

# Closer or Further? Comparison of Employee Development Trends in Polish and International Companies Operating in Poland

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Knowledge, skills and talents of employees constitute a significant source of competitive advantage. The consequence of this paradigm is the conclusion that organizations attempting to increase the efficiency must take steps to improve employees' qualifications. Caring for the employee development, the enterprises aspire to creation of the best practices in this area. Over time, best practices are converging in all the companies performing in various cultures and countries. However, the dissimilarity of Polish conditions, instead of convergence, may cause divergence or cross-vergence in the employee development. In the article, there were juxtaposed and compared the practices of the employees development in Polish and international companies operating in Poland. The aim of the comparison is to indicate the similarities, differences and trends in changes in employee development.

**Keywords:** employee development, developmental practices, trends in employee development, employees' qualifications, upgrading qualifications, training, employee evaluation, convergence, divergence, cross-vergence, HRM, MNCs.

## **Introduction. The context of employee development**

The result of the economic globalization and flattening of the world is reflected in the amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) that for the last ten years has been fluctuating around US\$ 1.5 trillion a year (Stor, 2011; UNCTAD, 2014a). Since the 1970s, a tendency to consolidate the companies as a result of cross-border

mergers and acquisitions has been observed (Bjorkman, Stahl & Vaara, 2007). As a consequence of absorbing organizations by Transnational Corporations (TNCs), the independent local companies transform into subsidiaries of Multinational Corporations (MNCs). It is estimated that TNCs are the owners of assets in the host countries, the value of which is about US\$ 87 trillion (UNCTAD, 2014b). Along with investments, to the host countries capital, advanced technologies and modern know-how come (UNCTAD, 2014b).

Transformation of companies into TNCs results in the increase in number of people employed in them in comparison to the general employment number. TNCs employ together about 72 million employees in the whole world (UNCTAD, 2014b). As an outcome of projects performed within FID between 2004–2012, in Europe almost 1.6 million new jobs were created (Gounelle & Lhermitte, 2009; Nibbe & Lhermitte, 2013). Work in these enterprises enables the employees to experience highly developed and professional know-how.

The paradigm that knowledge, skills and talents of the employees constitute the significant source of competitive advantage becomes more and more popular (Armstrong, 2009; Collings & Mellahi, 2009; Kianto, 2008; Lewis & Heckman, 2006). The consequence of this presumption is the conclusion that organizations attempting to increase the efficiency must realize both training undertakings and actions improving employees' qualifications (Sheehan, 2012; Swanson & Holton, 2008). The expenditures on the employee development are perceived as strategic investments (Pocztowski, 2007), the results of which are visible in the long run (Miś, 2007). That is the reason why they are less sensitive to the changes in the economic situation and do not plummet even during the economic crisis (Sheehan, 2014).

Diffusion of knowledge and best organizational solutions are supported by the development of new information technologies, more common access to the information as well as escalating tendency of the employees to move not only between the organizations but also between the countries. According to the World Bank, in 2010 about 215 million people changed their country of living (Murdoch, 2011). The benchmarking practices support the improvement of the internal processes taking place in all companies and simultaneously spread the best practices (Mayo, 2002). The movement of employees between countries and cultures poses developmental challenges (Buchelt, 2012).

The above-mentioned conditions may suggest a tendency of convergence of the solutions, procedures and management methods in business organizations. The phenomenon of unification is especially visible in the EU countries, where the internal legal regulations must comply with directives and regulations of the community (Tracz-Krupa, 2012). Those regulations regard mainly the free movement of people, undertaking a job and business activity in all EU countries (EEC

Treaty of 1957 and Treaty of Maastricht on EU of 1992) and the guarantee of rights to work, safe workspace, fair wage, guidance and work training for all citizens of the member states as well as prohibition of discrimination as far as employment is concerned (The European Social Charter and The Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights 1989).

The analysis of these processes and phenomena leads to the hypothesis that, caring for the employee development, the enterprises aspire to look for finding and creation of the best practices in this area. Over time, best practices are converging in all the companies performing in various cultures and countries, including Poland.

Simultaneously, in the organizations and their environment the processes take place, the result of which may be opposite to the expected. The research comparing HRM practices in the companies operating in highly developed EU countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands and Great Britain) has indicated significant differences in the HRM realization, the origin of which lies in distinct social and economic policies, particular conditions in a job market and various models of education system (Van der Klink & Mulder, 1995). Also the dissimilarity of Polish conditions, instead of convergence, may cause divergence or cross-vergence in the employee development. The factors forcing the search for and creation of different ways of the employee development are mainly:

- level of internationalization of Polish economy,
- macroeconomic state and a situation in the job market,
- business goals and priorities,
- cultural conditions and importance of job qualifications,
- behavioural habits connected with learning process,
- branch, size and financial resources of the organization.

In the recent years, Poland has become a leader among the countries accepting FDI in Eastern-Central Europe. Accumulated FDI value in Poland at the end of 2012 amounted to about 175 billion euro (MSZ, 2013). At the end of 2011 there were about 8,500 companies with foreign capital share<sup>1</sup>. They employed above 1.5 million workers (i.e. more than 10% of employees in general, and simultaneously almost 30% of people employed by the companies with more than 9 workers). Companies with foreign capital share significantly contribute to the creation of added value and modernization of the economy. Their investment expenditures in 2011 amounted to about 75 billion PLN (Ministerstwo Gospodarki, 2013). In the forthcoming years, the further growth of foreign capital in Poland should be expected. It is indicated by the recommendations of opinion-forming entities in

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<sup>1</sup> It was 16 percent of all companies in Poland employing more than 9 people (Ministerstwo Gospodarki, 2013).

the investment environment (Ministerstwo Gospodarki, 2013; Nibbe & Lhermitte, 2013; UNCTAD, 2014b). Stable macroeconomic situation and high employees' qualifications is what justifies the positive recommendations. The above-mentioned premises give fair promise of investments in the employee development.

Global economic trends as well as investment, modernization and restructuring processes of Polish economy influence the shape and dynamics of the demand of employment in local and state job markets. The worldwide economic crisis influenced the slowdown of Polish economy development. Nevertheless, the Polish GDP kept increasing between 1.6 – 5.1% at that time, and the unemployment rate in recent three years in Poland has been fairly stable and, depending on a season, fluctuated between 12 – 14% (GUS, 2014). Following the current world macroeconomic situation and investment recommendations for Poland, one may assume, that since 2014 the economic revival and decrease of unemployment rate will come<sup>2</sup>. Usually, in the periods of prosperity and low unemployment rate, the range of employee development activities increase.

The primary determinants of setting the trends of employee development are strategy and organization development plans as well as the appointed HR strategy. The goals of organisation and applied personal policy indicate the vision of the attitude towards human resources (to employ highly qualified professionals or develop own employees' potential) and the model of conducting employees development (to invest in talents, not to interfere in the employee development or create equal development opportunities for all workers). The results of the research conducted in Polish organizations indicate that the most common method of defining trends and forms of employee development are managers' decisions. The analysis of the applied practices revealed that, unfortunately, in the case of development and improvement, no comprehensive solutions are introduced (Sitko-Lutek, 2004).

The goals and strategy of a company must always include the conditions of the cultural environment of an organization. The meaning and success of the employee development is a result of cross-vergence between the companies' developmental standards and preciousness of development in the hierarchy of social values in which the company operates. The meaning of cross-vergence problem is particularly important in the situation of cross-border mergers and acquisitions (Hurst, 2013). In Polish cultural realities, formal education is perceived as highly significant. The percentage of people with higher education in Poland in the age group of 30–34 in 2012 was 39.1%, whereas the average for EU amounted to 35.8% (MSZ, 2013). In higher education institutions study almost half of young people

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<sup>2</sup> First symptoms have already appeared: growing dynamics of GDP in the subsequent quarters of 2013 and decrease in unemployment calculated year-on-year in January and February 2014 (GUS, 2014).

aged between 19 and 24. Both indicators show the upward trend (Przytuła, 2011). High level of Polish employees' education is one of the most important motives convincing foreign investors where to locate their capital (Nibbe & Lhermitte, 2013; Sheehan, 2012). Qualifications and level of employees' education constitute the background of effective employees' development.

In spite of the high level of Polish society education, improving qualifications is not a common phenomenon in Poland. In 2009–2011 only 10.7% of people aged 25 and older took part in any activities connected with the development of professional qualifications. Unfortunately, the downward trend of this indicator is also noticeable, since in 2005–2007 and 2007–2009 it reached the levels of 11.7% and 11.9% respectively. Little activity in the modification of qualifications may lead to problems with structural adjustment of supply and demand at the job market (Ministerstwo Gospodarki, 2013). Moreover, practitioners organizing trainings in companies that operate in Poland draw attention to the problem of discrepancy between the declared employees willingness to develop their qualifications and actual actions taken to reach that goal (Suchodolski, 2008).

Undertaking educational actions by the employees in Poland differs depending on the branch and specific character of the performed job. That is the reason why, for the employees of some branches (e.g. IT branch) or representatives of particular occupations (e.g. knowledge workers), a demand for permanent knowledge development is an integral attribute of the performed job (Bohdziewicz, 2008). What is more, the scope and intensity of developmental activities are strongly determined by the size and financial reserves of an organization. The bigger the company is, the more alternative development possibilities it creates within its own organizational structures. Possession of greater financial resources allows to undertake more advanced and expanded development initiatives. Evaluation of the budget for the developmental actions draws the scope of those initiatives. Probably insufficient financial resources are the reason for scarce activity in employee development undertaken by small and medium companies in Poland (Szmidt, 2007). The possibility of training from the EU financial resources is an opportunity for smaller and less affluent organizations.

## Aims of the article

In the article, there were juxtaposed and compared the practices of the employees development in Polish and international companies operating in Poland. The aim of the comparison is to indicate the similarities, differences and trends in changes in employee development. On the basis of the trends analysis, the attempt

was undertaken to predict the directions and dynamics of the developmental modification. The research covers different aspects of employee development, such as: human capital strategies, employee career and succession planning, qualification improvement, evaluation of development potential and development progress.

The article attempts to find the answer to the following research questions:

- What is the scope of similarities and differences between the development practices in Polish and international companies?
- Which of the practices converge and which diverge?
- Do the developmental practices change in time or remain unaltered?
- What is the direction of convergence? Do the developmental practices of Polish companies become similar to the international practices or on the contrary, they evolve independently?
- What is the convergence rate of particular developmental practices?
- What are the causes of convergence and divergence?
- In which direction will the particular developmental practices evolve in the future?

## The subject and scope of empirical research

The data presented in the article were derived from the examination of the development practices in the period of 2009 – 2013 in Polish firms and MNCs operating in Poland. The research attempt includes 219 enterprises, 121 of which are subsidiaries of MNCs and 98 Polish companies. The sample size varied in individual years. In 2009 there were examined 30 subsidiaries of MNCs and 22 Polish organizations. Similarly, in 2010, 20 foreign and 9 Polish companies were put under the survey and in 2011, 30 foreign and 24 native ones. In 2012 the sample amounted to 21 non-native and 17 Polish companies. In 2013, 20 subsidiaries and 26 Polish units were researched. The reason for the significant diversity of population in the surveyed companies was non-obligatory participation in the survey, even though the research questions were directed to about 100 foreign and Polish companies each year. The main reason usually given as an explanation to the refusal of participation in the research was scarce realization of development practices. Therefore, one may assume that the researched companies realized comparatively advanced practices in the scope of development.

The researched organizations performed various types of business activities: 100 were production, 95 service and 24 trade companies. The organizations under study varied also in their size. As measured by the number of employed workforce, 108 were large companies (over 250 workers), 62 fall into a category of medium

organizations (from 50 to 250 employees) and 49 small (less than 50 employees). Taking into consideration insufficient HRM practices, microenterprises with less than 10 employees were excluded from the examination. Most organizations were headquartered in the region of Lower Silesia.

The basic research techniques were: questionnaire surveys and advanced interviews based on checklist questionnaire (respondents: managerial staff of different organizational levels).

The presented results constitute a part of empirical material collected by the author of the article within his own researches on the employee development conducted at the Department of the Human Resources Management in Wrocław University of Economics.

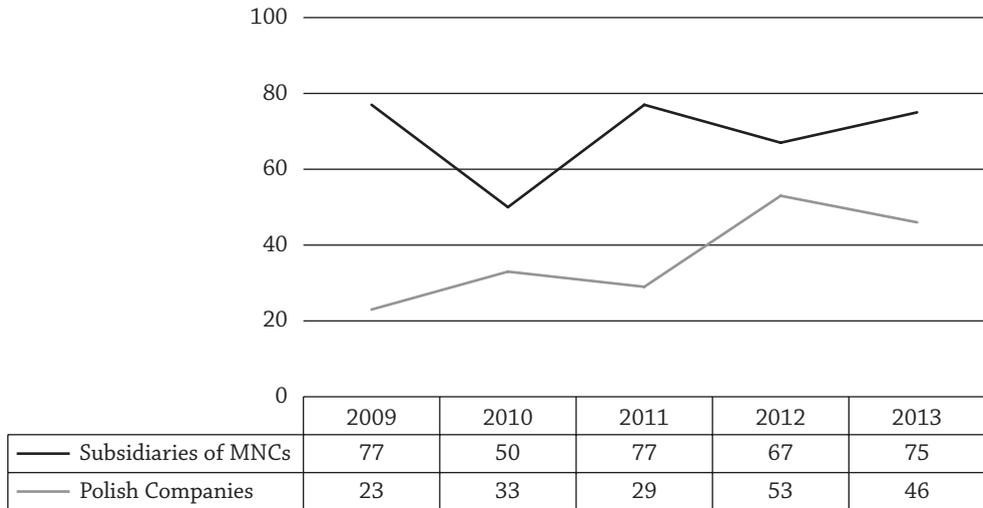
## Research findings. Comparison of development trends

Due to the long-term and scope of the influence, all the HR processes taking place in the organization ought to be defined within the HR strategy. From the perspective of its content, all the operations concerning employees, including their development, ought to be analysed and assessed (Pocztowski, 2007; Stor, 2011). Therefore, it is crucial for the company to possess formal HR strategy. In 2009, among the researched organizations, the TNCs introduced this type of strategy three times more often than the Polish ones (relation 77% to 23%). In the subsequent years the percentage of Polish companies owning the HR strategy in writing had been systematically increasing and in recent research periods has reached the level of about 50 percent. In the case of MNCs, 70–80 percent of the companies have had formal HR strategies for about 10 years<sup>3</sup> (Graph 1).

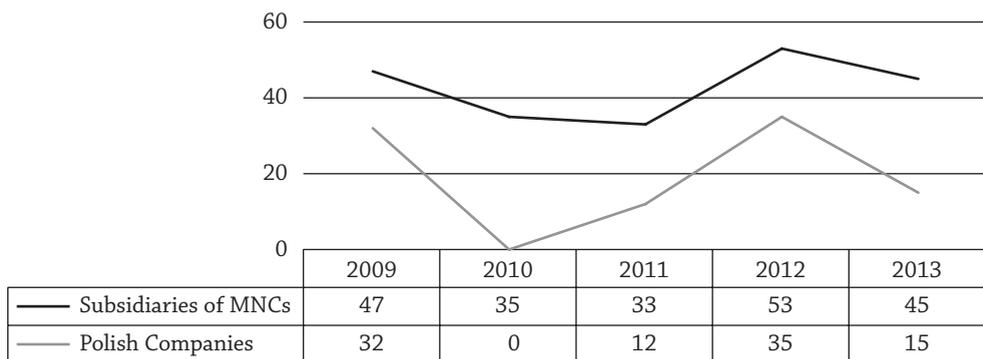
Such a significant progress is hardly noticeable in Polish companies as far as planning of employee development is concerned. The percentage of companies with formally drawn-up plans of career paths (Graph 2) and plans of succession (Graph 3) in all research periods fluctuated between 15 and 35 percent. In this case one cannot draw conclusions about any tendencies, since the mentioned numbers varied in different research periods. As far as TNCs are concerned, the percentage of companies incorporating development plans each year remained at the comparable level and fluctuated between 40 and 50 percent.

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<sup>3</sup> Compare the results of researches in (Suchodolski, 2008).

**Graph 1. Percentage of companies possessing a formal HR strategy (in %)**

Source: Research data.

**Graph 2. Percentage of companies constructing formal plans of career paths (in %)**

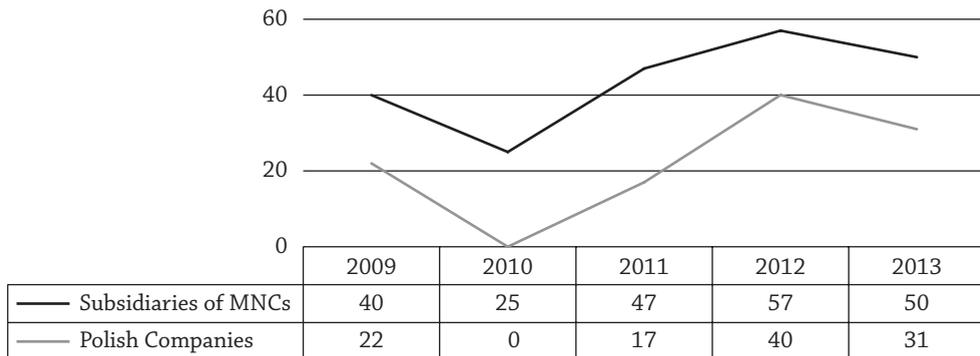
Source: Research data.

No greater year-to-year changes were recorded, both in Polish and transnational organizations, in the field of employee trainings plan preparation. In all research periods in both groups the unchangeable commonness of training plans construction was diagnosed (they are prepared by 70–80 percent of Polish companies and about 90 percent of foreign ones) (Table 1).

Almost all researched companies (both Polish and transnational ones) performed actions related to employees training (Table 2). The difference, however, lies in the capital invested in them. During the researches, the attempts were taken to find data about amounts of training budgets. Nonetheless, unfortunately, the

feedback was so scarce that it is hardly possible to draw any conclusions.<sup>4</sup> The companies do not avoid funding or participating in the costs of external trainings, if the employee participates in them on his or her own initiative (Table 3). Mostly they participate in paying for studies, post graduation studies or courses which are a result of cafeteria motivation plan.

**Graph 3. Percentage of companies constructing formal succession plans (in %)**



Source: Research data.

**Table 1. Percentage of companies constructing plans of trainings (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	93	90	80	90	90
Polish Companies	77	78	71	65	80

Source: Research data.

**Table 2. Percentage of companies organizing internal trainings (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	100	100	100	100	100
Polish Companies	100	89	92	100	100

Source: Research data.

<sup>4</sup> Most of the respondents (about 80 percent of the given answers) claimed, that despite the economic slowdown in Poland, the expenditures on trainings increased. The acquired incomplete data do not instil optimism. In chosen Polish companies the investments in trainings reach the amount of 60-70 PLN per an employee a year (The data come from large Polish companies employing even a few thousand of workers and they were provided with a comment, that in comparison to the previous year training expenditures increased). According to the information from the other researched companies, in a given year 0 PLN was spent on trainings with a simultaneous declaration that the company trains the employees. Transnational organizations gave information about the training budgets even less frequently than Polish ones. In this group the most common amount oscillated around 1,000 PLN per person per year.

**Table 3. Percentage of companies funding external trainings (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	70	80	87	100	95
Polish Companies	82	78	92	88	88

Source: Research data.

While analysing the subject matter of trainings in all the research periods, it is noticeable that, invariably, in Polish and transnational organizations, obligatory trainings (imposed by legal regulations) as well as professional trainings (strictly related to the performed job or branch of an organization)<sup>5</sup>, enjoyed the greatest popularity (Tables 4 & 5). Less commonly used were trainings developing so-called soft qualifications (communication, formation of interpersonal relations, management) (Table 6).

**Table 4. Percentage of companies investing in obligatory trainings (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	100	100	100	100	100
Polish Companies	86	89	87	100	100

Source: Research data.

**Table 5. Percentage of companies investing in professional trainings (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	100	90	87	90	95
Polish Companies	86	89	87	100	96

Source: Research data.

**Table 6. Percentage of companies investing in trainings of soft qualifications (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	63	65	70	86	80
Polish Companies	50	56	54	53	65

Source: Research data.

<sup>5</sup> The conclusion is confirmed by results of the other researches (Plawgo & Kornecki, 2010; Sitko-Lutek, 2004).

Still, large disparities were found in realization of the remaining types of training such as foreign language trainings (Table 7), trainings conducted in the other organization units or headquarters (Table 8) and trainings abroad (Table 9).

**Table 7. Percentage of companies investing in foreign language trainings (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	73	75	80	86	85
Polish Companies	27	22	54	65	50

Source: Research data.

**Table 8. Percentage of companies investing in trainings in units or HQ (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	20	25	37	19	25
Polish Companies	13	11	8	6	11

Source: Research data.

**Table 9. Percentage of companies investing in trainings abroad (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	27	45	43	33	30
Polish Companies	4	0	4	0	11

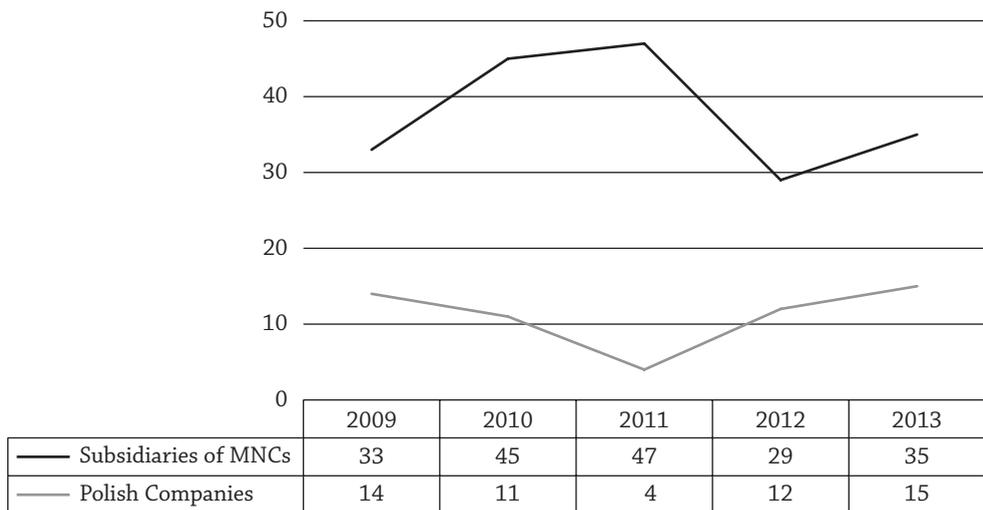
Source: Research data.

The most developed form of training is comprehensive programs that prepare the employed to perform their future roles and functions in the organization. These practices may be organized within the solutions called talent management, management of high-potential employees, “schools of leaders” or “internal universities”. TNCs definitely take a lead in implementation of this kind of solutions. They are implemented in about 40 percent of the researched companies of this group. In Polish companies no tendencies were noticed to spread practices of comprehensive attitude towards employee development (Graph 4).

The positive aspect of employee development in Polish organizations is a growing tendency of enabling the employees to fulfil their need for self-realization in a company. The need of self-realization can be fulfilled by employee participation in work of task forces, fulfilling non-vocational needs or even private needs of workers. Creating task forces by Polish companies is practised in about 60–80 percent of businesses. Taking into consideration the mentioned solutions,

Polish organizations got closer to the standards of MNCs where, in each research period, such practices were registered in approximately 80 – 90 percent of cases (Table 10).

**Graph 4. Percentage of companies investing in comprehensive programs of employee development (in %)**



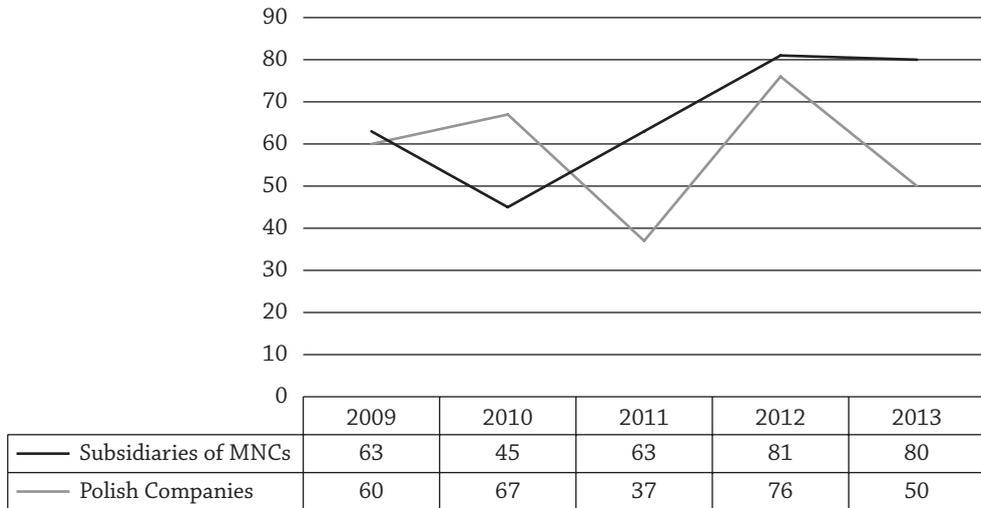
Source: Research data.

**Table 10. Percentage of companies creating task forces (in %)**

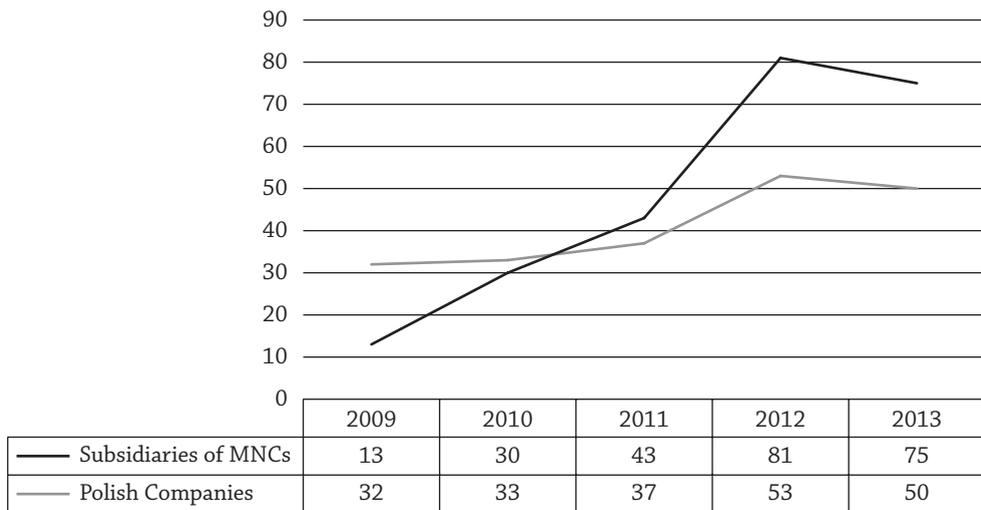
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	83	80	83	90	85
Polish Companies	60	78	58	82	73

Source: Research data.

Each enterprise, apart from the economic, has got also a social function, which is revealed in enabling employees to fulfil their non-vocational or private needs. As examples of practices allowing to reach the above-mentioned goals serve: company meetings, integration events, supporting interest groups under the auspices of the company (they give a possibility of fulfilling non-vocational needs) and promotion of sports, assurance of additional health care services, flexitime, facilitation of access to cultural goods and events, legal and educational guidance (fulfilling private needs). Such practices are often financed from social funds of the company. In the researched organizations, both Polish and transnational ones, high activity in this field was observed in 60–70 percent of the cases (Graphs 5 & 6).

**Graph 5. Percentage of companies fulfilling non-vocational needs of the employees (in %)**

Source: Research data.

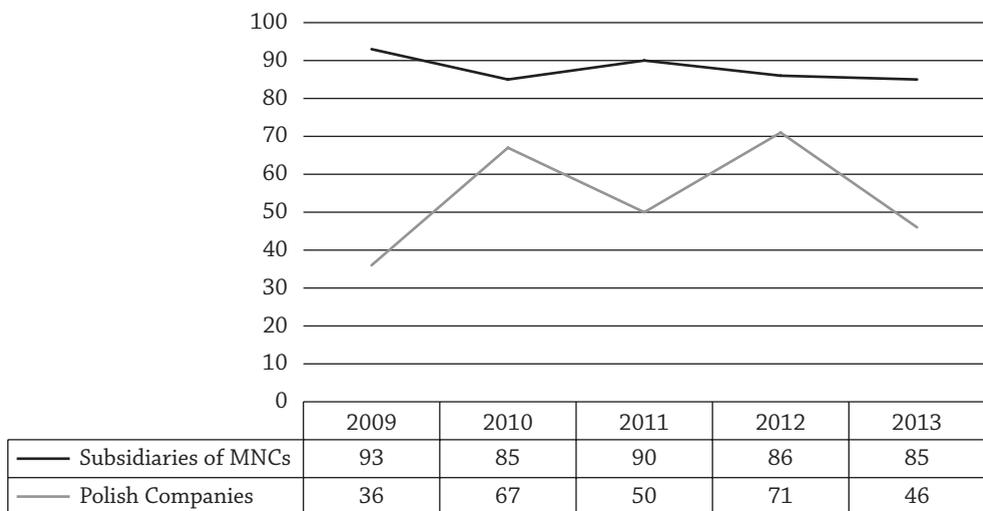
**Graph 6. Percentage of companies fulfilling private needs of the employees (in %)**

Source: Research data.

The integral part of the development process is employee evaluation. Significant majority of the researched MNCs (about 90 percent) evaluate the employees within the formal performance appraisal (Graph 7). In the past, evaluation was not too popular practice in Polish organizations. Assessment was perceived as an “obstacle” to efficient work performance. That is the reason why the results of

evaluation often were not used to improve any HR activities. While analysing the examinations results, the growing frequency of evaluation and making use of its results in Polish companies is noticeable. For developmental goals, the assessment results are used mainly to make decisions about employees promotion (Table 11), identification of competence gap (Table 12) as well as analysis of employees' developmental potential (Table 13). Each of the mentioned benefits was indicated twice as often in the group of transnational organizations as in Polish ones.

**Graph 7. Percentage of companies evaluating the employees within the formal performance appraisal (in %)**



Source: Research data.

**Table 11. Percentage of companies using results of appraisal for promotion (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	67	55	73	71	70
Polish Companies	36	33	25	41	27

Source: Research data.

**Table 12. Percentage of companies using results of appraisal for training (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	67	45	57	52	50
Polish Companies	23	33	21	41	38

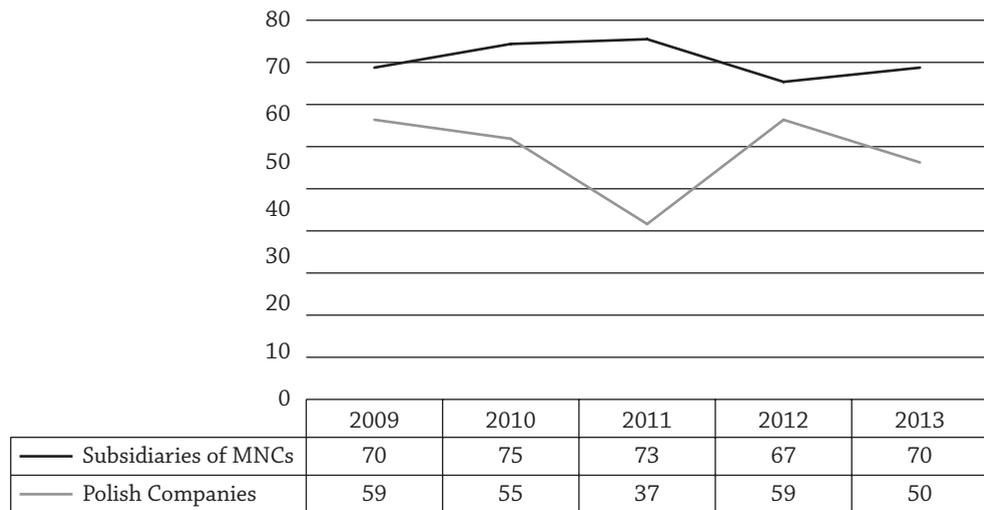
Source: Research data.

**Table 13. Percentage of companies using results of appraisal for diagnose of employee potential (in %)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Subsidiaries of MNCs	27	30	20	29	25
Polish Companies	9	0	4	23	15

Source: Research data.

In order to draw any conclusions on the efficiency of developmental practices it is necessary to control them. The process of the development progress monitoring is systematically conducted in about 70 percent of transnational organizations. In Polish enterprises clear negligence of the controlling practices may be observed. Admittedly, in the last two research periods the increase in monitoring of employees development process was recorded, however it was controlled only in approximately half of the companies (Graph 8).

**Graph 8. Percentage of companies monitoring the employee development (in %)**

Source: Research data.

## Conclusions and Implications

While analysing the trends and results of the conducted researches, one may distinguish the fields of convergence and divergence of the development practices conducted in Polish and international organizations. As converging may be defined the following phenomena:

- In the subsequent research periods, the percentage of Polish companies having the formal HR strategy was increasing in comparison to the high percentage of TNCs that implemented such a strategy.
- Very high percentage of Polish and international companies organizing internal trainings for employees.
- Increasing percentage of funding external training for employees by both groups of companies.
- Increasing popularity of investing in trainings of soft qualifications in all examined firms.
- In Polish organizations the popularity of enabling employees to fulfil their self-realization need increases within the practice of project teams or task forces.
- In the subsequent research periods in MNCs there was observed the systematic growth of the scope of practices supposed to fulfill employees' non-vocational and private needs. One may assume, that within the cultural adaptation, the managers of subsidiaries noticed that Polish employees positively react to the employer's practices in the social field. In those cases, it is possible to observe the phenomenon of cross-vergence.
- Popularization in Polish companies of employee appraisal systems and practices of the usage of the evaluation results for development purposes. Construction and implementation of efficiently working and useful systemic solutions in the case of employee appraisal, requires several years of efforts of all the employed in the organization as well as strong determination of the managers. Therefore, the very fact of registering the increase in frequency of appraisal systems occurrence guarantees that they will bring the desired benefits. In the foreign companies, systemic employee appraisal is a common standard.
- In Polish companies the attempts of monitoring the employee development progress appear more and more frequently. The development of personnel resources of organization means investing in people and building competitive advantage. Nonetheless, if the investment process is supposed to succeed and bring measurable benefits to the company, it has to be systematically controlled and adjusted to the changing conditions. As the research results show, such conclusions have always been obvious for the foreign companies.

Observed discrepancies in the research between the development practices conducted in Polish organizations and those in the foreign ones regard the following areas:

- In each of the examined periods, the employee development planning in the MNCs occurred at least twice as often as in Polish companies. Nevertheless, one may draw a conclusion that the awareness of the discussed issue is growing in Polish companies, since each year about 40 of the researched companies declared preparation of informal plans of career paths and plans of results.
- The occurrence of significant differences in the frequency of foreign language trainings is caused by the demand that employees of TNCs must fluently use the language of the corporation. On the other hand, reluctance towards foreign language teaching in Polish companies may derive from the anxiety that employees may leave a company.
- The cases of trainings conducted in the other organization units or headquarters occur more frequently in the MNCs than in Polish companies. The reason for constant discrepancies are disproportions in the size of organizations. The researched MNCs are mainly of holding or concern structure. In the case of Polish surveyed companies, they were mainly single-establishment organizations, about 60 percent of which are included in the category of small and medium enterprises.
- Lower popularity of abroad trainings in Polish companies in comparison to the foreign organizations. Such discrepancy is a result of costliness of such trainings as well as language barrier of employees.
- The size and financial affluence of an organization are the crucial causes of significant difference in conducting comprehensive programs of employee development such as “internal universities”, “schools of leaders”, which prepare for future functions in the organization.

The presented findings may suggest the following directions of the evolution of development practices in the near future:

- It can be assumed that every large and medium enterprise will seek to construct a HR strategy, because HR strategy defining lines of action improves the HRM.
- Trainings in units, HQ, abroad and comprehensive programs of development remain the domain of large companies. Due to mergers and acquisitions the market share in large companies will grow.
- It is difficult to draw any conclusions about trends of constructing formal plans of career paths, formal succession plans and formal performance appraisal.
- Such practices as investing in trainings, organizing task forces, fulfilling non-vocational and private needs and monitoring of development are implemented with high frequency and no changes are expected in this field.

The research results and conclusions presented in the article concern only the quantitative aspect of development practices conducted in Polish and transnational organizations. Complete conclusions regarding the problems of convergence and divergence of employee development processes will be possible to draw only after conducting qualitative research. In order to do that, one ought to analyse the case study of processes and practices on a representative sample. This sort of task will require great amount of work, time and resources. Only a team of highly qualified researchers could cope with it. The experience gained by the author during conducting the discussed researches confirmed the existence of obstacles that need to be overcome, which make the recognition of the employee development issue difficult. The main obstacles are: unwillingness of the managers to reveal the information about internal management practices, tendency of the respondents to idealize the reality as well as the anxiety of people responsible for it, critical analysis and negative assessment of the practiced solutions.

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