20.6	10.4	19.4	15.5	18.6
13.	Accurate and timely salary	18.1	19.0	16.3	20.3	15.9	20.8	16.9	18.1	20.0
15.	Concern of employee work-life balance	19.3	20.5	17.0	18.5	13.2	24.0	18.5	21.2	14.3
16.	Effective conflict management	19.3	18.3	21.1	19.8	16.2	20.0	14.5	21.7	20.0
18.	Match between employee's and organizational values	20.0	20.1	19.7	19.8	22.1	19.2	18.5	20.8	20.0
19.	Encouraging of innovativeness	21.4	19.9	24.5	22.0	22.1	20.3	20.2	22.3	21.4
23.	Equality of employees	32.4	32.6	32.0	30.4	26.5	39.2	33.9	31.0	34.3
24.	Recognition of individual and team work	34.5	31.5	40.1	42.3	20.6	28.0	37.1	31.9	38.6
28.	Feedback from managers	60.0	59.3	61.2	66.2	57.7	60.8	59.7	61.1	57.1
30.	Encouraging creativity	61.9	64.8	62.3	63.9	61.2	65.6	66.9	63.6	60.0
<b>Rewards and motivation</b>										
17.	Career opportunities	18.1	13.2	27.2	18.5	20.6	16.0	20.8	14.5	15.7
20.	Attractive non-financial rewards	21.7	18.3	27.9	22.5	26.5	17.6	22.6	20.8	22.9
22.	Effective financial incentives	24.3	22.3	27.9	27.3	22.1	20.0	27.4	23.0	22.9
25.	Valuable benefits	43.3	42.3	44.9	44.2	22.1	52.8	40.3	44.0	45.7
26.	Training and development	51.0	52.7	47.6	55.5	36.8	50.4	57.3	46.9	52.9
29.	Attractive salary	61.2	59.7	63.9	62.1	45.6	68.0	54.8	63.7	64.3

An attribute of *teamwork* described as encouragement of employees' collaboration has been ranked as third among the attractive attributes. Frequency of respondents' disagreement with the attribute *decision-making possibility* shows that employees are allowed to make job-related decisions.

According to the answers, most of the employees in Lithuanian organization are allowed to perform their job independently (attribute *independency at work*), can express themselves at work (attribute *self-expression opportunities*) and can feel safe and comfortable in job places (attribute *safe and comfortable work place*). Besides that, employees find the workload to be quite relevant (attribute *balance between workload and deadlines*). Mostly of Lithuanian employers are also seeking to provide their employees with all necessary job-related tools and resources (attribute *provision with necessary resources*).

As the contrary to the best worldwide employers practice, Lithuanian employers tend attract with the *interesting and satisfying job* and *reasonable job control*. The survey results reveal that about 20 percent of employees find their job content not interesting and not satisfying or they feel too much controlled. At least inherent attractive job-related attribute in Lithuanian organizations is *flexible working hours*.

When analysing these attributes taking into account the demographic characteristics of respondents, certain differences can be identified. The perceived actual experience of women and men differs when evaluating working conditions (attractive work conditions are less important to women than men), teamwork (women find the teamwork more valuable than men), decision-making ability (according to the findings men are usually given enhanced opportunities for decision-making compared to women), self-expression opportunities at work (women opine they have more opportunities to express themselves compared to men), women tend to have a better perceived real experience about safe and comfortable job environment than men, level of control (women tend to feel more controlled than men).

Age of respondents has even higher influence on employees' perceived actual expectations about the job-related attributes of an attractive employer. It has been noticed that the respondents from different age groups agree on evaluation of teamwork, provision with necessary resources and level of control. The biggest difference has been noticed when evaluating working conditions (none of the employees over 36 years found the working conditions to be unattractive, as the employees aged 26 – 35 tend to rate their working conditions as unattractive more frequent than a total opinion). The other differences in answers influenced by the respondents' age could be explained with gaining more experience and changes in job duties or roles. The employees aged 36 or more have more freedom at work for work-related decision making (compared to the group of employees between 26-35 years old, who indicated they have least opportunities to make decisions at work). The opportunities for self-expression at work are increasing depending on employee's age, while the balance between the workload and deadlines is also growing with employees' age. A presumption can be made that as the workload increases with employee's age, the job satisfaction decreases, therefore the employees over 36 years old tend to be least satisfied with their jobs. The level of education has the least influence on respondents' opinions. The respondents' opinions only distinguish when evaluating the safe and comfortable job environment, balance between workload and deadlines as well as job satisfaction. It has been noted that the employees with higher education level and bigger workload are more likely to be dissatisfied with their job.

Ranking of the attributes of organizational job environment shows that this dimension of attractive employer gains less endeavours in Lithuanian organizations compared to the job-related dimension. The attribute *informing about organizational changes and decisions* is mostly inherent to Lithuanian organizations. Over one tenth of respondents indicated they are

not being informed about the ongoing or recent changes, management's decisions on organization's future. The survey also shows that still there are employers in Lithuania, do not providing a physically, financially and emotionally safe working environment, including social guarantees such as health and life insurance (attribute *social security and stability*); almost one fifth of Lithuanian employers cannot ensure timely paid salary and guarantee financial stability (attribute *accurate and timely salary*); are not seeking to improve employees' work-life balance (attribute *work-life balance*) or to solve and prevent organizational conflicts (attribute *effective conflict management*). Ranking of the attributes of this dimension also enables to see, that Lithuanian organizations are still lacking most of the attributes inherent to attractive employers, such as trusting and respecting their employees, performance appraisal (attribute *appreciation of employee*); fostering employees' innovativeness by encouraging innovative ideas and job methods (attribute *encouraging of innovativeness*); ensuring employees' equality in terms of their career opportunities or salary (attribute *employees' equality*); employees' appraisal and recognition (attribute *recognition of individual and team work*). The least inherent attribute of Lithuanian organizations are *feedback* and *fostering the creativity* and they are listed at the end of rank-ordering. This conclusion is based on the answers of respondents that revealed that more than a half employees are not given a feedback from their managers on their performance, nor they are provided with creativity encouraging environment.

When analysing the survey results according to the demographical characteristics of employees, some of the differences can be identified. When comparing opinions of women and men, a presumption can be made that men are better informed on changes and decisions within the organizations compared to women. They are also more likely to put a higher value on trust, encouraging innovativeness and performance recognition compared to men. Employee's age has the biggest influence on the following attributes of an attractive employer: recognition of employee, work-life balance, equality of employees, recognition of individual and team work. The recognition of an employee in Lithuania, according to survey, highly depends on their experience, the best conditions are provided the employees aged 26 – 35; the lack of equality of employees and recognition of individual and teamwork is also perceived differently in various ages of employees. When comparing respondents' answers according to their education level, the highest differences has been noticed between the respondents with bachelor's degree and respondents with other levels of education, regarding the following attributes: work-life balance, effective conflict management, recognition of individual and team work; feedback; fostering the creativity.

Lithuanian employers are paying the least attention to the third attributes of rewards and motivation dimension of an attractive employer. The most inherent attributes from this dimension are *career opportunities* and *attractive non-financial rewards*. This reveals that employees in Lithuania mostly have an opportunity to progress and develop their career, and employers are using social and psychological tools to motivate their employees. Fewer employers are using tangible rewards to motivate their employees, these include variable payments, bonuses etc. (attribute *financial incentives*) and additional benefits, such as car, health club memberships, travels (attribute *valuable benefits*). Almost half of the employees cannot improve or gain better professional knowledge or skills (attribute *training and development opportunities*). Finally, according to the opinion of 61.2 percent of employees, their employers are not paying them satisfying their needs salary (attribute *attractive salary*). When analysing this dimension according to respondents' demographical characteristics, the certain differenced can be identified. Women are more likely to put more value on all the attributes related to reward and motivation, except for training and development opportunities. When comparing the differences in respondents' answers according to the levels of education, the highest differences exist between respondents with bachelor's degree

and all the other respondents. A particularly high separation of opinions can be seen between the respondents with the highest and lowest level of education.

## 5. Conclusions – comparison of employees perceived expectations and reality in Lithuanian organizations

Comparison of the perceived expectations of employees' and reality on attractiveness of Lithuanian organizations lead firstly to discussion about dimension and attributes on attractive employees. As it was reviewed in the second section of this article a great variety of theoretical and methodological concepts have been developed for identifying the lists of attractive organization's features, but if to ask the employees to identify themselves these attributes, this list is very clear, simple and quite short. Moreover the list is mainly related to the job content and its environment. From the other hand, of course this could be seen as the limitation of this research, because if we 'force' the employees asking them to evaluate and rate the long list of presented attributes by the importance (according to their own perception) the results would be different. Also these considerations could be closely related to the reason that Lithuanian employees are less demanding for attractiveness of employer due to the country economic conditions and emigration rates.

The results of survey also disclose that Lithuanian employers are firstly focusing their attention on the attributes of an attractive employer related to the content of employee's work and it directly influencing factors. Fewer efforts are being put in to creating and providing an attractive working environment, while the rewarding and motivating of employees receives the least of attention from employers. It seems that this could be explained again with the Lithuanian context. As there is a quite high rate of unemployment Lithuanian employer's do not have to get involved in attracting new employees, as they only need to put their efforts in retaining their current valuable employees.

An in-depth comparison of results presented in tables 2 and 3, allows to make a certain statement that the highest gap existing between the perceived expectations of Lithuanian employees and reality is related to the most important attribute of an attractive employer, *attractive salary*. According to perceived real experience of employees (including all demographical characteristics), this attribute is the least inherent to Lithuanian organizations. This of course could be explained by the country context and the further research should be extended by surveying the employers and defining their attitude, since in Lithuania salaries gap between employees and top level management are quite big in general.

The highest match of the perceived expectations and reality is reached when evaluating *attractive working conditions*. According to the description of this attribute provided by respondents, it can be stated that employers in Lithuania are providing good working conditions, all work-related resources and tools. Analysis of this attribute based on respondents' demographical characteristics, such as gender, age and education levels reveals that the perceived expectations are matching the real experience.

The perceived expectations of *respect for employee* are not matching the real experience at the right level - according to the list of attributes of attractive employer all the items such as trusting and respecting employees (attribute *appreciation of employee*) also employees' appraisal and recognition (attribute *recognition of individual and team work*) have been identified as non-inherent to about 20 percent of Lithuanian organizations. However, the analysis based on employees age and education level shows that perceived expectations are closer to the real experience in the groups over 36 years and with highest level of education.

An attribute *encouraging creativity* can be also assigned to the list of attributes that are not meeting employees' expectations, as this attribute is rarely inherent to Lithuanian organizations based on expected real experience. The expectation of *clear job content* is also

highly unlikely to be satisfied in reality as its description according to employees' perceived expectation differs from the content of this item. *Reasonable job control* is another attribute that only exists theoretically. The attribute *career opportunities* somewhat matches the perceived expectations and real experience of women of elder age, with the highest education level.

The perceived expectations about *social guarantees and stability* also meet the real experience, especially of elder employees and with the highest education level. The attribute of *friendly team*, which is mostly important to the employees with bachelor's degree, matches the description of *goodwill of colleagues and supervisor* attribute. This attribute should also meet or even exceed employees' expectations as it has been listed as one of the most inherent to Lithuanian organizations. The attribute *flexible working hours* is highly important to the employees aged 26 – 35 and least important to elder employees. However, their perceived expectations are not matching the real experience, according to their answers as well as overall opinion.

The attribute *feedback*, which is highly attractive to the employees, aged 26 – 35 also with masters or higher degree, is the least inherent to Lithuanian organizations, therefore not meeting the perceived expectations of employees. It is difficult to define, if the attribute *equality of employees* is actually inherent to Lithuanian organizations in reality as the description of this attribute highly varies based on employees perception or in real experience.

The research conducted and its results have also raised many additional questions to be analysed and proposed a topic for developing the further research in this field. The research could be extended by exploring the influence of demographical characteristics more accurately. In such a way, it could be identified what particular reasons predetermine the differences in opinions among these groups when evaluating the attributes of attractive employer. It should be analysed further, if these differences are only influenced by gender, age or levels of education; how the job position affects the employees' opinion about employer's attractiveness. Also, the findings of this research showed that the top management and HR specialists should identify the perceived expectations of employees according to their age, gender, education level and take these into account when creating and developing the attributes of the attractive organization.

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