

Master Thesis  
BA399 MBA Research Project

Employee Training Practice in the Serbian publishing  
industry

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Analyzing the issues related to employee training, a question that should be asked is: “Do companies have long or short term approach when plan education for their employees?” The potential answer is a subject of many debates among human resource management professionals and the relevant public audiences. There is almost a general agreement in management theory that employees are a strategic resource of the company, so the organization should invest in their knowledge continuously, having in mind long-term approach. On the other side, economic globalization process, increasingly dynamic and strong competition, lack of financial resources, pressures from external stakeholders, force companies to require long working hours from its employees, short term results and demonstrate lack of care and interest for their long term development.

The fact that a firm organizes some kind of trainings for its employees doesn't have to mean that it has a long-term approach to its human resources, as the relevant business literature suggests it should be. There are numerous examples and case studies of successful companies that made extraordinary business performances, thanks to the strategic approach to employee knowledge. Anyhow, it doesn't mean that most of the firms have quality employee training practice, especially when it is spoken about the countries where market driven economy is relatively new and lack of financial sources is an ongoing problem.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

This thesis deals with employee training practice of the firms, in the sense of type of trainings that firms provide to their employees, both internally and externally, which increases their applicable knowledge and skills, that way improving overall firm's performance. This study was carried out with the purpose to find out if the publishing

firms strategically approach education of their employees, since it is an important factor of sustainable business development. The results could be used by the publishing industry in Serbia to learn if there is a space for employee knowledge and business performance improvement. On the other side, firms that provide business trainings can find out which trainings are mostly demanded by the publishing industry, as well as to get more knowledge on the future trends of education in this dynamic and highly competitive industry.

### 1.3 Delimitations

This study is observing Serbian publishing firms in the sense of their employee business training practice and perception of needed education for their employees, all with intention to improve their competitiveness and business performance. The publishing industry is, for this purpose, limited on the firms that publish printed publications. The analyses is based on the concepts of learning organization, which indicates need for permanent, long term oriented education of employees, with aim to sustainably improve business performance and competitiveness of a firm.

### 1.4 Definitions of Terms

Choice technique is a measurement task that identifies preferences by requiring respondents to choose between two or more alternatives.<sup>1</sup>

Cover letter is a letter that accompanies the questionnaire in a mail survey. Its purpose is to induce the reader to complete and return the questionnaire.

E-mail survey is a survey that uses questionnaires distributed and returned by e-mail<sup>2</sup>.

Forced-choice scale is a fixed-alternative rating scale that requires respondents to choose one of the fixed alternatives<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> W. G. Zikmund, Business Research Methodology, Oklahoma state University, Thomson South-Western, 2003, page 309

<sup>2</sup> ibidem, page 219

<sup>3</sup> ibidem, page 325

Knowledge worker is a representative of employees in the market driven economies, which possess high level of formal education and ability to gain and apply both theoretical and analytical knowledge<sup>4</sup>.

Learning is a process by which people acquire knowledge, understanding, skills and values, and apply them to solve problems throughout their daily life. The learning process engages and individual's emotional as well as intellectual dimensions, and enables him or her to control, or adapt to, their environment. Whilst much individual learning is put into store, most learning leads to behavior, which can be recognized and assessed.<sup>5</sup>

Learning organization is defined as an organization that has significant capacity for learning, adoption and changes. It is the organization whose members constantly improve their abilities for new knowledge creation and continuously learn how to efficiently work as a team<sup>6</sup>.

Employee Training (education) can be defined as an effort to improve employees performance on their working place or some related working place.

## 1.5 Background Information

Due to socialist regime, in the last few decades, state owned publishing firms were dominant on the Serbian (SFRY) market. These firms were usually large, producing more publications at once – newspapers, periodicals, books etc. That way, in the plan based economy, publishing industry was stable, and so few existing publishing firms were bureaucratic and slow. Human resources in the industry were planned according to human resource plan on the state level. Since political factors were more important than the economic ones, employee education budgets for large firms were also planned on the state level, according to human resource plans. Bearing in mind all above mentioned, it could be said that there were long term oriented human resource plans, but without market arguments, since it was almost impossible for the state decision makers to understand all the needs of every industry and state owned firm. From that standpoint, it can be concluded that publishing industry practice in

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<sup>4</sup> P. F. Drucker, *The Essential Drucker*, Harper Collins Publishers Inc, 2001, page 192

<sup>5</sup> G.A. Cole, *Organizational Behaviour*, Letts Educational, 1998, page 137

<sup>6</sup> R. Tissen, D. Andersen, F.L. Deprez, *The Knowledge Dividend*, Pearson Education Limited, 1999, page 228

Serbia (FRY) was not based on modern human resource management practice and that way not competitive outside the country borders. Finally, it is important to say that publication policy was, specially related to the media, highly influenced and censored by the socialist political establishment, so the objective for work force education and development in the industry was not to have creative and highly skilled personnel, but “loyal and silent officers”.

In the 90s, despite war, embargo and deep financial crisis, numerous publishing firms were established, since some elements of market economy appeared and therefore space for making a profit was created. Anyway, Slobodan Milosevic’s regime didn’t leave much of space for the industry fast growth. After the political changes in 2000, situation in the industry changed dramatically. Most of the state owned publishing firms were privatized, as well as brand new publishing firms were established. It is important to mention that foreign investments entered this market, too.

Nowadays, competition on the market is very large, because the market is relatively small. Also, the publishing market is a mature, even decreasing market, since ICT, especially Internet and its services make strong substitutes for printed publications. According to the national statistics, the publishing industry shows business activities decrease in the last 2 years. That is the reason profit margins are relatively low and many market players are fighting for survival on daily basis. Tough business conditions lead to great pressure on management and other employees to give their best. It is mostly related to pressures on the distribution channels, as well as attractiveness of the publications. Publishing firms have to improve their employees’ knowledge and skills so they could keep and improve their business performance. Small publishing firms have the largest problem in this sense, because these have high expenses per unit of publication<sup>7</sup>. Bearing in mind that the market is very sensitive on the price level, these are able to have very limited budgets for business development, except for sales improvement, which could be labeled as “necessary”.

According to available secondary data sources, there are not many information and relevant data on the publishing industry in Serbia, especially education in this sector.

<sup>7</sup> The Serbian Chamber Commerce, *About the publishing industry in Serbia*  
<http://pks.komora.net/PrivredauSrbiji/Privrednegrane/Izdava%C4%8Dkadelatnost/Izdava%C5%A1tvouSrbiji/tabid/1653/Default.aspx>

Reasons for this are various, but mainly related to inadequate national statistics categorization<sup>8</sup>, undeveloped public information services, very dynamic industry changes, big publishing companies privatization, as well as still low level of public disclosure and transparency of most of the businesses in Serbia.

## 1.6 Employee training and development

Training (education) of employees can be defined as an effort to improve employee's performance on their work place or some related work place. It indicates changes in the specific knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes or behaviors. Efficient training has to be balanced with identified needs, to be well planned and to provide learning curve application. Based on place of training carrying out, it can be:

- ◆ On the job training
- ◆ On site, but not on the job training
- ◆ Off the job training

Training is often mixed with a term of “employee development”, that is related to creating environment where employees are encouraged for self-improvement. Anyway, employee training and development are an integral part of human resource management practice, so this thesis will focus on employee education practice, but bearing in mind sustainable business development using knowledge and skills of the employees.

Nowadays, many firms believe that the key of sustainable competitive advantage in the market is intellectual capital development that includes:

- Cognitive knowledge
- Advanced skills
- Systematic understanding and creativity
- Individually motivated creativity

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<sup>8</sup> Not only related to the publishing industry, but also many other service based industries. The statistics categorization haven't been changed since socialists period and plan based economy. For example, publishing industry is put in the same category as wood processing industry and paper production, so number of the publishing firms can not be precisely defined, only approximated. Beside that, Serbian Publishers Association was found few months ago and even that organization still doesn't have reliable data on this issue.



Training focus, from the first two elements is moving forward to creating conditions for employees to understand connections and reasons why something is done and to be motivated for innovative thinking and continuous quality improvement. One of the most famous management theorists, Peter Drucker, said that continual education and knowledge will be the industry with the fastest growth.

## 2. Review of the Literature

### 2.1. The most referenced theories and concepts related to employee knowledge and education

#### 2.1.1. Peter Drucker – The *Concept of Knowledge Worker*

Peter Drucker noticed in his “*The Essentials Drucker*” and “*Managing in the Next Society*” that the dominant social group that appeared in the last few decades is the “knowledge workers”. These possess high level of formal education and ability to gain and apply both theoretical and analytical knowledge. These have different approach to business and different mindset. Above all, these employees possess a habit for permanent learning. They want to improve themselves all the time and put new challenges in front of their employers. Drucker wrote that this group of “knowledge workers” would become the largest group of population and working force. Even if other groups become more numerous, knowledge workers will give a new character to the society; they will be its leadership and will shape its social profile. Probably, knowledge workers will not be the *ruling* class of society, but they will definitely be its *leading* class.

Knowledge based society will become far more competitive than any other known society ever, since, due to internationally available knowledge, there will be no excuse for lack of knowledge and bad performance. Employers should provide permanent education for all of their employees, since the profit will be made by the organization of people, not by some extraordinary individuals. Knowledge society is a society of employees. Since they have high level of formal and informal knowledge, they will become more important to the organization than vice versa. That way, employees need to improve their skills, knowledge and working conditions constantly. The knowledge is becoming the key resource of the business success.

### 2.1.2. Richard Florida – *The Rise of the Creative Class*

Following the Drucker's concept of "knowledge workers", Richard Florida introduced a term "creative class", that is mainly economic term in this context. Creative class consists of people who add economic value through creativity<sup>9</sup>. It thus includes a great many knowledge workers, symbolic analysts<sup>10</sup> and professional and technical workers, but emphasizes their true role in the economy. They generally do not own and control any significant property in the physical sense. Their property – which stems from their creative capacity – is an intangible because it is literally in their heads<sup>11</sup>. Actually, these people use their great and continuously improving knowledge and experience to "create meaningful new forms". Employers should manage the knowledge and creativity of the creative class in the way of creating sustainable growth and development of the organization and its performance.

### 2.1.3. R. Tissen - *Knowledge Based on Value*

In the book named "*The Knowledge Dividend*", R. Tissen, D. Andriesen and F.L. Deprez explain the concept of "smart knowledge". This knowledge should be based on value, other words; firms should focus training of their employees on knowledge and skills that will improve the value of their business. Since ICT brings numerous information and knowledge, firms and their employees should, using their current knowledge and experience, recognize which knowledge is most important for the business development. Beside that, through interaction with other employees and management, individuals gain new and important knowledge on the daily basis. Related to above mentioned, the authors introduce a concept of 3 "I" – Information, Intellect and Interaction, which become blocks for knowledge building and become a basic element of the organization knowledge and success. Finally, the context of some situation or business is important for information analysis and knowledge application.

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Florida, *The Rise of Creative Class*, Basic Books, 2002, page 68

<sup>10</sup> The members of the workforce who manipulate ideas and symbols, in Erik Olin Wright, *Class counts*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1996

<sup>11</sup> Richard Florida, *The Rise of Creative Class*, Basic Books, 2002, page 68

#### 2.1.4. Peter M. Senge – *Learning Organizations*

Author Peter M. Senge, in his famous book named “The Fifth Discipline – The art and practice of a learning organization” indicates that “the fifth discipline” of a learning organization, that creates high and sustainable performance is systematic thinking, other words, providing team learning that makes synergy and a common vision. That way, learning organization is a place where people continuously discover how to create their own reality and how to apply it in everyday business. Main characteristics of learning organizations are<sup>12</sup>:

1. Continual learning – employees share knowledge on daily basis and use their everyday job as a basis for receiving and application of knowledge
2. Creation of knowledge and knowledge exchange – organization makes a system for creation and exchange of knowledge
3. Systematic and critical thinking – organization encourages its employees to think in a new way, to understand relations between the elements and constantly check their starting prepositions
4. Learning culture – organization tends to create the culture where the basis for rewards and compensations is learning, which is supported by the business strategy and top management
5. Encouragement for flexibility and experimenting – organization encourages employees to take risk, to be innovative, to strive for new knowledge, to test new processes and develop new products and services
6. Employees evaluation - organizations create new organizational systems and internal environment which motivates every employee for self-improvement

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<sup>12</sup> Biljana Bogićević, Menadžment ljudskih resursa, Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade, 2003, page 174-175

## 2.1. Employees education in practice

Employee training is increasingly important HR activity because of economic globalization, strong competition, increasing needs for leadership, need for everyday knowledge improvement, need for attracting talented individuals, quality focus and rapid changes<sup>13</sup>. Some researches show that firms on the different types of employee education spend from 1.5% to 2% of the total annual salary budget. If this calculation includes indirect training costs (salaries of employees who attend trainings during working time and opportunity costs of lost productivity due to their absence), total training costs can reach 10% of total annual salary budget.

Increasing investments in education are result of accepting the standpoint that knowledge is a factor that makes the difference between success and failure, no matter if it is related to firms or employees inside the firms. Efficient training should have clearly defined objectives, to be coordinated with identified needs, to be planned and to provide learning experience<sup>14</sup>. Main objective of training should be to eliminate deficit in employee performance.

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<sup>13</sup> Biljana Bogičević, Menadžment ljudskih resursa, Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade, 2003, page 153

<sup>14</sup> ibidem, page 154

### 3. Research Design

The email survey research method is applied for the purpose of the thesis. This method was used mainly because of the financial and time limitations, but also because of the fact that the respondents were mostly decision makers with lack of time, so they preferred flexibility for survey participation.

In order to research employee training practice in the publishing industry in Serbia, sample was focused to employers' side or people in the firms accountable for human resource management, especially to education and training.

#### 3.1 Definition of the Problem

Using concepts of learning organization, hypothesis of the paper is:

- *Firms in the publishing industry in Serbia mostly implement employee's training programs that bring short-term results.*

In the contrary, Senge's theory of learning organization involves long-term strategy and systematic approach to the employee's knowledge that is of essential importance for the firm's sustainable growth and development. Beside that, Drucker's concept of knowledge worker also focuses employees as a strategic resource of the sustainable business. In this sense, a firm should care for its employee's everyday knowledge improvement, that should lead to its competitive advantage improvement and that way increased profitability. Employee training and development short-term orientation and lack of strategy in this field can jeopardize firm's performance in the long term, both related to market share and profitability.

### 3.2 Research Focus

Types of seminars that firms in the publishing industry in Serbia provide to their employees were analyzed, as well as the firms' training practice in general. It is important to check if firms from the mentioned industry are short or long term oriented to employee training and development, since the publishing industry is decreasing, but with many competitors. That way, it could be concluded how firms approach human resource role in the business success. It is important to find out if publishing firms consider training benefits to have a short or long-term character.

According to fast market development and still relatively undeveloped business practice related to human resource management, it is supposed that firms in publishing industry don't have a systematic approach related to employee training and development.

### 3.3 Methods of Research

*The e-mail survey* was carried out on the sample of 52 firms from the publishing industry in Serbia, in the second half of March and first week of April 2009. Respondents were employees from the HR sector involved in training/education, or persons generally involved in HR issues, in the smaller firms, that don't have formed HR sector. Respondents were from twenty municipalities, covering all regions in Serbia (Northern Serbia – Vojvodina, Belgrade region, Western Serbia, Central Serbia – Šumadija and South-Eastern Serbia).

A criteria for the sample definition was *the size of the firm*:

- a) Large publishing firms (over 250 employees);
- b) Medium sized publishing firms (50 to 250 employees) and
- c) Small publishing firms (less than 50 employees).

The stratified sampling was applied in this case (20% of sample to be large firms, 30% of the sample to be medium sized firms and 50% of the sample to be small

firms<sup>15</sup>), since probability sampling was applied inside every stratum. The following table shows the realized sample structure:

<b>Firm size ↓</b>						
<b>Type of publication →</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Periodical</b>	<b>Books</b>	<b>Mixed product line</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Large firms	2	2	3	3	10	19.2%
Medium sized firms	4	6	4	2	16	30.8%
Small firms	4	9	8	5	26	50%
Total	10	17	15	10	52	52

Table 1: The realized sample structure

The list of publishing firms was taken from the Serbian Business Registers Agency and Yellow Pages – Serbian Business Directory. Certain number of companies from every stratum was contacted, using the criteria of firm size. On the other side, it was also important to cover different products these firms offer on the market, so that way industry could be realistically presented and analyzed, which was reached in the realized sample.

Technique that was used for measuring attitudes was the choice technique with forced choice scale, except in a few cases with option “other”. That way, the space was left for answers that could also be important for the purpose of the study.

### 3.3.1. Limitations of the methodology

The sample is focused on the firms that publish printed publications, but also can have electronic or online editions of their products. This way, the intention was not to cover too broad segment of publishing firms (for example, movie industry etc). Bearing in mind the research method, the sample is relatively small, so the results should be taken with a reserve.

The survey was focused on the business seminars that firms provide and plan to provide for their employees in the future, which gives a relatively narrow approach to the employee training quality.

<sup>15</sup> approximation of the publishing industry size structure, since there are no relevant data available



## 4. Collection of Data

The survey was anonymous. The fieldwork was carried out in the second half of March and the first week of April 2009. Related to the survey, response rate was around 65%, which is relatively good in the Serbian market. Reasons of rejection were mostly related to the lack of time, but also confidentiality of the data. Since the survey was carried out via email, it was needed to call every relevant respondent before sending a questionnaire, to explain the purpose of the survey and guarantee every firm's/respondent's anonymity. It seemed to be a good strategy, since that way there was no need for the long cover letters. On the other side, direct contact to future respondents was important for building trust, so it provided relatively high level of response rate. It was needed to call every respondent approximately twice to remind them to fill out the questionnaire and that way give them a space for additional explanations. It was more difficult to get answers from the former state-owned publishing firms, since some of them retained old policies of undefined individual accountability and general confidentiality of the data. In the contrary, successful and dynamic medium sized firms were the most interested to participate in this survey, so the response rate was the highest in this case (around 85 per cent).

Pretest is done with two publishing firms. One of these was a subsidiary of an international consulting company with intensive publishing activities in Serbia. The other one was a domestic medium sized publishing firm. The aim of pretest was to check the questions relevance and accuracy, as well as their overall comprehensibility, so these could be modified and improved before the main fieldwork activities.

Filter question was: "Does your firm provide education (trainings) for its employees?". All of the contacted firms that think they do not provide trainings for the employees, didn't participate in the survey, since the research focus was on employee training practice in the firms that provide any kind of employees education and perceive it as a part of their business practice. It should be clarified that response rate was calculated from the respondents that positively answered on the filter question.

Finally, it is important to mention that some questions in the survey had to be defined in indirect way. The reason is related to the Serbian culture characteristics. Since it is a wide context culture with very noticeable collectivistic culture elements, indirect questions (related to the industry, not directly to the questioned firm) can give much more objective answers, than it is the case with direct questions.

## 5. Research Findings and Analysis

### 5.1. The account of results of business respondents in the publishing industry in Serbia

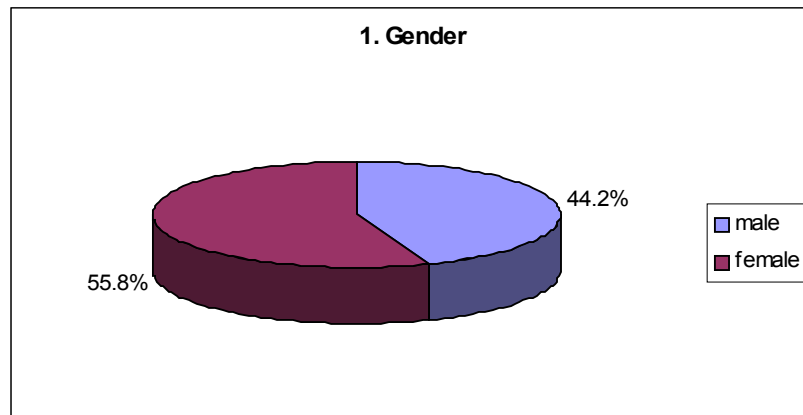


Figure 1: Gender structure of the sample

Gender structure of the sample truly represents Serbian population, since 55.8% of respondents were women. Beside mentioned, majority of employees in Serbia are women, except on the top management positions, where men are still a dominant group. Not all persons who are accountable for human resources and employee training are on the leading positions in firms, so it shouldn't affect the results.

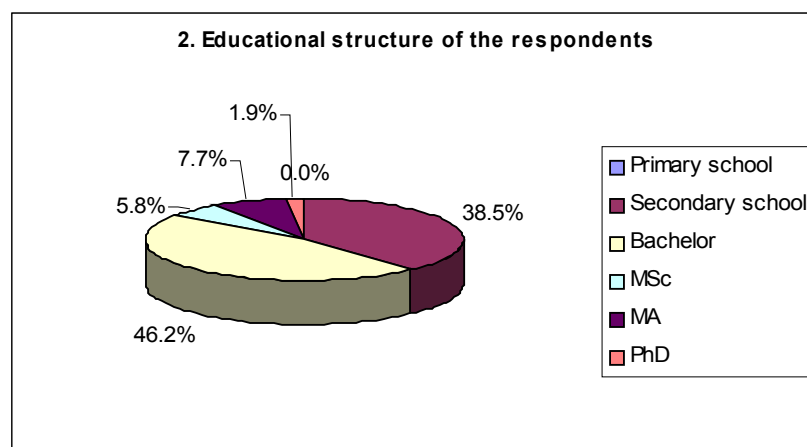


Figure 2: Educational structure of the respondents

Educational structure of the sample is relatively high, since more than a half of all respondents have a bachelor degree or higher level of education. No respondent had only primary school degree, since only one respondent had a PhD degree. Most of them had a bachelor degree (46.2%) and relatively high percentage of respondents (38.5%) had a secondary school degree. Despite educational structure of employees in Serbia, that is much lower than in the sample presented, publishing industry has higher educational structure than average, especially when it is spoken about departments or specialists who deal with human resource issues.

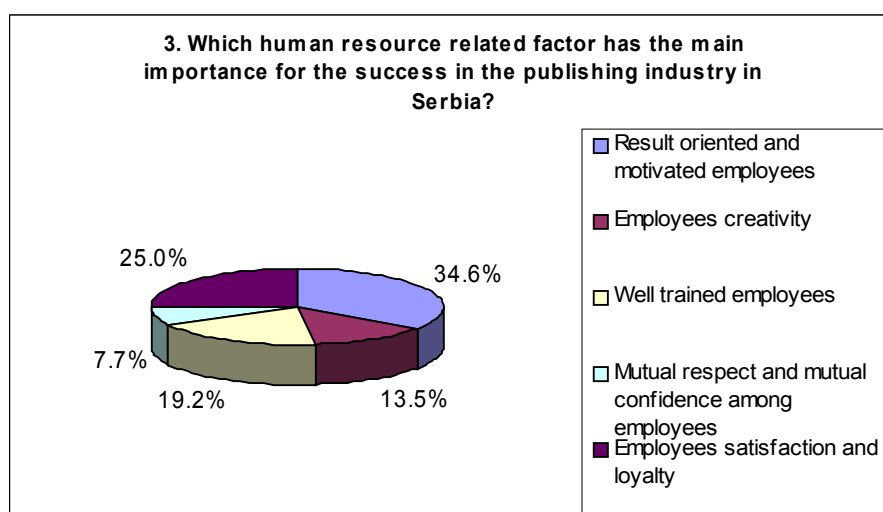


Figure 3: The key HR factors for business success in the industry

Asked on human resource related factors that are, by their opinion, the most important for the success in the publishing industry, about every third respondent (34.6%) said that these are result oriented and motivated employees, every fourth respondent said that it is employee satisfaction and loyalty, 19.2% mentioned it were well trained employees, since employees creativity (13.5%), mutual respect and mutual confidence among employees (7.7%) were perceived as relatively less important in this sense.

It can be seen that most of the companies insist on result orientation and probably performance that can be seen fast. The reason of it can be found in the highly competitive and decreasing market, numerous and strong competitors and need to think about everyday survival. Beside that, relatively high percentage in favour of employee satisfaction and loyalty can indicate characteristics of Serbian culture,

where loyalty is highly evaluated, rather than focus on employees satisfaction, although it could also be of great importance for the success of the company. Almost every fifth respondent thinks that it should be well trained employees, which puts importance of training/education on the third place. Finally, the least important in this case are shown to be mutual respect and mutual confidence, which by management theory, bring stability in human resource structure and long term business performance improvement. It can show some kind of short term education, but also lack of respondents knowledge on the concept.

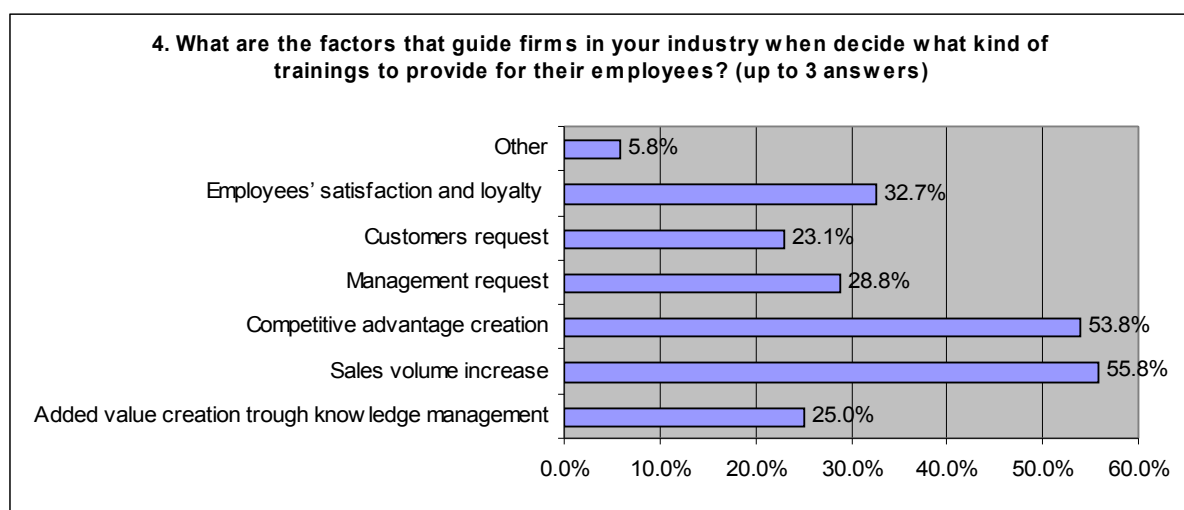


Figure 4: Decisions on employee training programs – main factors

Respondents were asked to give up to three answers on the question related to the factors that guide firms in publishing industry when decide what kind of trainings to provide for their employees. More than the half of all respondents said that the key factors are sales volume increase and competitive advantage creation (55.8% and 53.8%, respectively). It indicates a strong market orientation of publishing firms, as well as dominance of external factors that influence human resource management decisions, in this case, related to the training programs.

Almost every third respondent (32.7%) thinks that firm cares for employee satisfaction and loyalty when it is spoken about decisions on the training programs type, which is expected, if compare with answer on the previous question, where

every fourth respondent considered that as one of the most important human resource related factors for the success in the industry.

Management requirements are important for 28.8% of the respondents. It could be interesting in the sense of the need for planning and management role in systematic approach to employee education. Customer requirements are again an external factor that drive decisions on training programs in 23% of the cases. From the aspect of the publishing industry, this influence could be indirect, through the distribution channels which are very powerful in this industry, but also it could be direct, where customers, through readers' clubs or personal contact, influence relevant business decisions of the firms. Added value creation through knowledge management, that indicates understanding of knowledge management and learning organization concept is highly evaluated by 25% of all the respondents, which is encouraging for employee education practice development in the industry, bearing in mind the Serbian economy background and relative slowness of accepting new business concepts and practice.

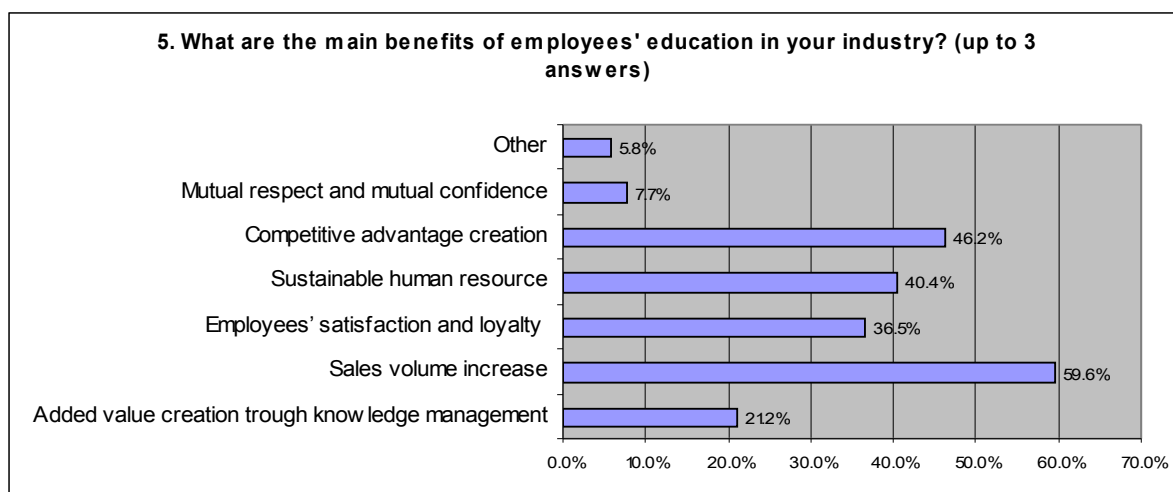


Figure 5: Main benefits of employee education

Related to benefits of employees education in the publishing industry in Serbia, respondents also could give up to 3 answers. This finding shows that the perceived benefits are related to market performance improvement (Sales volume increase – 59.6% and Competitive advantage creation – 46.2%). That way, most of the questioned firms are focused on direct and quick market results of employee training.

Sustainable human resource structure was important for 40.4% of the respondents, which means that the publishing companies tend to create human resource structure that will be stable in the longer period. Also, 36.5% questioned firms have opinion that employee satisfaction and loyalty are some of the main benefits of employee education in the publishing industry, which could be again compared with the previous questions, but anyway shows positive attitude to work force as one of the most important business resource, as well as one of the key firm's stakeholders. Added value creation through knowledge management, which connects sustainable business performance with long term human resource development approach is noticed by 21.2%. Similar to the previous question 7.7% of respondents said that mutual respect and mutual confidence among employees were a factor considered in this sense.

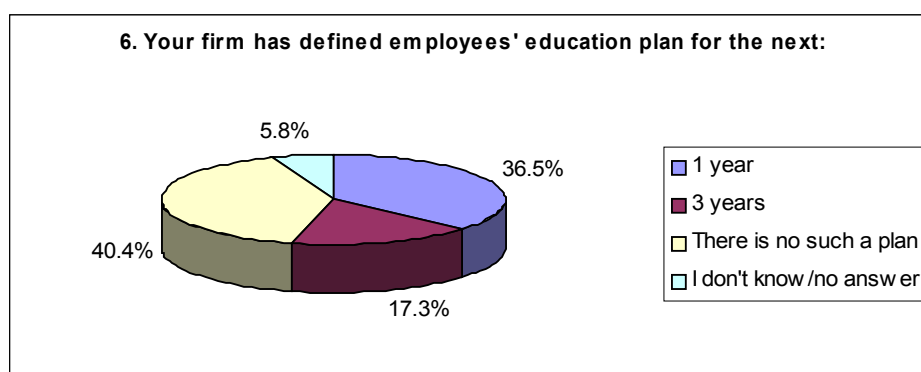


Figure 6: Employee education plan

Asked about employee education plan for the next period, more than one third of all respondents (36.5%) said that they have defined education plan for the period of one year, since 17.3% of all respondents have an employee education plan for the next 3 years, which makes 53.8% of the enterprises that have some kind of the education plan. Planning in the area of employees education and training is of the crucial importance for the results measuring and the employees education process improvement, so this also could be a positive trend in development of HR practice in the publishing industry in Serbia. Anyhow, having a plan doesn't mean that companies have long term approach to employee training and its results, which is the main focus of the research in this thesis. Finally, it should be easier to influence firms that have a plan to improve their attitudes and training programs, than the firms that have no plan in this area.

Related to the previously said, 2/5 of respondents have no plan for employees education, which gives great space for improvement. Finally, three questioned firms gave no specific answer to this question or refused to answer to it, which also puts them in the group where much should be done in the sense of employee training practice.

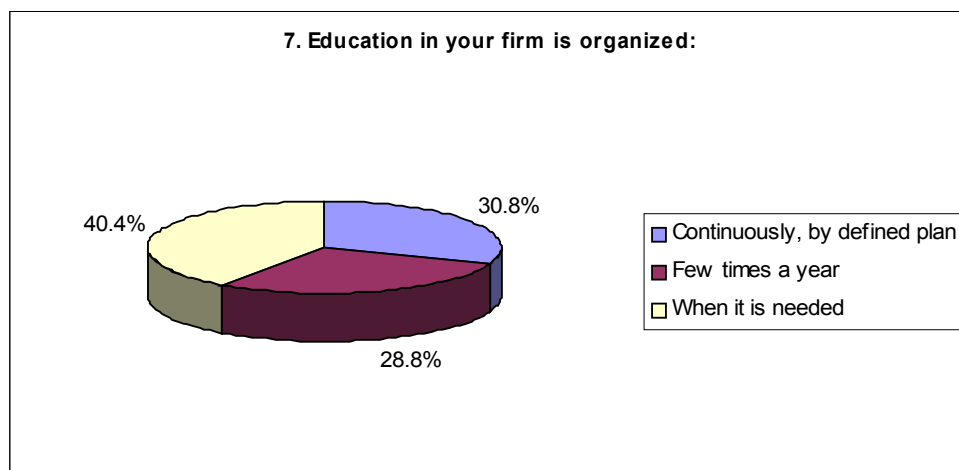


Figure 7: Employee education continuity

Speaking about frequency of employees education, 40.4% of all questioned companies educate their employees when they think "*that it is needed*". It shows lack of understanding of employee training role in the business success. It could also indicate lack of financial sources for even vital business activities, which is a chonical problem on the Serbian market, bearing in mind still undeveloped financial service market. It is especially problem for the smaller firms that have very limited capacities to compete with large firms, so these have to choose which is the most important for investment in the moment. That way, short term results are more important than longer term investments (for example, employee education), because short term means survival.

28.8% of the respondents organize employees education few times a year, 30.8% organize it continuously, by defined plan. It can be seen that 59.6% have some shedule of employees education, no metter if it is carried out by a defined plan or some other factor. In this case, findinings show that almost every third respondent understand importance of ongoing employees education, which is a good way to a



systematic approach to human resource training and development and its strategic potential for the long term business development.

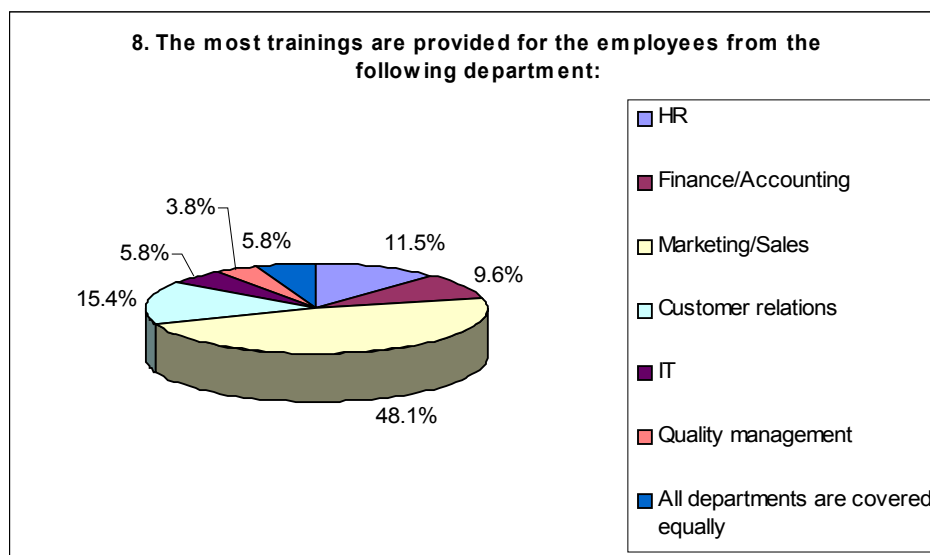


Figure 8: Departments by employee training intensity

Most of the business trainings in the publishing industry in Serbia are provided for the employees from Marketing/Sales department (48.1%) and Customer relations department (15.4%). It is important to make difference between these two departments, because the first is usually focused on distribution channels, which are very powerful in the publishing industry in Serbia, since those provide about 70% of total sales volume in the industry. Customer relations department is focused on final customers. Sometimes, direct sales is included in Marketing/Sales department, since Customers relations department deals with readers' clubs and long term demand development. Understanding the previously mentioned, Marketing/Sales department usually has short term business performance orientation, since Customers relations department can have both short and long term orientation.

Human resource (11.5%), Finance/Accounting (9.6%), IT department (5.8% each) and Quality management department (3.8%) are perceived as less important in the sense of need for education. Only three respondents said that their firm equally covers all of the business departments, understanding the importance for systematic approach to human resource education. In this moment, it is clearly seen that

publishing firms force current market results, pressured by strong competition and lack of financial sources.

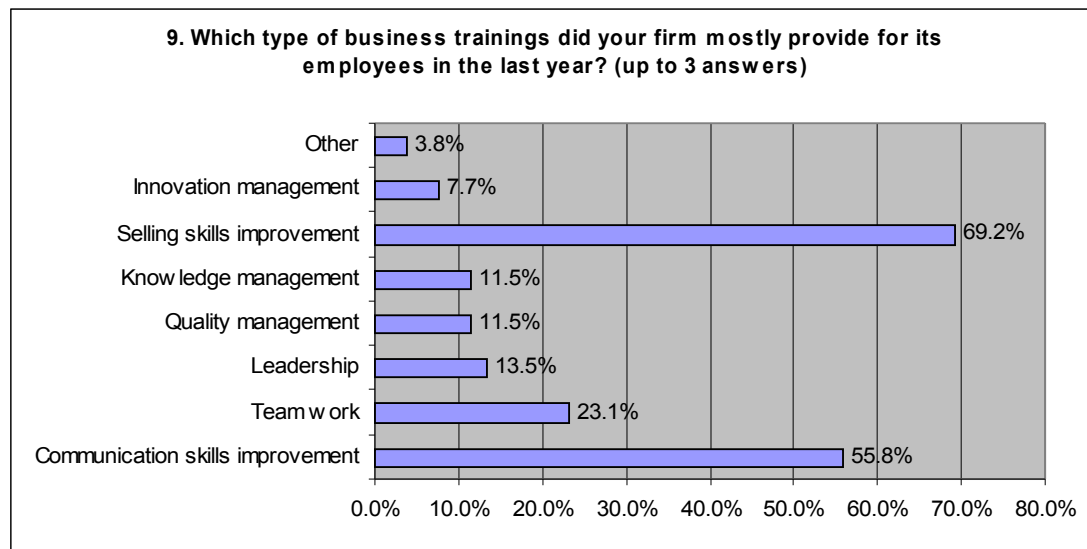


Figure 9: The most frequent trainings

Questioned about the type of business seminars that respondent's firm mostly provided for its employees in the last year, selling skills improvement training was perceived as the most frequent by 69.2%, as well as Communication skills improvement (55.8%), which is similar to the previous findings. It is followed by Team work (23.1%), Leadership (13.5%), Knowledge management (11.5%), Quality management (11.5%), Innovation management (7.7%), trainings that have longer term perspective than the first two ranged. This finding directly indicates employees education orientation of the publishing firms in Serbia in the current moment.

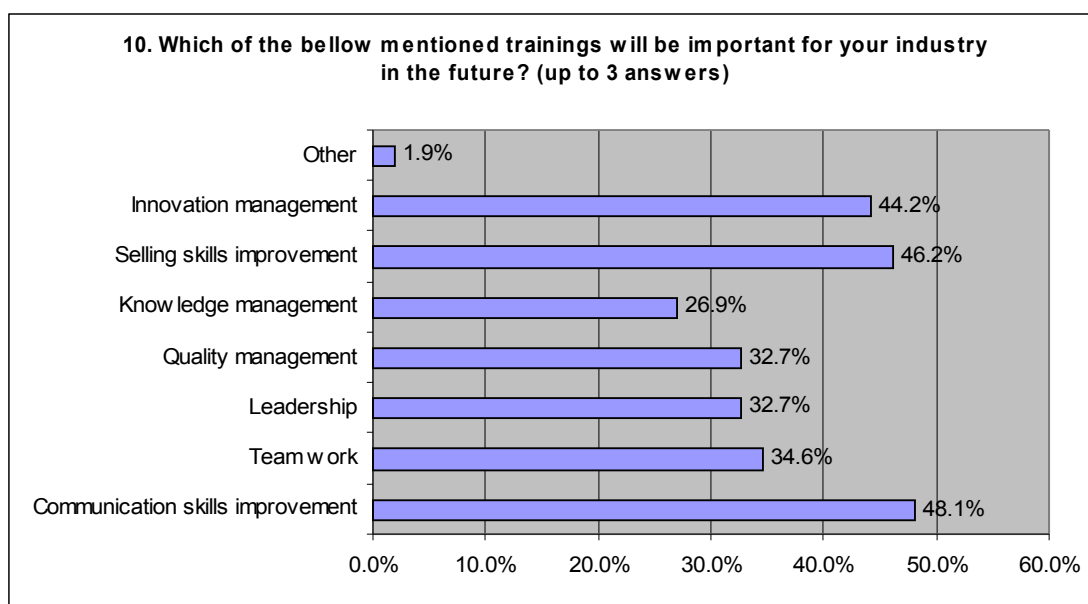


Figure 10: Business trainings important for the industry in the future

Relatively connected to the previous question, respondents were asked to express their attitude and evaluate which business trainings will be important for the publishing industry in the future. Perceived as the most important are Communication skills improvement (48.1%) and Selling skills improvement (46.2%). Anyway, Innovation management is also perceived as important (46.2%). These are followed by Team work training (34.6%), Leadership and Quality management (32.7%, each) and Knowledge management (26.9%). This question was given to the firms so they could systematically approach the problem of employees' education, to distinguish themselves from the individual current business problems and think about really important education for their employees. It is a shift from "what is the reality" to "what it should be, what is really important". Results show that communication skills improvement and selling skills are on top of their importance, but many others have a trend of strong increase, comparing to the previous question. It is especially evident for Innovation management training (from 7.7% to even 44.2%), but also Quality management (from 11.5% to 32.7%) and the other business trainings listed in the question. Serious potential of the publishing industry in Serbia should be noticed by employee education services providers which should focus efforts on this target market.

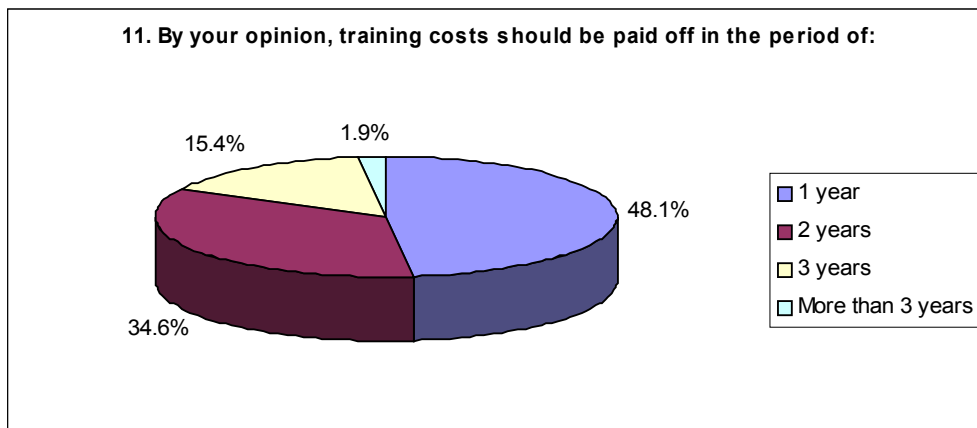


Figure 11: Expectable training costs payoff period

Interesting question for the analysis could be expected period in which training costs should be paid off. Almost every second business respondent (48.1%) thinks that it should be within one year period, 34.6% of the questioned said that it should be the period within 2 years, since training program should be profitable within 3 years for 15.4% firms. Only one respondent emphasized that the period of more than 3 years is acceptable in this sense. Publishing firms mostly expect to reach short term profitability from human resource investments, which is rarely possible in business practice. This question is directly related to the set hypothesis, so one can easily evaluate publishing firms' approach to human resource education and knowledge.

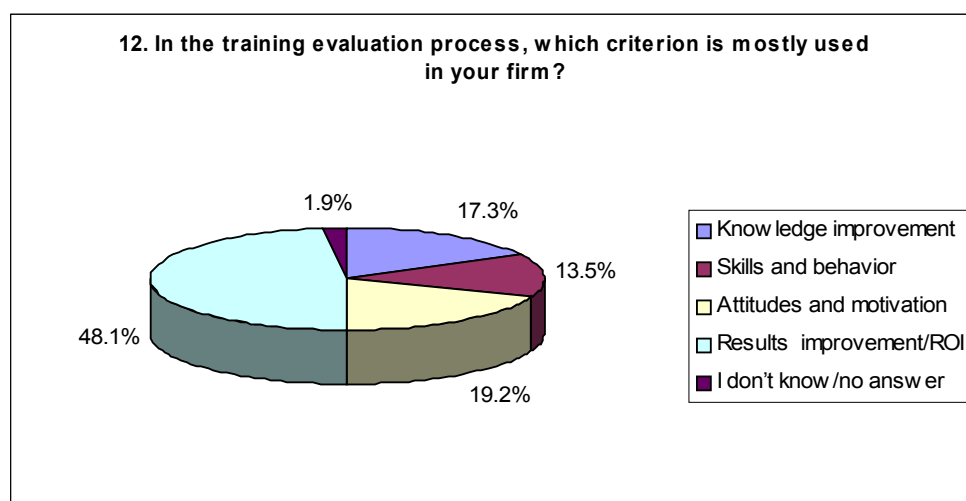


Figure 12: Criteria of the employee training evaluation process

Almost one half of the questioned companies use Results improvement and/or Return on investment as the main criteria for training evaluation process. 19.2% of the respondents think that changes in attitudes and motivation are the most relevant for the evaluation process, since almost every seventh respondent analyze changes in skills and behavior. Knowledge improvements as the most important evaluation criteria use 17.3% of the questioned publishing firms. If connect with the previous question where every second respondents said that they want profit from employee education within one year, it strenghten the findings related to the short term orientation of employees education in the publishing industry in Serbia.

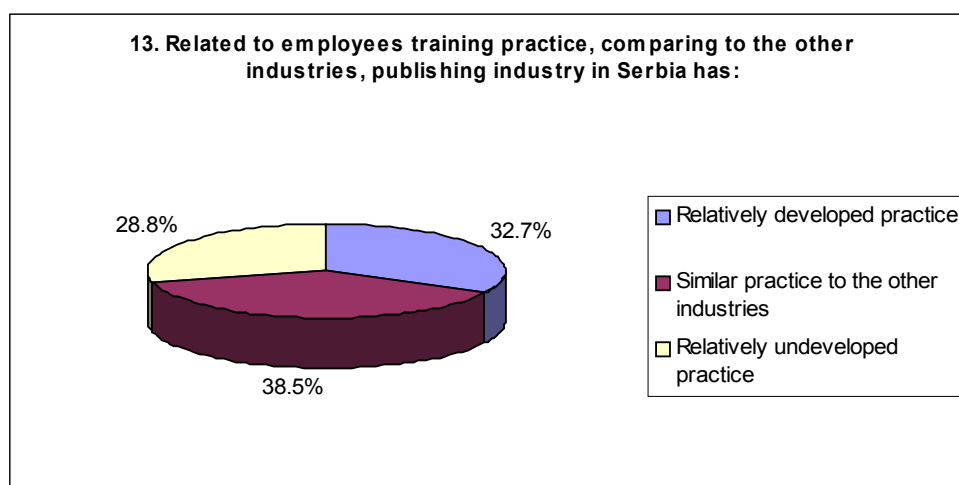


Figure 13: Comparison with other industries

The firms were also questioned how they position publishing industry, related to employee training practice. It can be seen that 38.5% of the respondents think that publishing industry has a similar training practice to other industries, every third respondent think that publishing industry has better employee training practice than most of other industries, since 28.8% of the questioned firms said that publishing industry has relatively undeveloped training practice. It can be said that all of three answers got relatively similar percentages, so the firms don't have some specific attitude toward their employee training practice positioning among industries in Serbia. Comparative analyses of different size firms in the industry could clarify these findings.

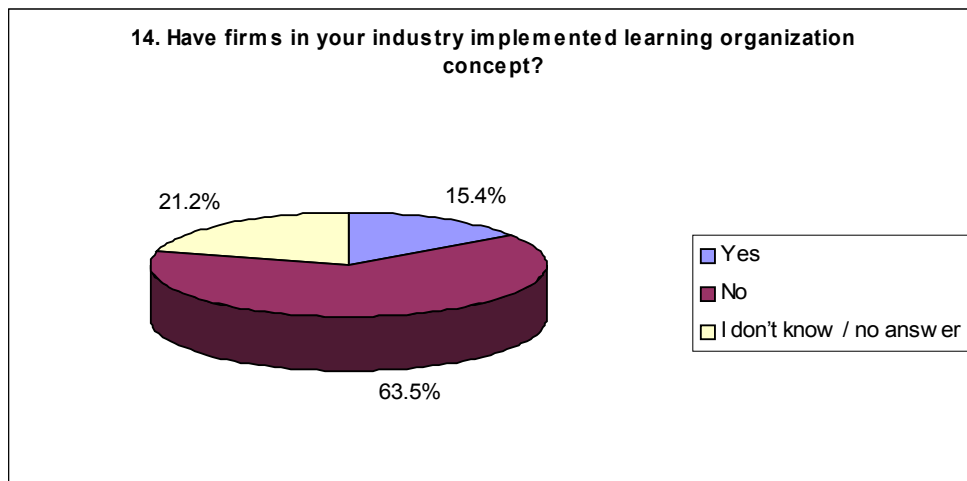


Figure 14: Implementation of the learning organization concept

“The concept of learning organization is still not implemented in the publishing firms in Serbia”, said 63.5% of the questioned firms. 15.4% of the respondents think that this concept is implemented in the publishing firms in Serbia, since even 21.2% of the respondents didn’t know the answer to this question. This is an evident proof that the publishing firms in Serbia still have lack of knowledge on this concept and still didn’t implement it in their business practice. It is also indicated by the previous research findings.

## 5.2. Comparison of employee training practice in the publishing firms of different size

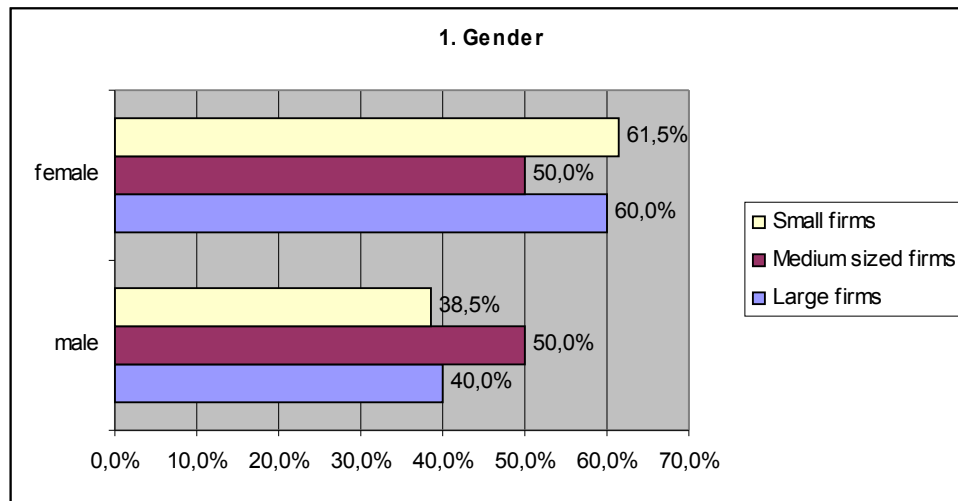


Figure 15: Gender structure of the sample – comparative analysis

Gender structure is not so important in the sense of the comparative analysis, although in medium sized companies there was equal number of male and female respondents, while in large and small firms women were in majority.

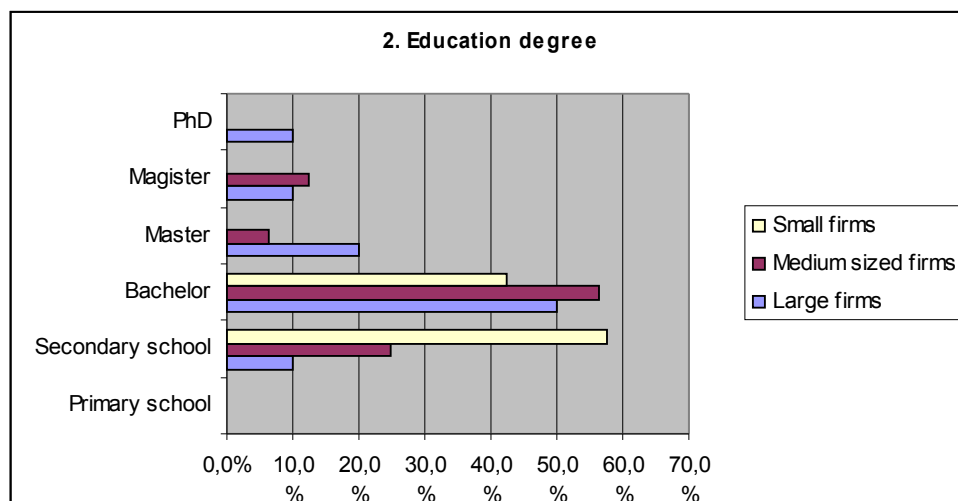


Figure 16: Educational structure of the respondents – comparative analysis

Education structure could be interesting in this case. Noticeably, the highest educational structure have the respondents from the large companies, since the respondents from the small firms have relatively worse educational structure (over

half of questioned persons from small companies have a secondary school degree and no of the respondents from that stratum have higher level of education than bachelor degree). Respondents from the medium sized companies have, in average, a relatively high level of education (56.3% of the respondents from the medium sized publishing firms have a bachelor degree, and 25% of them have a higher degree of that), although it is not so good as in the large companies.

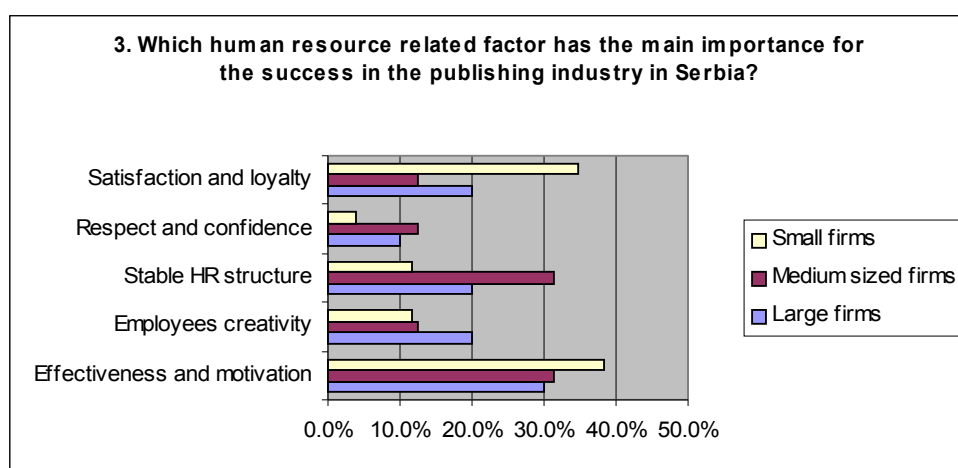


Figure 17: The key HR factors for business success in the industry – comparative analysis

Speaking about the key human resource related factors of success in the publishing industry in Serbia, these strata have similar results. In fact, Result oriented and motivated employees are the first ranked for the large, medium sized and small publishing companies. Well trained employees are important for the medium sized companies in 31.2% of the cases, while 20% of the respondents in the large firms and 11.5% of the respondents in the small publishing firms share that opinion, so the main focus of the questioned firms is not on employees development, but on use of their current knowledge, skills and attitudes. Every third respondent in small firm said that Satisfaction and loyalty are the key human resource factor of success in their industry. This can be explained by organization culture in small firms where people act like in a family, usually do more jobs at once and that way are sometimes irreplaceable. It is very important to have them loyal and satisfied, since it is often crucial for the firm's survival. Also, as previously mentioned, it could indicate one of the main Serbian culture characteristics, where loyalty is highly evaluated. It is more



noticeable in the small than in the large firms, since small organizations are less influenced by the new business trends.

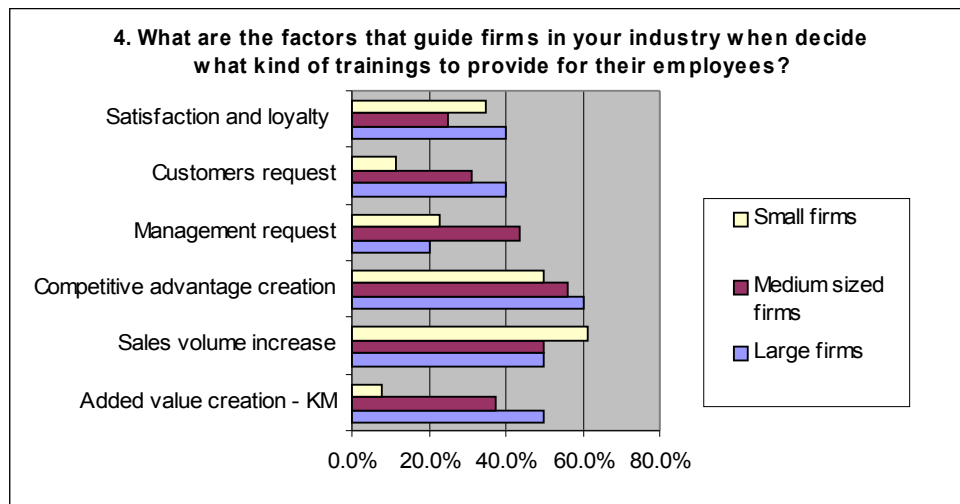


Figure 18: Decisions on employee training programs (main factors) – comparative analysis

Bearing in mind the key factors that guide the companies in deciding which training program to choose, the majority of the companies in all the stratum think that these are Sales volume increase and Competitive advantage creation. Beside that, one half of the respondents from the large firms said that it could be Added value creation through knowledge management, which is a significant proportion in this sense and shows elements of good practice in the employee education practice development. It is also interesting that 43.8% of the respondents from the medium sized firms emphasized Management request as one of the key factors of decisions on the training programs, which could indicate that these firms have a strong leadership that guide them through the dynamic and very competitive industry, but also could mean that “it only matters what the boss says”.

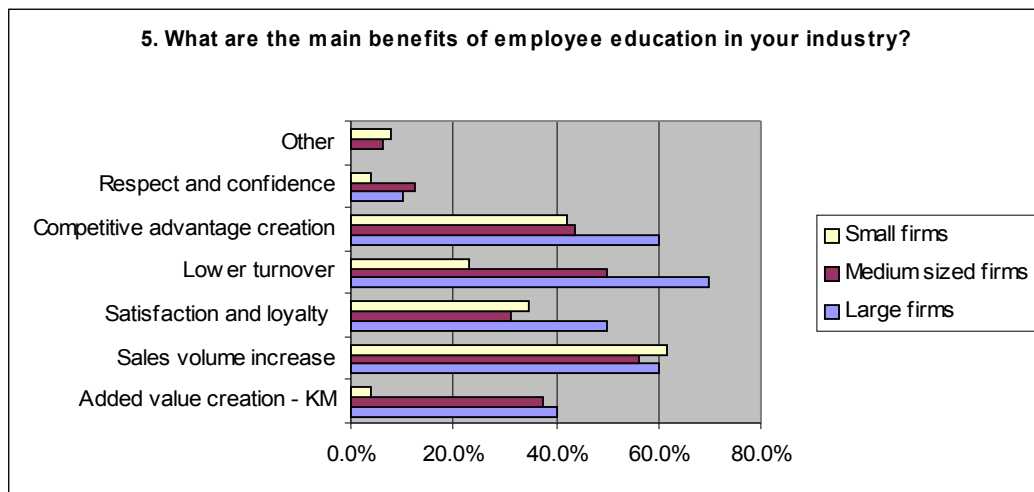


Figure 19: Main benefits of employee education – comparative analysis

The main benefits of education are relatively similar for the all groups of firms. These are Sales volume increase and Competitive advantage creation, as it mentioned before. Anyway, exception in this case are the large firms that highly evaluated previously mentioned factors (60%), but Sustainable HR structure was on of the main benefits in even 70% of the cases. This answer also received interest of every second medium sized company, since it is a noticeably lower procentage in the case of the small firms (23.1%). Satisfaction and loyalty is the most important for one half of the large enterprises. In the same time, only every third SME thinks that the mentioned factor is really among the main benefits of the employee education. These data show that the majority of the questioned companies are concentrated on the visible market benefits, so they see it first as a result of employee training programs.

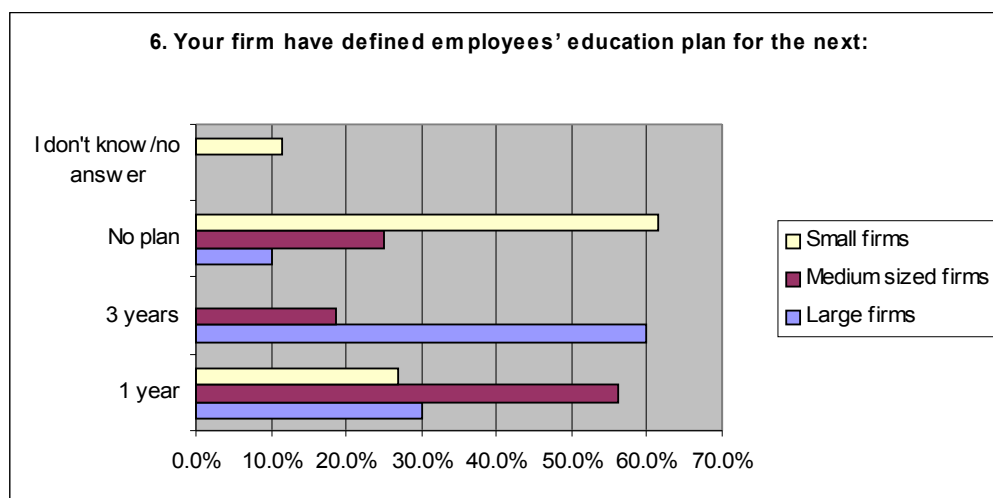


Figure 20: Employee education plan – comparative analysis

Bearing in mind the question related to the employee education plans of the questioned companies, the result is evident:” The smaller firm, the poorer planing”, which should be logical. Most of the large firms (60%) generally plan employee training programs for the period of 3 years, since none of the small firms does that. Most of the medium sized firms (56.3%) plan employees education for the current year, comparing to the 30% of the large companies and 26.9% of the small publishing firms, which do the same. Surprisingly high number of the publishing firms don’t plan trainings for their employees at all, even 3/5 of the small firms from the sample and one third of the medium sized firms. It can be concluded that lack of planing is probably one of the biggest problems related to the training programs and education practice of the publishing firms in Serbia.

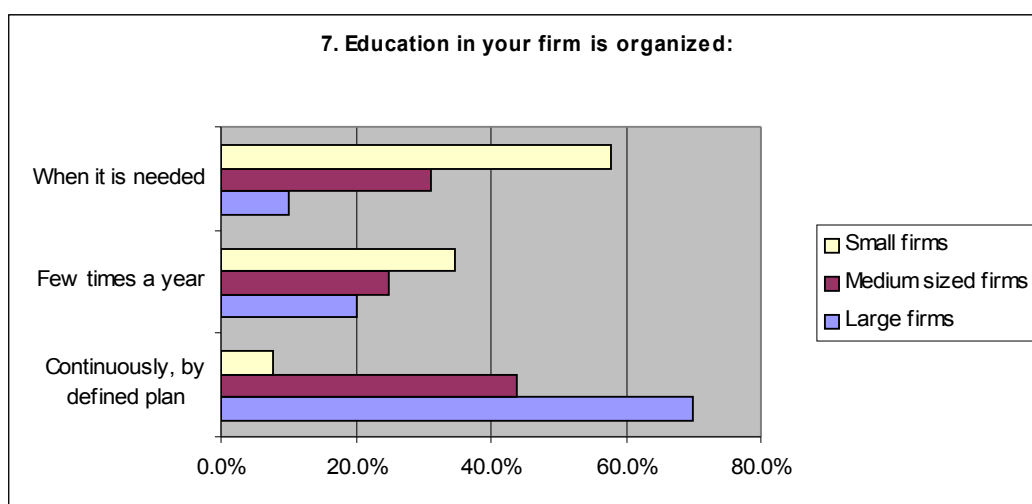


Figure 21: Employee education continuity – comparative analysis

Seven out of ten large firms usually organize continual employee education, by defined plan, which is also the case with 43.8% of the medium sized firms and only two small firms (7.7%). On the other side, most of the small enterprises (57.7%) organize trainings for the employees “when it is needed” and the same do 31.3% of the medium sized. It indicates that these organization don’t have strategic approach to the knowledge of their employees, but react from case to case. Also, significant number of SMEs organize trainings few times a year, some of those using defined plan, the others by habit or tradition. Continual education of employees is one of the key prepositions for the systematic approach to the employee knowledge

improvement. If connect this question with the one related to the planning, much should be done on raising of HR responsables' awareness on importance of planning.

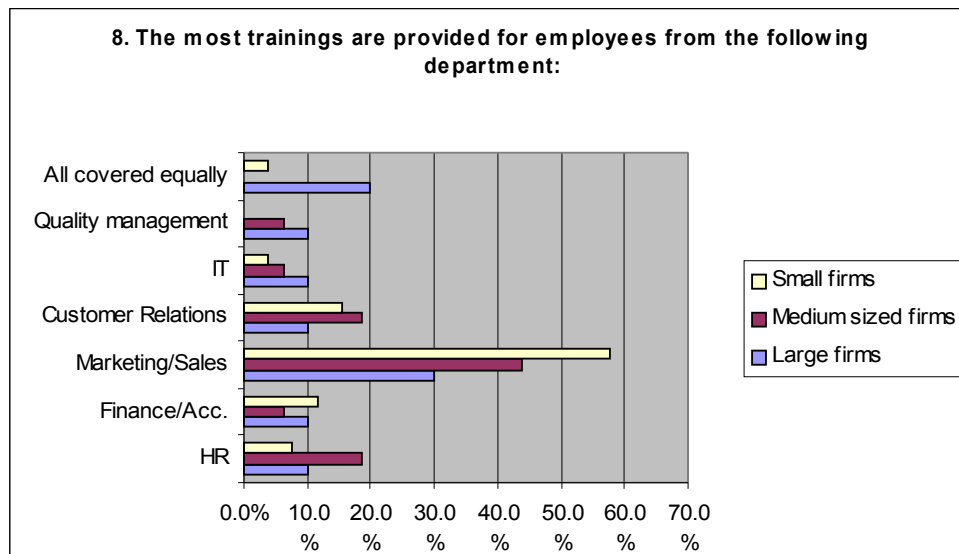


Figure 22: Departments by employee training intensity – comparative analysis

It can be noticed that most of the companies from all the stratum educate Marketing/Sales department on the first place. On the other side, only every fifth large firm equally covers all of the business departments by business trainings, none of the medium sized and only one small firm. These findings are in accordance with the previous data obtained.

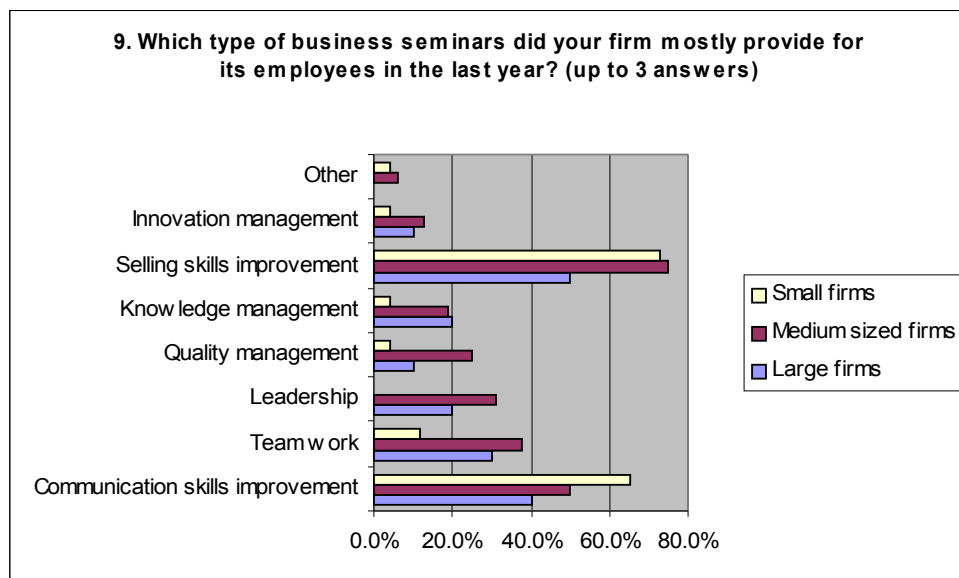


Figure 23: The most frequent trainings – comparative analysis

Bearing in mind above mentioned, it shouldn't be a surprise that the trainings related to the Selling skills and Communication skills improvement are usually demanded by the publishing firms, no matter of which size these are. It is the most evident in the case of the small firms, in which case *myopia* related to human resources education and development is the most noticeable. Larger firms also show interest for some other trainings, like Teamwork and Leadership, but in a limited extent. Trainings on quality management are mostly interesting for the medium sized firms (25%), which is not strange, since these fast developing businesses are trying to position themselves on the national and regional markets, so the quality should be something that gives them an opportunity to do that.

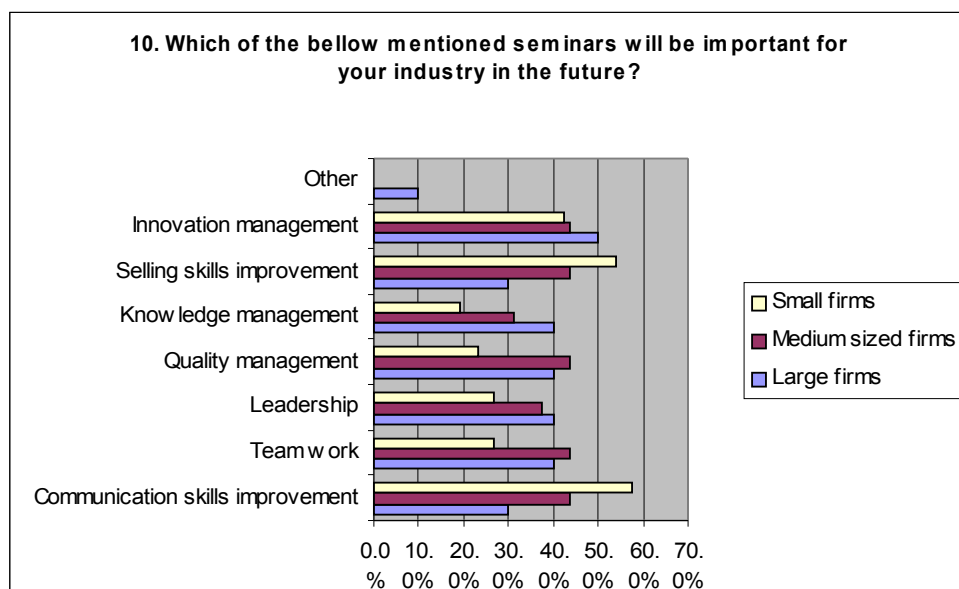


Figure 24: Business trainings important for the industry in the future – comparative analysis

Asking the question in indirect way, the questioned firms were able to say what “should be”, out of their own reality and daily problems. That way, they could express more rational attitudes toward employee education. It affected the results dramatically, so the firms think that all of the listed business trainings will be important for the industry in the future. No big differences appeared among the stratum.

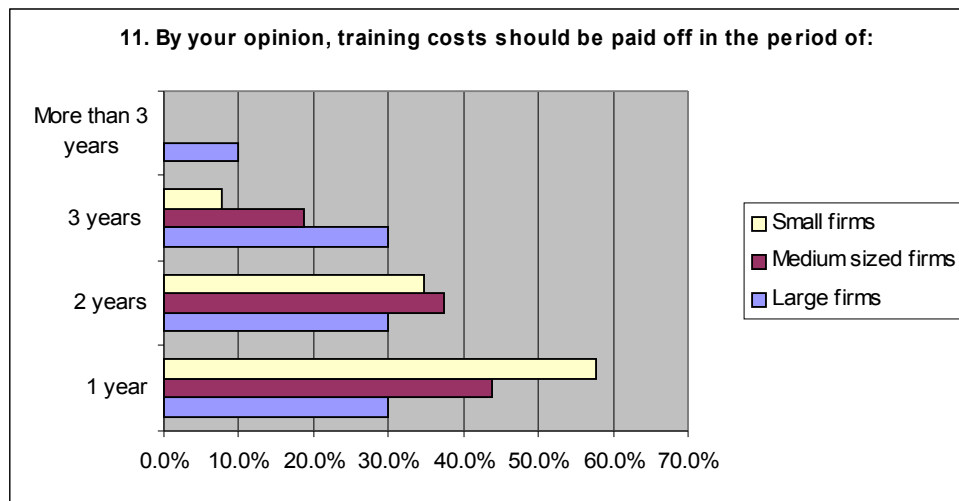


Figure 25: Expectable training costs payoff period – comparative analysis

Expectations related to the training costs are important to be observed because these directly show a firm's time orientation related to the employee education. In this case, the large publishing firms had relatively shared opinions, but the serious majority of the SMEs were short term oriented, so they expect training costs to be paid off in the period of 1 year, in the less number of cases payoff period of 2 years.

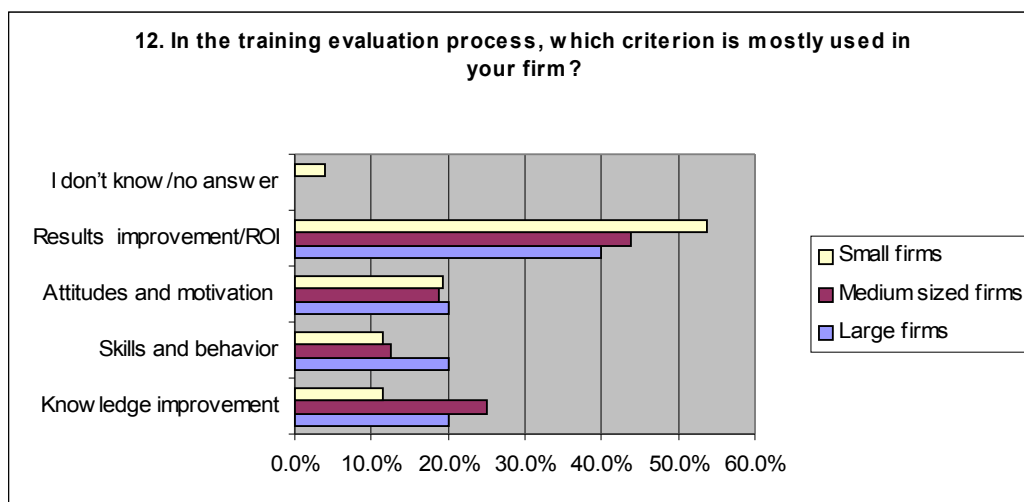


Figure 26: Criteria of the employee training evaluation process – comparative analysis

The main criteria of trainings evaluation is Result improvement/ROI in all of the stratums. Beside that, every fourth of the medium sized firms use knowledge improvement as the main criteria for the trainings evaluation, which could be a good step to a long term approach to the employees as an important business resource. Other criteria have relatively similar proportion in all of the cases.

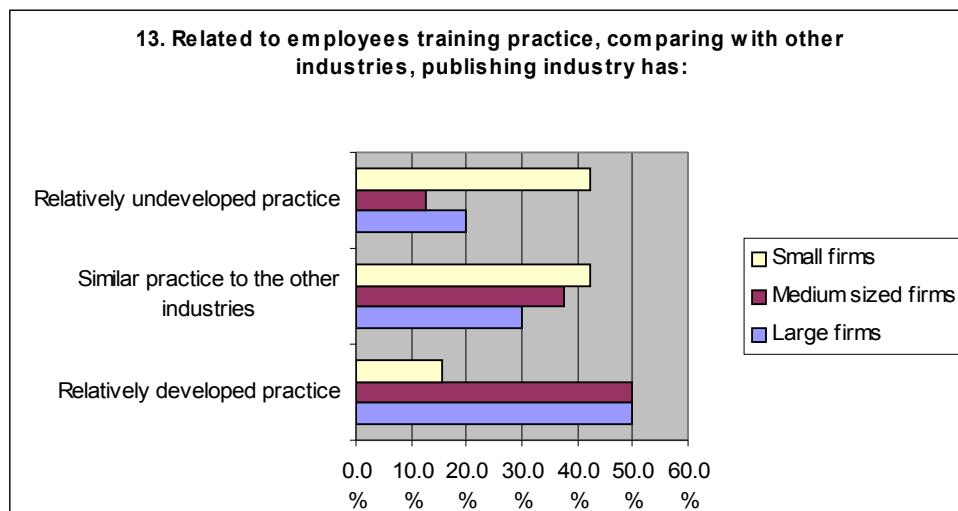


Figure 27: Comparison with other industries – comparative analysis

Respondents are optimistic related to the comparison of the employee training practice in the publishing and other industries in Serbia. Most of the respondents in all the strata think that the publishing industry has better or at least the similar employee training practice as the other industries. The medium sized firms are the most optimistic related to the question, since the small firms are the least optimistic in the case. Anyway, the positive approach could be both advantage and disadvantage in the process of changing the attitudes towards new trends on the employee education practice development.

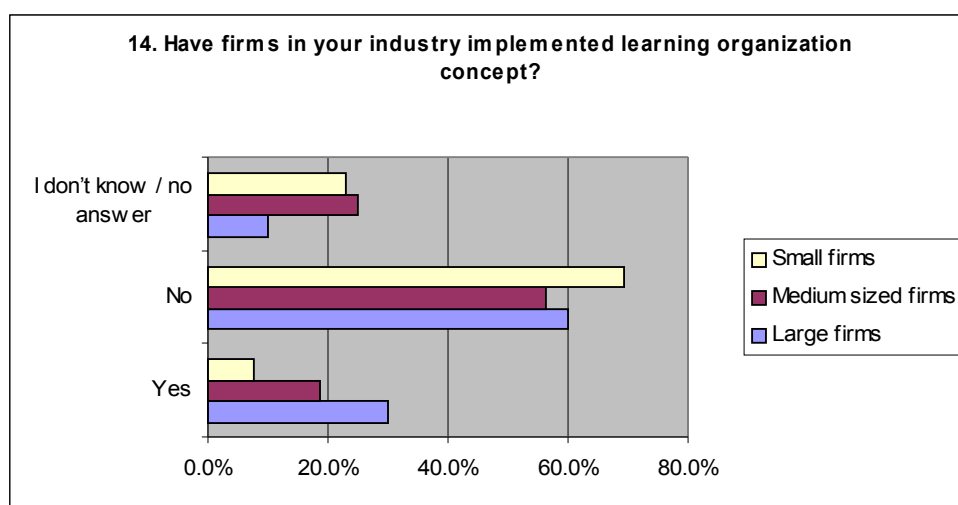


Figure 28: Implementation of the learning organization concept – comparative analysis

Most of the respondents from all the strata think that the concept of learning organization is still not applied in the publishing industry in Serbia. Significant number of the respondents didn't even know the answer to the question (even 25% of the medium sized and 23.1% of the small firms). Every third out of ten respondent from large firms think that the concept is implemented in the industry, so the big businesses are the most optimistic in the case, since the small firms are the most pessimistic again. It indicates that the small publishing enterprises will need the most of time to be encouraged, educated and to reach new trends in the field of the employee education practice.



## **6. Conclusion and recommendations**

According to the research findings presented in this thesis, it can be said that the publishing industry in Serbia is relatively young in understanding benefits that employee education can bring to the business. Some of the companies do not have relevant knowledge needed to understand all the advantages that systematic, long term oriented approach can bring to their business, which is mainly related to the small and medium sized firms in the industry. Large companies have noticeably more developed employee training practice, but still much should be done to close these to the best business cases in the area of employee education and training. Lack of planning is probably one of the biggest problems related to the training programs and employee education practice of the publishing firms in Serbia.

Most of the questioned companies are oriented to fast results and selective approach to need for employees ongoing education, mainly because of the industry characteristics and strong competition, but also lack of knowledge and poor implementation of modern business concepts and practice in this field. It is the reason it can be said that the hypothesis of this research is proved. Firms in the publishing industry in Serbia mostly implement employee trainings programs that bring short-term results.

On the other side, trend of positive changes in the industry is evident, so some of the firms also show interest for trainings that influence long-term business results and employee satisfaction. Again, the leaders are the large publishing firms.

It is evident that concept of learning organization still didn't gain its ground, but there is a serious potential for improvements. In that sense, the medium sized publishing firms have the biggest potential for short terms improvements, due to their attitudes and assess to the needed financial sources. Small firms have that potential in the long term, changing their attitudes and strenghtening their both market and financial position.

Lessons learned from this research should be useful both for the publishing firms and training services providers.

On the first place, forcing sales volume can bring only short-term results. I can be said that majority of the companies in this industry are forcing short-term results, focusing their employee training budgets to the marketing/sales departments. Forcing the sales volume, companies are strengthening competition on the publishing market but in a way that is not sustainable, hence neglect other factors of business success: continual quality improvement, satisfied employees, good relations with all relevant stakeholders etc. Only a quality educated team can cover and control all of the mentioned factors. So the relevant decision makers in the publishing firms should constantly think about education and knowledge improvement of all of the employees, not only of those who will bring instant business results improvement. On the other side, they should find out more about the employee trainings and education practice in the successful publishing and other similar companies worldwide and learn which model of it will be the most suitable for the Serbian business environment. Finally, the publishing firms in Serbia should generally contemplate more about the trends and concepts of organizational learning both on theoretical and practical level and tend to implement it in their everyday business practice. Serbia is definitely a part of the global economy, so the relevant decision makers should always have it on mind when think about their employee education and development.

The research findings and analysis suggest that business training services providers should approach publishing firms with great interest and invest in demand of this perspective market segment. Beside trainings related to sales and communication skills, which the publishing companies are already interested in, business training services providers can also offer to them a wide range of other business trainings – Innovation management, Leadership, Team work, Knowledge management, Quality management etc. Also, in the process of the training practice development, business trainings providers can offer trainings for business departments that are still not enough covered by training programs – such as IT department, HR department, Quality management department etc. It is already mentioned that the large, especially medium sized firms have the biggest potential for the training practice and

employee education practice improvement in the short term, since the small publishing firms have that potential in the long term. The business training services providers should have it in mind when decide to enter this market segment, or improve the relevant market position. Finally, they should promote the importance of continual employee education and educate business decision makers on benefits it could bring to their business.

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## Appendix 3: Questionnaire

Questionnaire is anonymous, therefore you are asked to answer the questions sincerely. Received information will not be given to the competition nor misused in any other way.

A. Name of the firm\_\_\_\_\_

B. Size of the firm:

- a) Large firm (over 250 employees)
- b) Medium sized firm (50 to 250) employees
- c) Small firm (less than 50 employees)

C. Type of publications

- a) Dailies
- b) Periodicals
- c) Books
- d) Mixed product line

1. Gender of the respondent:

- a) Male
- b) Female

2. What degree do you possess?

- a) Primary school
- b) Secondary school
- c) Bachelor
- d) MSc
- e) MA
- f) Ph.D.

3. Which human resource related factor has the main importance for the success in the publishing industry in Serbia?

- a) Result oriented and motivated employees
- b) Employees creativity
- c) Well trained employees
- d) Mutual respect and mutual confidence among employees
- e) Employees satisfaction and loyalty
- f) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What are the factors that guide firms in your industry when decide what kind of trainings to provide for their employees?

(up to 3 answers can be chosen from the list bellow)

- a) Added value creation trough knowledge management
- b) Sales volume increase
- c) Competitive advantage creation/improvement
- d) Management requirements
- e) Customer's requirements
- f) Employee satisfaction and loyalty improvement
- g) Other:\_\_\_\_\_



5. What are the main benefits of employee education in your industry?

(up to 3 answers can be chosen from the list bellow)

- a) Added value creation through knowledge management
- b) Sales volume increase
- c) Employee satisfaction and loyalty improvement
- d) Lower turnover
- e) Competitive advantage creation/improvement
- f) Sustainable human resource
- g) Mutual respect and mutual confidence among employees
- h) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Your firm has defined employee training plan for the next:

- a) 1 year
- b) 3 years
- c) There is no such a plan
- d) I don't know

7. Education in your firm is organized:

- a) Continuously, by defined plan
- b) Few times a year
- c) When it is needed

8. The most trainings are provided for employees from the following department:

- a) HR
- b) Finance/Accounting
- c) Marketing/Sales
- d) Customer Relations
- e) IT
- f) Quality management
- g) All departments are covered equally
- h) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which type of business seminars your firm mostly provided for its employees in the last year? (up to 3 answers can be chosen from the list bellow)

- a) Communication skills improvement
- b) Team work
- c) Leadership
- d) Quality management
- e) Knowledge management
- f) Selling skills improvement
- g) Innovation management
- h) Other:

10. Which of the bellow mentioned seminars would be important for your industry in the future? (up to 3 answers can be chosen from the list bellow)

- a) Communication skills improvement
- b) Team work
- c) Leadership
- d) Quality management
- e) Knowledge management
- f) Selling skills improvement
- g) Innovation management
- h) Other:

11. By your opinion, training costs should be paid off in the period of:

- a) 1 year
- b) 2 years
- c) 3 years
- d) More than 3 years
- e) I don't know

12. In the training evaluation process, which criteria is mostly used in your firm?

- a) Knowledge improvement
- b) Skills and behavior improvement
- c) Attitudes and motivation improvement
- d) Results improvement / ROI
- e) I don't know

13. Related to employee training practice, comparing to the other industries, publishing industry has:

- a) Relatively developed practice
- b) Similar practice to the other industries
- c) Relatively undeveloped practice
- d) I don't know

14. Have firms in your industry implemented learning organization concept?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't know

Thank you for your patience and help!

## Appendix 4: Survey-data processing codes

A. Name of the firm: \_\_\_\_\_ - number 1-52

B. Size of the firm:

Large firm - 1

Medium sized firm - 2

Small firm - 3

C. Type of publications

Dailies - 1

Periodicals - 2

Books - 3

Mixed product line - 4

1. Gender of the respondent:

Male - 1

Female - 2

2. What degree do you possess?

Primary school - 1

Secondary school - 2

Bachelor - 3

MSc - 4

MA - 5

Ph.D. - 6

3. Which human resource related factor has the main importance for the success in the publishing industry in Serbia?

Result oriented and motivated employees - 1

Employee's creativity - 2

Well-trained employees - 3

Mutual respect and mutual confidence among employees - 4

Employee's satisfaction and loyalty - 5

Other - 6

4. What are the factors that guide firms in your industry when decide what kind of trainings to provide for their employees?

(up to 3 answers can be chosen from the list bellow)

Added value creation trough knowledge management - 1

Sales volume increase - 2

Competitive advantage creation/improvement - 3

Management requirements - 4

Customer's requirements - 5

Employee satisfaction and loyalty improvement - 6

Other - 7

5. What are the main benefits of employee education in your industry?

(up to 3 answers can be chosen from the list bellow)

Added value creation through knowledge management - 1

Sales volume increase - 2

Employee satisfaction and loyalty improvement - 3

Lower turnover - 4

Competitive advantage creation/improvement - 5

Sustainable human resource - 6

Mutual respect and mutual confidence among employees - 7

Other - 8

6. Your firm has defined employee training plan for the next:

1 year - 1

3 years - 2

There is no such a plan - 3

I don't know / no answer - 4

7. Education in your firm is organized:

Continuously, by defined plan - 1

Few times a year - 2

When it is needed - 3

8. The most trainings are provided for employees from the following department:

HR - 1

Finance/Accounting - 2

Marketing/Sales - 3

Customer relations - 4

IT - 5

Quality management - 6

All departments are covered equally - 7

Other - 8

9. Which type of business seminars your firm mostly provided for its employees in the last year? (up to 3 answers can be chosen from the list bellow)

Communication skills improvement

Teamwork - 1

Leadership - 2

Quality management - 3

Knowledge management - 4

Selling skills improvement - 5

Innovation management - 6

Other - 7

10. Which of the bellow mentioned seminars would be important for your industry in the future? (up to 3 answers can be chosen from the list bellow)

Communication skills improvement - 1

Teamwork - 2  
Leadership - 3  
Quality management - 4  
Knowledge management - 5  
Selling skills improvement - 6  
Innovation management - 7  
Other - 8

11. By your opinion, training costs should be paid off in the period of:

1 year - 1  
2 years - 2  
3 years - 3  
More than 3 years - 4  
I don't know / no answer - 5

12. In the training evaluation process, which criteria is mostly used in your firm?

Knowledge improvement - 1  
Skills and behavior improvement - 2  
Attitudes and motivation improvement - 3  
Results improvement / ROI - 4  
I don't know / no answer - 5

13. Related to employee training practice, comparing to the other industries, publishing industry has:

Relatively developed practice - 1  
Similar practice to the other industries - 2  
Relatively undeveloped practice - 3  
I don't know / no answer - 4

14. Have firms in your industry implemented learning organization concept?

Yes - 1  
No - 2  
I don't know / no answer - 3

## Appendix 5 - Research results (tables)

<b>B. Size of the firm</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
large firm	10	19.2%
medium sized	16	30.8%
small firm	26	50.0%
total	52	100%

<b>B. Size of the firm</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Dailies	10	19.2%
Periodicals	17	32.7%
Books	15	28.8%
Mixed product line	10	19.2%
total	52	100%

<b>1. Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
male	23	44.2%
female	29	55.8%
total	52	100.0%

<b>2. Education</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Primary school	0	0.0%
Secondary school	20	38.5%
Bachelor	24	46.2%
MSc	3	5.8%
MA	4	7.7%
PhD	1	1.9%
total	52	100.0%

<b>3. Which human resource related factor has the main importance for the success in the publishing industry in Serbia?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Result oriented and motivated employees	18	34.6%
Employees creativity	7	13.5%
Well trained employees	10	19.2%
Mutual respect and mutual confidence among employees	4	7.7%
Employees satisfaction and loyalty	13	25.0%
total	52	100.0%

<b>4. What are the factors that guide firms in your industry when decide what kind of trainings to provide for their employees? (up to 3 answers)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Added value creation trough knowledge management	13	25.0%
Sales volume increase	29	55.8%
Competitive advantage creation	28	53.8%
Management request	15	28.8%
Customers request	12	23.1%
Employees' satisfaction and loyalty	17	32.7%
Other	3	5.8%
total	-	-

<b>5. What are the main benefits of employee education in your industry? (up to 3 answers)</b>	Number	%
Added value creation through knowledge management	11	21.2%
Sales volume increase	31	59.6%
Employees' satisfaction and loyalty	19	36.5%
Sustainable human resource	21	40.4%
Competitive advantage creation	24	46.2%
Mutual respect and mutual confidence	4	7.7%
Other	3	5.8%
total	-	-

<b>6. Your firm have defined employees' education plan for the next:</b>	Number	%
1 year	19	36.5%
3 years	9	17.3%
There is no such a plan	21	40.4%
I don't know/no answer	3	5.8%
total	52	100.0%

<b>7. Education in your firm is organized:</b>	Number	%
Continuously, by defined plan	16	30.8%
Few times a year	15	28.8%
When it is needed	21	40.4%
Total	52	100.00%

<b>8. The most trainings are provided for employees from the following department:</b>	Number	%
HR	6	11.5%
Finance/Accounting	5	9.6%
Marketing/Sales	25	48.1%
Customer relations	8	15.4%
IT	3	5.8%
Quality management	2	3.8%
All departments are covered equally	3	5.8%
total	52	100.0%

<b>9. Which type of business seminars did your firm mostly provide for its employees in the last year? (up to 3 answers)</b>	Number	%
Communication skills improvement	29	55.8%
Team work	12	23.1%
Leadership	7	13.5%
Quality management	6	11.5%
Knowledge management	6	11.5%
Selling skills improvement	36	69.2%
Innovation management	4	7.7%
Other	2	3.8%
total	-	-

<b>10. Which of the bellow mentioned seminars will be important for your industry in the future? (up to 3 answers)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Communication skills improvement	25	48.1%
Team work	18	34.6%
Leadership	17	32.7%
Quality management	17	32.7%
Knowledge management	14	26.9%
Selling skills improvement	24	46.2%
Innovation management	23	44.2%
Other	1	1.9%
I don't know/No answer	0	0.0%
total	-	-

<b>11. By your opinion, training costs should be paid off in the period of:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
1 year	25	48.1%
2 years	18	34.6%
3 years	8	15.4%
More than 3 years	1	1.9%
total	52	100.0%

<b>12. In the training evaluation process, which criteria is mostly used in your firm?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Knowledge improvement	9	17.3%
Skills and behavior	7	13.5%
Attitudes and motivation	10	19.2%
Results improvement/ROI	25	48.1%
I don't know/no answer	1	1.9%
total	52	100.0%

<b>13. Related to employees training practice, comparing for other industries, publishing industry has:</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Relatively developed practice	17	32.7%
Similar practice to the other industries	20	38.5%
Relatively undeveloped practice	15	28.8%
total	52	100.0%

<b>14. Have firms in your industry implemented learning organization concept?</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	8	15.4%
No	33	63.5%
I don't know / no answer	11	21.2%
total	52	100.0%



## Appendix 6 – Comparative analysis (tables)

<b>1. Gender</b>						
By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
male	4	40.0%	8	50.0%	10	38.5%
female	6	60.0%	8	50.0%	16	61.5%
total	10	100.0%	16	100.0%	26	100.0%

<b>2. Education degree</b>						
By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
Primary school	N	%	N	%	N	%
Secondary school	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Bachelor	1	10.0%	4	25.0%	15	57.7%
Master	5	50.0%	9	56.3%	11	42.3%
Magister	2	20.0%	1	6.3%	0	0.0%
PhD	1	10.0%	2	12.5%	0	0.0%
total	1	10.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

<b>3. Which human resource related factor has the main importance for the success in the publishing industry in Serbia?</b>						
By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
Effectiveness and motivation	3	30.0%	5	31.3%	10	38.5%
Employees creativity	2	20.0%	2	12.5%	3	11.5%
Stable HR structure	2	20.0%	5	31.3%	3	11.5%
Respect and confidence	1	10.0%	2	12.5%	1	3.8%
Satisfaction and loyalty	2	20.0%	2	12.5%	9	34.6%
other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
total	10	100.0%	16	100.0%	26	100.0%

<b>4. What are the factors that guide firms in your industry when decide what kind of trainings to provide for their employees? (up to three answers)</b>						
By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
Added value creation - KM	5	50.0%	6	37.5%	2	7.7%
Sales volume increase	5	50.0%	8	50.0%	16	61.5%
Competitive advantage creation	6	60.0%	9	56.3%	13	50.0%
Management request	2	20.0%	7	43.8%	6	23.1%
Customers request	4	40.0%	5	31.3%	3	11.5%
Satisfaction and loyalty	4	40.0%	4	25.0%	9	34.6%
Other	0	0.0%	2	12.5%	1	3.8%
total	-	-	-	-	-	-

**5. What are the main benefits of employee education in your industry? (up to three answers)**

By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
Added value creation - KM	4	40.0%	6	37.5%	1	3.8%
Sales volume increase	6	60.0%	9	56.3%	16	61.5%
Satisfaction and loyalty	5	50.0%	5	31.3%	9	34.6%
Lower turnover	7	70.0%	8	50.0%	6	23.1%
Competitive advantage creation	6	60.0%	7	43.8%	11	42.3%
Respect and confidence	1	10.0%	2	12.5%	1	3.8%
Other	0	0.0%	1	6.3%	2	7.7%
total	-	-	-	-	-	-

**6. Your firm have defined employees' education plan for the next:**

By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 year	3	30.0%	9	56.3%	7	26.9%
3 years	6	60.0%	3	18.8%	0	0.0%
No plan	1	10.0%	4	25.0%	16	61.5%
I don't know / NA	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	11.5%
Total	10	100.0%	16	100.0%	26	100.0%

**7. Education in your firm is organized:**

By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
Continuously, by defined plan	7	70.0%	7	43.8%	2	7.7%
Few times a year	2	20.0%	4	25.0%	9	34.6%
When it is needed	1	10.0%	5	31.3%	15	57.7%
Total	10	100.0%	16	100.0%	26	100.0%

**8. The most trainings are provided for employees from the following department:**

By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
HR	1	10.0%	3	18.8%	2	7.7%
Finance/Acc.	1	10.0%	1	6.3%	3	11.5%
Marketing/Sales	3	30.0%	7	43.8%	15	57.7%
Customer Relations	1	10.0%	3	18.8%	4	15.4%
IT	1	10.0%	1	6.3%	1	3.8%
Quality management	1	10.0%	1	6.3%	0	0.0%
All covered equally	2	20.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.8%
total	10	100.0%	16	100.0%	26	100.0%

9. Which type of business seminars did your firm mostly provide for its employees in the last year? (up to 3 answers)						
By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
Communication skills improvement	4	40.0%	8	50.0%	17	65.4%
Team work	3	30.0%	6	37.5%	3	11.5%
Leadership	2	20.0%	5	31.3%	0	0.0%
Quality management	1	10.0%	4	25.0%	1	3.8%
Knowledge management	2	20.0%	3	18.8%	1	3.8%
Selling skills improvement	5	50.0%	12	75.0%	19	73.1%
Innovation management	1	10.0%	2	12.5%	1	3.8%
Other	0	0.0%	1	6.3%	1	3.8%
I don't know/no answer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
total	-	-	-	-	-	-

10. Which of the bellow mentioned seminars will be important for your industry in the future?						
By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
Communication skills improvement	3	30.0%	7	43.8%	15	57.7%
Team work	4	40.0%	7	43.8%	7	26.9%
Leadership	4	40.0%	6	37.5%	7	26.9%
Quality management	4	40.0%	7	43.8%	6	23.1%
Knowledge management	4	40.0%	5	31.3%	5	19.2%
Selling skills improvement	3	30.0%	7	43.8%	14	53.8%
Innovation management	5	50.0%	7	43.8%	11	42.3%
Other	1	10.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
I don't know/No answer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
total	-	-	-	-	-	-

11. By your opinion, training costs should be paid off in the period of:						
By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 year	3	30.0%	7	43.8%	15	57.7%
2 years	3	30.0%	6	37.5%	9	34.6%
3 years	3	30.0%	3	18.8%	2	7.7%
More than 3 years	1	10.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
total	10	100.0%	16	100.0%	26	100.0%

<b>12. In the training evaluation process, which criteria is mostly used in your firm?</b>						
By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
Knowledge improvement	2	20.0%	4	25.0%	3	11.5%
Skills and behavior	2	20.0%	2	12.5%	3	11.5%
Attitudes and motivation	2	20.0%	3	18.8%	5	19.2%
Results improvement/ROI	4	40.0%	7	43.8%	14	53.8%
I don't know/no answer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.8%
total	10	100.0%	16	100.0%	26	100.0%

<b>13. Related to employee training practice, comparing with other industries, publishing industry has:</b>						
By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
Relatively developed practice	5	50.0%	8	50.0%	4	15.4%
Similar practice to the other industries	3	30.0%	6	37.5%	11	42.3%
Relatively undeveloped practice	2	20.0%	2	12.5%	11	42.3%
total	10	100.0%	16	100.0%	26	100.0%

<b>14. Have firms in your industry implemented learning organization concept?</b>						
By firm size →	large		medium sized		small	
Number / percent →	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	3	30.0%	3	18.8%	2	7.7%
No	6	60.0%	9	56.3%	18	69.2%
I don't know / no answer	1	10.0%	4	25.0%	6	23.1%
total	10	100.0%	16	100.0%	26	100.0%

## Appendix 7 – List of Acronyms

HR – Human Resource

ICT – Information and Communication Technologies

MA – Master of Arts

MSc – Master of Science

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

PhD – Doctor of Philosophy

ROI – Return on Investment

SFRY – Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

SME – Small and Medium sized Enterprise