

Human Resources Management Practices in Hospitality Companies

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Abstract—Human Resources Management (HRM) has been recognized by academics and practitioners as an important element in organizations. Therefore, this paper explores the best practices of HRM and seeks to understand the level of participation in the development of these practices by human resources managers in the hospitality industry and compare it with other industries. Thus, the study compared the HRM practices of companies in the hospitality sector with HRM practices of companies in other sectors, and identifies the main differences between their HRM practices. The results show that the most frequent HRM practices in all companies, independently of its sector of activity, are hiring and training. When comparing hospitality sector with other sectors of activity, some differences were noticed, namely in the adoption of the practices of communication and information sharing, and of recruitment and selection. According to these results, the paper discusses the major theoretical and practical implications. Suggestions for future research are also presented.

Keywords—Human resources management practices, human resources manager, hospitality companies, Portuguese companies, exploratory study.

I. INTRODUCTION

INCREASINGLY, organizations need to effectively manage their human resources to provide high quality service to their customers, to improve productivity and hence profitability [1], [2]. If the success of an organization depends on the skills of its employees, then it is crucial that they are managed effectively, so that they can contribute to organization achieving its goals. Therefore, HRM has assumed greater relevance in organizations and gaining and increasingly strategic role [3]. In line with this, human resources function plays an important role in the success of organizations [2] as well as including strategic contributions and business knowledge [4]. HRM includes all the activities that managers engage to attract and retain employees and to ensure that they have a high-level performance and contribute to the accomplishment of organizational goals [5].

Over the years, the role of HRM has been proclaiming itself an increasingly autonomous, diverse and dynamic conceptual and operational framework. The human resource is being progressively viewed as the main responsible for the

competitive advantage of an organization. Pfeffer [6] goes one step further in claiming that it is not the people per se, but mainly how they are managed that has become gradually more important. As recently referred by Cristiani and Peiró [1], when addressing the HRM system and policies, organizations can influence employees' behaviors and motivation through various HRM practices. Nevertheless, in the last three decades, the HR function has shifted from an administrative role to a more strategic role, as a reaction to the professionalization of HR staff/practitioners [1], [7]. This fact allows that HR function gains credibility, quality, innovation [5] and leveraging the development and implementation of diverse and coherent HRM practices, which will lead to organizational competitive advantage [6], [8]. Thus, as referred by Noe et al. [9], the role of human resources in competitive advantage should continuously increase because of the fast-paced change characterizing today's business environment. However, the role of the HRM in many organizations, from some contexts (e.g. Portuguese, Uruguayan, Indian), has been given a low status compared with other functional areas and remain less formal and less structured than North American, Britain, German, Japan or Sweden contexts [1], [10], [11]. Furthermore, hospitality sector is regarded as one of the most promising economic activities in the Portuguese context, particularly in a time of social and economic crisis. In addition, some researchers (e.g. [12]) pointed out that the HRM departments in hospitality companies are often criticized for being a cost center. Despite the importance of hospitality sector in Portuguese context, few studies [1], [7] researched the HRM practices in this sector and compared them to others. Besides that, there has been a lack of research regarding to identify what practices of hotel management are common with HRM role in increasing organizational competitive advantage.

Considering the increasing prominence of tourism in Portugal, it is absolutely essential for hospitality businesses to develop efficient HRM practices to provide an outstanding quality of service. Hospitality companies should adopt and develop HRM practices, since they will enable them to attract, develop, motivate and retain highly skilled employees who can contribute to the achievement of the companies' goals. Thus, an empirical exploratory study was conducted in Portugal to characterize the human resources practices of companies in the hospitality sector and other business sectors. This study seeks to contribute to the development and strengthening of this line of research in Portugal, especially regarding the hospitality industry compared to other industries. To analyze the issues of HRM practices in

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Portugal, the following research questions were formulated: (1) What are the best practices in HRM? (2) What are the practices of HRM adopted by different companies of different sectors of activity, especially of hospitality sector? (3) What is the role of HR department in the implementation of these practices?

This paper is organized as follows: First section makes an introduction to human resources role in companies and its relevance to potentiate competitive advantages and defines the research questions of the study conducted; the next section will review the HRM main concepts and the best practices established in literature; the following section explains the methodology applied to conduct the study; the fourth section presents and discusses the results. Finally, the last section reports the conclusions of the study, its practical and theoretical implications.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. HRM Main Concepts

The HRM encompasses all the processes of management decision affecting the relationship between the organization and its employees [13]. However, the structure of "Personal Function", in most companies, only began in the early of the twentieth century as an effect of the adoption of Taylor's philosophy. Martins [14] highlights that, this period, in the history of Personnel Management, aside from the strong influence of engineering and production, was characterized by the split of work tasks into smaller tasks, which were strictly defined, and with rigid criteria of satisfaction and motivation of employees (mainly economic). This traditional approach sees HRM policies and practices as tools to shape the behavior of employees to the pre-requisites of the job they undertake [15].

The 1980s mark the beginnings HRM concept development, keeping up in use till today [16]-[18]. Nowadays known as "Human Resources Management", the HR function acquires the status of a strategic function, due to the pressure of competition and the need to adapt to technological, economic and social challenges [16]-[18] and to the need of taking new challenges, allowing them to get closer to company's strategic decision-making centers [11], [19]. In this new context of strategic management, it is worth to highlight that, contrary to what prevailed until the seventies, there is no "one best way" to manage HR. Each organization has specific characteristics in several areas that must analyze and smoothly articulate with the needs of its customers and organizational goals [13].

HR managers, as elements of the organization's top management team, share not only the strategic process decision making but also influence organizational outcomes from the perspective of people management [19]. HRM not only repositioned the HR function as part of the management team, but also set a new status for the HR Manager [19]. These arguments lead recent authors (e.g. [11], [20]) to consider that the HR Managers are the ones that guarantee the best choices on the future of the organization in matters related to people and to the success of organization's projects,

preventing the risk of a mismatch of skills when allocating employees, considering the new demands of labor work [11]. Therefore, the main goal of the HRM shall become to contribute to the success of the organizational strategy [13].

Recent research conducted by Gillon et al. [21] makes a review of how HRM concept has evolved. They select the most important authors to explain the main theories on HRM area, namely: (1) Ruona and Gibson [22] say that HRM has begun in the mid-1980s; (2) HRM field includes "anything and everything associated with the management of employment relations in the firm" [23, p.184]; (3) Bratton and Gold [24, p.7] emphasize that HRM is about "leveraging people's capabilities and commitment (...) through a distinctive set of programs and practices embedded in an organizational and societal context"; (4) Ulrich and Brockbank [4] outline the key roles of HRM as follows: Employee champion, administrative expert, change agent and strategic partner; (5) Becker and Huselid [25] emphasize that HRM should embrace value creation for the organization, not just operational excellence and; (6) Ulrich [26] defends that HRM function should assume four main roles (i) Strategic partners; (ii) Administrative experts; (iii) Employee champions and (iv) Change agents.

In Portugal, even in the context of rooted administrative practices, the HR function has progressively been including a strategic vision in its operations [27]. The RH function has seen a transformation from a reactive and administrative function to a proactive activity, responding to market demands. Moreover, since the 90's HRM in Portugal has been monitoring, in real-time, the trends occurring in the organizational panorama [28]. Nevertheless, Cunha et al. [19] argue that there is still a long way to go, since even starting to be seen as strategic, the influence of HRM in Portuguese companies is still limited. In this sense, Martins [14] challenges the HR professionals to rethinking the design and implementation of a strategic HR management which may align the interests of HR with the organization's strategic goals. Human resources should be the priority of any manager because they have all the skills and knowledge necessary to materialize the organizational goals [29].

B. HRM Best Practices

The practices of human resource management are specific actions used by companies to attract, motivate, retain and develop employees [30]. The promotion of a set of HRM practices consistent and integrated with the overall strategy of the organization allows promoting organizational competitive advantage in its marketplace. It allows establishing it as a single organization, complex and inimitable, through its social structure [33] and with better organizational performance [11], [30]-[32]. The literature (e.g. [11], [19], [30]) seems to be consensual that a good strategic in employees' management occurs when a set of good practices are implemented. Table I summarizes the proposed best HRM practices identified in the literature reviewed.

TABLE I
HRM BEST PRACTICES IN LITERATURE

HRM Best Practices	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7
Job descriptions							X
Status differentiation				X			
Dissemination and sharing of information	X	X	X		X	X	X
Teams of redesigning jobs						X	X
Training and skills development		X	X	X	X	X	X
Groups Troubleshooting				X			
Wage and symbolic equality	X				X	X	X
Surveys of employee attitudes							X
Shareholder Employees	X	X				X	X
Prospects for long-term / internal promotions						X	X
Large jobs / rotation jobs			X	X		X	
Practice of participation and empowerment		X	X	X		X	X
Formal grievance procedures							X
Recruitment and selection				X	X	X	X
Formal conflict resolution			X				X
High wages, benefits or other incentives			X	X	X	X	X
Employment Security					X	X	X
Systems based on merit review							X
Teamwork			X	X	X		

Source: Adapted from [11], [19]; A1: [51], A2: [52], A3: [36], A4: [53], A5: [54], A6: [6], A7: [31]

Table I shows that there is not a unique consensus about the best practices of HRM. It was noticed that its applicability varies depending on the interests of the organization and the type of employees [14]. Esteves [30] refers that neither the theoretical work that has been developed in the Strategic HR Management field – which relates HRM practices with organizational outcomes (e.g., [34], [35]) – nor the empirical work (e.g., [36]-[39]) presents a precise and consensual definition of the best HR practices, i.e., which practices can arise associated with positive organizational outcomes. However, Esteves [30] argues that underlying the designation of best practices, there is a HRM conception oriented to maintain and develop the skills and organizational commitment of companies, which takes effect on recruitment practices and stringent selection, performance appraisal oriented to development, job security, promotions and rewards based on merit and also in practices of training and development of employees, as well as practices that encourage participation in decision making and sharing of information about the company.

As referred by Hiltrop [40, p.253], “many of the HRM practices identified in the recent literature seem like fads, because they often are implemented without much understanding of the underlying principles of human behavior as well as a tendency to do whatever is popular at the moment”. On the other hand, Mamman & Kulaiby [41, p.2815] say that there is “a number of factors accounting for the variation in HRM practices across organizations and across societies”. Hence, several authors (e.g. [34], [37], [42], [43]) confirm that studies and research are still limited in order to define, with certainty, which are the best HRM practices

and, consequently, which are related with the organizational success. HRM practices to be truly effective need to have two fundamental characteristics: Be adequately coordinated and be applied as part of organizational strategy [19].

Cho et al. [12] on the one hand suggest that the adoption of best practices has resulted in lowered costs, increased revenue, and the creation of more effective HRM. On the other hand, the effectiveness of the implementation of HRM practices varies by industry. Nankervis and Debrah [2] underline that modern organizations need to be more proactive in use of HRM practices to enhance their operations. In their study in hospitality industry in Australia and Singapore, they conclude that hotel managers need to understand that the opportunity to enhance the stability of employees' careers and the attractiveness of their reward systems, in return of greater productivity. Therefore, this research project aims to identify: (a) HRM practices promoted by Portuguese companies and verify whether they are approaching to those that are considered by the literature as HRM 'best practices'; (b) the level of participation of HR department in the development of these HRM practices of companies in the hospitality sector when compared with companies of other sectors of activity; and (c) the specific features of HRM practices in companies of hospitality sector when compared to companies other sectors of activity. Based on the literature reviewed, and with these goals in mind, the following hypotheses of research were formulated:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between HTM practices in the hospitality sector and HRM practices in other business sectors;
- H2: The level of participation of the HR department developing the HRM practices is bigger in the hospitality sector than in other business sectors.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted under a quantitative methodology approach in order to characterize the HRM practices developed by companies operating in Portuguese market.

A. Sample and Instrument

The sample of this study is comprised of 33 hospitality companies and 95 companies of other activity sector, all operating in Portugal.

A survey to analyze the research hypotheses was developed, and applied to the HR Managers of the companies of the research sample.

All participants completed a survey [44], with 16 questions (short answer, dichotomous and Likert), aiming to identify the HRM practices, the level of participation of the HR Department in the development of HRM practices, and the differences in developing HRM practices in companies of the hospitality sector comparatively to other business sectors. The survey was organized in three sections: Section 1 was designed to measure the socio-demographic characteristics, namely activity sector, number of collaborators, and foundation year; Section 2 was planned to measure HRM practices. In this section there were a list of 23 HRM practices

to identify the practices used by the company as well as the level of participation of the HR department developing the practice; besides that, it was also asked all the participants to identify the four practices that require more time from the HR department, the practices that were outsourced, and the most important practices to develop in the next year. Finally, Section 3 has some questions to characterize the respondent of the survey, namely, gender, age, function, degree, and number of years in that function.

B. Procedure

The sample was collected using a convenience method and the research project fulfilled ethical and data confidentiality procedures. Data were gathered by e-mail, by sending about 600 e-mails to the top managements of companies. The e-mail explained the research project goals and asked the HR department employees to answer a survey. The reporting period and sample collection took place between May and November 2016. It was obtained a total of 128 responses (response rate of 21.5%), which represents the total sample of this research project, where 33 responses are the subsample of companies of the hospitality sector of activity ($n = 33$) and 95 are the subsample of companies of other business sectors ($n = 95$).

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 was used for data analysis. The descriptive analysis was developed with descriptive statistics parameters, adopting the usual measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode), dispersion (range, variance, standard deviation and coefficient of variation), and calculation of simple and relative frequencies.

As the assumptions of normal distribution were not met, the researchers opted for using non-parametric statistics. The variables relating to HRM practices and to the level of participation of the HR Department in HRM practices were recorded into dichotomous variables (presence/absence) and, subsequently, the total level of participation in HRM practices was calculated. The level of participation of HRM department in developing HRM practices were analyzed in three dimensions: Level of consultation, decision-making and implementation, assessed on a Likert scale of 4 degrees, where 1 corresponds to the absence of participation and 4 is the total participation. The dimensions and scale of degrees are in accordance with the recommended in the literature [45]. To understand if there are any differences between both groups (hospitality and other sectors) a Chi-square test was conducted. The level of significance of the study was 5%, as recommended in literature [45].

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Development of HRM Practices in the Hospitality Sector versus Other Business Sectors

The companies of this study verified the best HRM practices suggested by the literature. Table II shows that the most common practices in hospitality sector are: Hiring ($n=27$, 82%); training ($n=26$, 79%); communication and information sharing ($n=26$, 79%). For companies of other sectors of

activity, the most common practices are hiring ($n=85$, 90%); recruitment and selection ($n=88$, 93%) and training ($n=83$, 87%).

TABLE II
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTIC AND DIFFERENCES FOR HRM PRACTICES ON
HOSPITALITY AND OTHER SECTORS

HRM Best Practices	Hospitality sector (N=33)		Other sectors (N=95)		Chi-square test X^2
	N	%	N	%	
Hiring	27	82	85	90	1322,5ns
Training	26	79	83	87	1343**
Communication and information sharing	26	79	78	82	1983ns
Reception and integration	25	76	78	82	955,5*
Recruitment and selection	25	76	88	93	1250**
Attendance and absenteeism control	24	73	86	91	744**
Performance appraisal	22	67	70	74	782,5**
Job descriptions	21	64	69	73	1384**
Direct compensation practices	21	64	51	54	1321,5*
Retention of employees	21	64	37	39	1223***
Management and career development	19	58	37	39	1475,6 ns
Employee satisfaction surveys	18	55	54	57	1666ns
Forward management skills	14	42	39	41	1445ns

Note: ns – not significant; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

In order to examine whether there are differences between HRM practices developed in companies in the hospitality sector and in other sectors, it was conducted a Mann-Whitney test. As noted in Table II, the differences between groups are statistically significant for practices of HRM training, reception and integration, recruitment and selection, attendance and absenteeism control, performance appraisal, job description, direct compensation practices and, retention of employees. The companies in the hospitality sector are distinguished by using more direct compensation practices, employee retention while other sectors companies use more significantly remaining practices.

B. Level of HR Department Participation in Developing HRM Practices in the Hospitality Sector versus Other Business Sectors

In the hospitality sector, the hiring and training practices are the ones with higher level of participation of HRM department. Although, in other business sectors, the practices of reception and integration, and communication and information sharing are the ones that have higher levels of participation of HRM department, as shown in Table III. It was also observed that the HR manager in the hospitality sector has a significantly expanded role on practices of hiring, training, attendance and absenteeism control, communication and information sharing, reception and integration, performance appraisal, direct compensation practices, job descriptions and, retention of employees.

TABLE III
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTIC AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE DEGREES OF
INTERVENTION OF HR DEPARTMENT IN DEVELOPING HRM PRACTICES IN THE
HOSPITALITY SECTOR VERSUS OTHER BUSINESS SECTORS

HRM Best Practices	Hospitality sector (N=33)				Other sectors (N=95)				Chi- square test X ²
	None/ Little		Much/ Total		None/ Little		Much/ Total		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Hiring	6	18	27	82	43	45	52	55	711***
Training	8	22	25	76	41	43	54	57	701**
Communication and information sharing	10	30	23	70	32	34	63	66	855**
Reception and integration	11	33	22	67	24	25	71	75	817**
Recruitment and selection	11	33	22	67	52	55	43	45	716**
Attendance and absenteeism control	10	30	23	70	39	43	56	59	676**
Performance appraisal	11	33	22	67	41	43	54	57	933***
Job descriptions	13	30	20	61	64	67	31	33	1061*
Direct compensation practices	12	36	21	64	41	43	54	57	814**
Retention of employees	14	42	19	58	63	66	32	34	1057*
Management and career development	17	52	16	48	49	52	46	48	1350ns
Employee satisfaction surveys	16	48	17	52	62	65	33	35	1392ns
Forward management skills	23	70	10	30	55	58	40	42	1552ns

Note: ns – not significant; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

C. Implementation of HRM Practices in Companies

The companies of the hospitality sector in this study expect to develop four main initiatives in the area of HRM. It can be noted that one in three hospitality companies properties (33.3%) favors investment in training, 21% (n = 7) highlights the relationships among employees, 12% (n = 4) pointed out the improvement of working conditions, and one in ten hospitality companies properties stresses the need to invest in internal communication.

The companies of other business sectors identified the three main initiatives to develop in the area of HRM: performance appraisal (n=30, 41%), training (n=24, 21%), and reception and integration of employees (n=17, 18%).

It is worth to notice that when analyzing the HRM practices in most companies of the total sample of the study, the results show that all HRM practices are developed. This allows to conclude that in these companies HRM is conducted in accordance with the theoretical assumptions, although the researchers are not dealing with a coherent development. The literature assumes that the trend is increasingly towards the human development of RH (i.e. the strategic HR practices), which still does not appear in this group of companies, where HRM practices are more directly related to the predominate management (which is hiring, recruitment and selection, attendance and absenteeism control, training). In turn, it is in the most operational HR practices that the level of participation of the HR department is greater. As Martins and Silva [11] concluded, there is a higher tendency for facing a more operational than strategic department in their lines of action. These results show quite clearly that the strategic

management of human resources is still emerging in Portugal and do not reflect the increasing awareness of the importance of the human factor advocated by literature [46]. These findings are explained by Cabral-Cardoso [47, p.564] with "many companies do not have an HR department mainly interested in personnel matters. The main function of their work remains the Personnel function within another function of management, being HRM a part-time subject."

Regarding first research hypothesis, the results show that the spread of most HRM practices is significantly higher in the hospitality sector companies than in companies of other sectors of activity, for practices of training, reception and integration, recruitment and selection, attendance and absenteeism control, performance appraisal, job descriptions, hiring and employee's retention. Nevertheless, there were no differences between hospitality companies and companies from other sectors on what concerns to hiring practices, communication and information sharing, management and career development, employee's satisfaction surveys and forward management skills. By this, this hypothesis cannot be fully confirmed. The results suggest that for this group of companies, the development of human factor is not yet a concern for management. The results show that the operational role of HRM in companies of hospitality industry is strengthened more than the competitive factor referred in literature [36], [38]. The HR function still very focused on hiring, training, and communication and information sharing.

The second hypothesis of the study seeks to relate the level of participation by the HRM department in the development of HRM practices and the company sector of activity. Hypothesis is partially confirmed since by analyzing the results, it can be noticed that in the hospitality sector the HR department has a higher level of participation in the total amount of the developed HRM practices. However, there are no differences for employee satisfaction surveys; management and career development and, forward management skills practices. In summary, results suggest that in this type of business, the HRM practices are still far from producing the intended guidelines to the strategic HR function. Most of the time, the participation of HRM department is restricted to hiring, recruitment and selection, training and attendance and absenteeism control.

HRM best practices have already been internationally established as practices that encourage teamwork, interdisciplinary work, initiative and employee satisfaction. However, companies of this study, by contrast, appear still being much focused on an operational management perspective and in a predominantly bureaucratic and administrative view. These findings allow to conclude that this is a group of companies which still seems far from considering the idea of the HR department as a priority, as the function responsible for the processes of change, motivation and development of all employees. More than the development of their HR, priority should be HR management, as recently concluded Martins and Silva [11]. In the Portuguese companies of this study, the HR managers has traditionally played only a basic administrative role. On the one hand, these

results do not confirm the previous evidence of the growing professionalization of the function in Portugal, evidenced by Larsen and Brewster [48] and Moreira [46]. On the other hand, the researchers, such as Noe et al. [9], believe that HRM function is in a process of transformation, because this function has contributed to recognize human resources as source of competitive advantage. This is in line with the vision of Mamman & Kulaiby [41, p.2831] when they mentioned, "HR practitioners can develop indispensable knowledge and skills that can catapult them into the strategic decision-making process".

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that in companies of the hospitality sector, the HR manager has a relatively high level of participation in the development of most HRM practices. It is possible that respondent managers may believe that the use of HRM practices have a positive impact on reducing costs, increasing sales and profits of their companies [12] or improving the quality of the provided services [49].

The results allow to conclude that the most common HRM practices are hiring, recruitment and selection, training and communication and information sharing. In the study of Martins [14], conducted in medium-sized enterprises located in the district of Aveiro, it appears that the HRM prevalent practices were "job descriptions", "social report", "hiring", "training", "hygiene and safety", "reception and integration", "satisfaction surveys to employees", "attendance/absenteeism control", "recruitment and selection", "formal conflict resolution", "labor relations in company". Although it was developed with a timeline of 9 years, it can be verified that the most intensively developed HRM practices seem to be more or less common in both studies. This can be explained by the fact that all of these analyses have been carried out in companies located in Portugal, thus integrating the same model of HRM. Moreover, there is an evident weak diffusion of practices that enable the development of HR. The researchers face a number of companies that tend to continue to develop a much targeted HRM for administrative and bureaucratic aspects, dominated by strong dissemination of traditional HRM practices. Therefore, the findings have some management implications. Understanding the relationship between the HR function and the use of HRM practices by different economics sectors is relevant for HR managers and management in general. The effects of the role of the HR function on HRM practices, as well as the role of HR manager, are important findings for organizations in changing business environments and in particular for organizations in developing economies, as it is the case of Portugal. Besides that, these findings can help managers to set up the HRM agenda and priorities of HR managers with employees' attraction, motivation, development and retention. Nevertheless, the results of this study provide an important contribution to the general debate in the HRM fields on developing economies, in particular in the understudied Portuguese context, where HRM function, practices and HR manager have particular characteristics. Thus, this study is expected to be helpful to the managers of

these companies on selection, planning and executing HRM practices. However, it is important to understand that this study is exploratory and has some limitations, which could be addressed in future investigations:

- The exclusive use of the technique of questionnaire survey to collect information limits the richness of information, since there is not any opportunity for further clarification. Therefore, it is suggested for future research to use of semi-structured interviews, allowing the use of qualitative methods;
- The fact that the respondent was a single person who is responsible for activities related to the study may have influenced the results of the research, since he could be constrained for his professional function or to his corporate image. Moreover, it is possible that the reliability of the obtained data through a single informant can be more reduced than if the collection was obtained by a broader group of company employees. Future research may consider other informants (e.g. company employees, outside the HRM department);
- Given that organizational context (e.g. leadership style, organizational culture) could influence the role played by HR practitioners, in-depth case studies can unearth differences and similarities within and across organizations. Therefore, this is an avenue for future research. Furthermore, study also did not allow identifying the main factors that can influence HRM role. It is possible that organizational size, work experience of HR practitioners and educational qualifications could be some of the factors that can influence HR roles. Therefore, research is needed to determine how these factors might impact on HR roles and their effectiveness.
- Despite of the contribution of this study, there are opportunities for further research to fully understand the role of HR managers participation in HRM practices, especially in developing countries, and to examine the effectiveness of HR practitioners' roles to complement studies conducted in developed countries;
- Finally, the small size of the sample makes it difficult to generalize the findings of the study for all companies in Portugal, as suggested in [50]. The researchers suggest, in the future, a wider period for data collection in order to potentiate a bigger sample collection.

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