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THE TRAINING MARKET IN THE FIELD OF EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE MANAGEMENT IN POLAND AND GERMANY

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Purpose: To establish the common and distinct characteristics of the training markets in the field of employee experience management in two European Union countries.
Design/methodology/approach: Application of a systematic qualitative and quantitative approach in the form of content analysis (including frequency analysis) to compare a total of 30 trainings/courses offers in the field of *Employee Experience Management* for two quarters of 2025.
Findings: The markets studied in both countries are characterised by a lack of atomisation on the supply side (indicating the initial stage of their development), segmentation, only partial transparency and strong heterogeneity. The content of the available offers can be classified into five categories, namely: conceptual approach, vocabulary related to professions/specialisations, implementation conditions, mapping the employee experience path, and experience design.
Research limitations: Practitioners looking for providers of development projects in the field of *Employee Experience Management* for management staff responsible for acquiring and retaining *Most Value Employees* may encounter difficulties due to a shortage of supply of the above-mentioned trainings/ courses and deficiencies in the content offered.
Practical implications: The results of the diagnosis can be used by entities conducting the above-mentioned trainings/courses, making them aware of their similarities and differences in relation to their competitors (and thus helping them to position their offer) and showing them opportunities to make their current offer more attractive.
Originality/value: To identify gaps in training/course activities in this field, which could help (utilitarian objective) to expand the content of proposed development projects for organisations. To date, the available literature on the subject has not presented any analyses of the trainings/courses market corresponding to the trend in HRM – *Employee Experience Management*. The analysis enriches our knowledge of the development of the trainings/courses market in Poland and Germany in relation to specific socio-economic conditions (experience economy), revealing that the current situation in these markets limits the potential for developing the managerial potential of organisations in this area.
Keywords: *Employee Experience Management, experience economy*, trainings / courses market, market homogeneity, market atomisation, market transparency.
Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

All over the world, organisations are undertaking development projects to adapt their management staff and HR departments to various types of change, including operating in an *experience economy*. They can take advantage of external offers for this purpose. Failure to adapt activities to the current context (experience economy, experience market, experience society) may result in the loss of the most valuable employees and difficulties in recruiting new ones to replace them, which is most painful for the organisation. This is due to the impact of employee experiences not only on work performance and profits (Silvestro, 2002), but also on employee loyalty (Veloso et al., 2021). In order to strengthen employee loyalty to the organisation, it is necessary to prepare for the implementation of employee experience management measures – a current megatrend in HRM, which may play an increasingly significant role in the game of attracting and retaining employees, and thus in the game of market position. It should be assumed that many organisations, after years of applying human resource management in its traditional form, may not be able to do so without appropriate development initiatives. Many entities are not even aware of the need for adjustments, and this can be brought to their attention through trainings/courses offers in the field of *Employee Experience Management* (EEM). It is therefore important to examine the extent to which they are available and whether and to what extent they comprehensively cover the rich content of EEM, as well as the extent to which they develop specific skills and attitudes. Organisations themselves do not often conduct diagnoses of specific trainings/courses markets due to the labour-intensive nature of the task, which results in them making cognitive errors when selecting providers, such as anchoring heuristics.

The aim of the study is to identify the situation regarding the supply of available trainings/courses in the field of EEM in terms of market characteristics, i.e. its atomistic nature, homogeneity and transparency. This objective therefore includes assessing the availability of offers and showing the similarities and differences between competitors in the trainings/courses market in this field. Atomisticity refers to the number of market entities (not only on the demand side, but also on the supply side) that influence or do not influence market relations and conditions, homogeneity refers to the characteristics of market participants, and transparency refers to the degree of knowledge of market conditions by its participants (Wrzosek, 1989, p. 65). A further objective of the diagnosis is to identify areas of EEM that constitute gaps in trainings/courses activities. Furthermore, the aim is to establish whether the training supply can adequately satisfy the demand for managerial competence development. The above objectives were achieved in relation to the types of market considered in two European Union countries, by analysing a total of 30 trainings/courses offers and comparing both markets with each other.

2. Factors influencing the development of EEM

The theoretical basis explaining the trend towards EEM can be found in G. Schulze's theory of the experience society (*Erlebnisgesellschaft*), which he presented in his book published in 1992. He emphasised that there is currently a social expansion of the experience orientation (Schulze, 1992, p. 57). This means that experiences are becoming such important personal values in increasingly wider social circles that they are even beginning to define the meaning of life, which is becoming a kind of experience project (*Erlebnisprojekt*) (Schulze, 1992, p. 12). At the same time, the experience orientation is not, as was previously the case, limited to the sphere of leisure time, but is also extended to the sphere of work (Schulze, 1992, p. 57).

The economic equivalents of G. Schulze's sociological considerations can therefore be transferred to the sphere of work. This mainly concerns the works of B.J. Pine and J.H. Gilmore (1998, 1999), which, in connection with the transition to the experience economy, are devoted to the generation of experiences and sensations in market entities that no longer strive solely to acquire material goods (Schulze, 2005, pp. 611-612). As a result, a market for experiences is emerging, confronting supply and demand for experiences. The labour market is also becoming a market for experiences, offering employees not only remuneration, but also – more or less diverse fields of experience, similar to the consumer market (Schmitt, 1999) – sensory (related, for example, to the work space), emotional, cognitive (intellectual), behavioural and relational experiences.

It is therefore necessary for organisations to master the rules of functioning in the experience-based labour market, i.e. adequate EEM. This will allow, just as is the case with consumers (Boguszewicz-Kreft, 2013), for the implementation of a qualitatively new standard of value offered to the employee, i.e. enhancing it with an experiential component that substantially increases the value offered to the employee. Until now, in accordance with the traditional understanding of business, it was customers who enjoyed the greatest interest (Rao, 2017), while EEM is associated with the imperative to pay more attention to the sphere of employee experiences (Li, Yang, 2023).

An analysis of the literature on EEM and a comparison with the literature on HRM indicates that the key concepts defining them are different. In HRM, it is the implementation of HR functions and sub-functions/processes at various levels of management (Scholz, 1989), and not – as in EEM – DT (*Design Thinking*) in relation to – treated in an integrated (Batat, 2022) and continuous (Tucker, 2020) manner - interaction points (*Touchpoints*) (Malik et al., 2023) in the employee journey (*Employee Journey*) – a vehicle for *Employee Experience* (Plaskoff, 2017) – is the most important. This raises the research question: Has the trainings/courses market already generated adequate offers for entities facing the need to adapt to the experiential challenges of not only external but also internal labour markets?

3. Methodology

In order to address the above research question and achieve the theoretical and practical objectives outlined in the introduction, a content analysis (of training and course offerings) was carried out, including a frequency analysis of the occurrence of specific words and terms relating to EEM in the offers and their categorisation, and thus a systematic approach of a qualitative and quantitative nature. The analysis integrated the demand-side and sipply-side approaches. The following search phrase was therefore adopted: "trainings/cources in the field of employee experience management". The following market characteristics were selected for analysis (Wrzosek, 1989):

- atomistic showing negotiation relations,
- homogeneity//heterogeneity reagarding service differentiation,
- transparency of market information.

The analysis covered EEM trainings/courses offered online in Poland as of the end of February 2025, scheduled to take place in the first two quarters of 2025. Postgraduate studies in this field were excluded from the analysis. The date and duration of the trainings were adopted as the inclusion criterion analysis, regardless of their proposed form, which did not constitute on exlusion criterion. The analysis included the same number (15) of providers of EEM training courses from the German market, taking into account offers based on their ranking on *Google*. A comparative analysis was applied based on three market characteristics in both countries (atomistic nature, transparency, homogeneity), as well as an analysis of competition (including internal competition) in the domestic markets concerning: prices and discounts, the profile of trainers, and the attractiveness of the offer (operationalised by the richness or poverty of EEM terminology in its description includes concepts related to employee yourney, touchpoints and design thinking.

4. Results

The range of trainings/courses (online, face-to-face, hybrid) in the field of EEM, both in Poland and in Germany, remains, as yet, very limited. Furthermore, the descriptions of individual courses often lack even the most basic terms relating to EEM. The most frequently mentioned terms in Poland are Employee Experience and Design Thinking, whilst in Germany they are Employee Journey, New Work, followed by – Employee Mapping, Moments of Truth, and optimised employee experience. In total, 30 different terms were included in the descriptions of 15 German trainings/courses offers. Table 1 shows their distribution, which

indicates a range of 7 and an average of 3.1. Table 1 also provides data on the market in Poland, which shows that the range is 13 and the average is 8.4.

Table 1.
EEM terminology in Polish and German trainings/courses offers

Offer No.	Number of EEM terms – German market	Number of EEM terms – Polish market
1	8	15
2	5	10
3	6	15
4	6	12
5	3	10
6	2	9
7	1	8
8	4	8
9	1	7
10	2	10
11	1	8
12	2	5
13	2	3
14	2	2
15	1	4

Source: own processing of data from existing documents.

The EEM-related terms used to describe German course and training programmes can be divided into the following five categories based on their substantive content:

- the first, comprising five elements, relates to a conceptual approach and includes the following terms: *New Work, New Work economy, Human-centred approach,* personalisation, optimised employee experience,
- the second, comprising three elements, covering job titles/specialisations related to employee experience management, such as: *Experience Designer, New Work facilitator, Employee Experience Specialist,*
- the third, comprising two elements, concerning the internal contextual conditions for implementing EEM: People-Culture-Fit and employee experience strategy,
- the fourth, comprising eight elements, whose components (Employee Journey, Employee Mapping, employee lifecycle phases, employee learning journey, Employee Experience, Digital Employee Experience, moments of truth, pain points) correspond to the concept of employee journey mapping,
- the fifth, comprising 12 elements, whose components relate to the terminology associated with experience design: EX-Roadmap, active shaping of employee paths, personas, eNPS, DT, Service Design, Service Prototyping, employee experience initiatives, new interface possibilities, EX Design, Employee Experience Management and Design, creating moments of surprise for employees.

In Polish offerings, conceptual approaches (the first set) are described using as many as 17 words/phrases, although there is only one term in common with German offerings, namely – experience optimisation. The others are: positive EX, CX and EX synergy, holistic CX and

EX management, EX and CX integration, empathy/empathisation, empathetic leadership, the era of experiences, the EX model, Total Experience, employee experience management, customer and employee experience management (Customer Experience and Employee Experience Management), Candidate Experience, improving employee experiences, enhancing employee experiences, and managing employee well-being.

The equivalent of the second set is an empty set, whilst the third set contains – as in the German offers – two terms: customer-centric organisational culture and EX strategy (the latter being a common term).

The fourth set is almost three times larger (comprising 23 elements) than that identified in the German offers, as it contains the following components: experience measurement, Employee Experience/Customer Experience, mapping of employee journeys, Touchpoints – mapping, emotion mapping, feeling mapping, empathy map, Employee Journey (Map), visualisation of impressions, visualisation of behaviours, pain points, visualisation of the journey, visualisation of opinions, Total Journey/overall experience, categories of employee experiences, level of employee experience, employee voice, employee experience platform, quality of employee experience, configuration of employee experiences, key moments of truth, experience survey, mapping of employee experiences. Six of these are therefore common to those found in German offerings.

The remaining terms (21 in total) belong to the fifth set. These include: added value for the employee, vision of the experiences offered (Experience Promise), management maturity, insights, co-creation, story sharing technique, Service Blueprint, human-centred design, employee experience mentoring, exceptional experiences, building the employee experience, designing employee experiences, digital employee experience – design and implementation, personas, the Kano model, DT (Design Thinking), IPA (service quality research method), NPS (Net Promoter Score), eNPS (Employee Net Promoter Score), CSAT (Customer Satisfaction Score), CXS (Customer Experience System). Thus, these four terms form a common element of the above-mentioned set in both Polish and German offerings.

The range of training methods is relatively diverse, although the emphasis in both countries is on workshops. The similarity of the market for the aforementioned training courses on the Polish and German markets concerns – apart from the volume of supply – their subject matter, target audience, partial price transparency, and the differences – price levels, the terminology used to describe the offer, the number and qualification profiles of trainers, the extent to which the teaching process incorporates new technologies, as well as – the benefits cited for participants. Differences also exist between domestic providers.

5. Discussion and conclusions

EEM represents an innovative approach to employee relations that is fundamentally transformative – including from a strategic perspective (Yang, Zhang, 2025) – which must be understood and learnt, as failure to do so will result in the depreciation of human capital (Lipka, Winnicka-Wejs, 2013). Although the literature on the subject (Yang, Zhang, 2025) indicates that practitioners pay greater attention to experience management than theorists (there being an insufficient number of analyses by the latter), research conducted (relating to training companies) has shown that there is currently a shortage of offerings. The markets for EEM trainings/courses in both Poland and Germany are therefore characterised by a lack of fragmentation on the supply side, which may indicate an early stage of their development/maturity, and at the same time – their potential for growth. Two segments can be distinguished within these markets – the 'more expensive' segment, with longer (though not as long as before the COVID-19 pandemic) training courses, and the 'cheaper' segment, with courses sometimes lasting only a few hours. In terms of price disclosure, they are partially transparent (some companies do not state prices directly, but rather, for example, after clicking through further links), in terms of homogeneity, they are highly varied (heterogeneous), and in terms of atomistic, they may limit organization's ability to develop managerial competencies.

"Gaps" in the analysed Polish offers – compared to German ones – include the concept of *New Work* and personalisation, as well as terms relating to professions/specialisations. Meanwhile, "gaps" in offers in both countries include employees' search for experiences, experience modules, the model of universal experientialism, the antecedents of employee experiences, particularly the most important one concerning autonomy/meaningfulness of work, as well as – the differentiation of concepts: experience – lived experience, the three-level pyramid of experiences (this type of term does not appear in the analysed offers, whereas pain points and 'surprises' (or 'delight points'), whilst work comfort/employee effort indicators are omitted), *job crafting*, an EEM-oriented organisational structure or *employee experience* (risk) controlling, and the quality costs of designing/redesigning employee experiences. It was also noted that some training firms, 'under the guise' of *Employee Experience Management*, 'sell' content not directly related to this issue, such as shaping the organisation's image.

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