

## THE DEGREE OF DEVELOPMENT OF COST-SENSITIVE CULTURE IN ENTERPRISES IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

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### Abstract

The continuous market demand for low costs is emphasized both in literature and in practice. Therefore, this paper explores the degree of development of cost-sensitive culture in enterprises in the Republic of Serbia (RS). The basic characteristic of such culture is the continuous cost reduction, which is especially important during a crisis. Empirical research is conducted through four research question, and the general conclusion is that cost-sensitive culture in enterprises in the RS is still under construction. Application of the proposed measures could contribute to a faster development of such culture.

**Key words:** cost-sensitive culture, cost reduction, global economic crisis, TCM concept, TQM concept

## ИЗГРАЂЕНОСТ ТРОШКОВНО-СЕНЗИТИВНЕ КУЛТУРЕ У ПРЕДУЗЕЋИМА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРБИЈИ

### Апстракт

Континуиран захтев тржишта за ниским трошковима истиче се како у литератури, тако и у пракси. Зато се у овом раду истражује степен изграђености трошковно-сензитивне културе у предузећима у Републици Србији (РС). Основна карактеристика ове културе је континуирана редукција трошкова, а она посебно добија на значају за време кризе. Емпиријско истраживање се реализује преко четири истраживачка питања, а општи закључак је да је трошковно-сензитивна култура у предузећима у РС у фази изградње. Примена предложених мера би допринела бржој изградњи.

**Кључне речи:** трошковно-сензитивна култура, редукција трошкова, глобална економска криза, TCM концепт, TQM концепт

### *INTRODUCTION*

Costs are a continuous subject of interest of both natural and legal persons both in private and in business life. Some authors have stressed the fact that the number of published papers in the field of cost management is smaller compared to their importance, and the main reason is because the importance is implied (Markovski, 1983). However, “oil shocks” from the 1970s, reduction in enterprise size in the 1980s and 1990s, the global economic crisis from 2008, and other circumstances have placed a demand for forming a ramified and comprehensive informational platform concerning cost management. Costs must be planned, monitored, analysed and controlled from various aspects (Novićević, 1998), with the end goal of cost reduction. During crisis, this is the only way to survive for a large number of enterprises.

Bearing in mind that the goal of this paper is to highlight the importance of a cost-sensitive culture in general, and especially during crisis, and to examine the condition in enterprises in the Republic of Serbia, it is structured in the following way:

- the first section provides an overview of the relevant literature dealing with the importance of cost reduction, as well as examples of practises implemented in successful companies;
- the second section defines the goals of the research, the sample, and the methodology used;
- the third section presents results of the research in relation to the specified research questions;
- the fourth section presents a comparative analysis against the results of research performed by the associates of the monthly magazine *Preduzeće*; and
- the final section presents the key considerations and implications for decision makers.

### *LITERATURE OVERVIEW AND EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE*

Manufacturing goods and providing services requires consumption of resources. Bearing in mind that the resources are limited and the needs are unlimited, conserving the resources is a continual requirement. Bolwijan and Kumpe (1990) investigated the genesis of market demands and came to the conclusion that low costs are a continual requirement, which has been supplemented by other requirements over time. As a result of that:

- in the 1960s the only market demand were **low costs**,
- in the 1970s it was expanded to **low costs** + high quality,
- in the 1980s it was **low costs** + high quality + flexibility, and
- in the 1990s the combination of **low costs** + high quality + flexibility + uniqueness was required.

Ferdows and Demeyer (as cited in Fisher et al., 1994, p. 2) also conducted a research on a sample of 187 European manufacturing enterprises regarding the dependence on market demands, such as cost-efficiency, speed of delivery, reliability, and product quality. The dependence was presented in the form of a *sand cone*, where cost efficiency is at the top of the cone and is not easily achieved. Namely, in order to increase cost efficiency by 11%, the rate of delivery should be increased by 15%, reliability by 25%, and product quality by 40%. This also stresses the necessity for the coexistence of the concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Total Cost Management (TCM).

Fisher et al. (1994) introduced a new cost management concept – total cost management (TCM) – which is based on sensitive-cost culture. This means that all employees in an enterprise must save continually, while top management must serve as an example. The *3T-3C-3M* model is recommended for the implementation of the TCM.

In the recent cost management literature, increased attention has been paid to the management of overhead costs and to the creation of new business models that integrate Porter's three generic strategies. Thus Coyne et al. (2010, p. 78) see in overhead costs the potential for 'cutting down' the cost. The implementation of incremental ideas can help achieve the reduction of overhead costs of up to 10%, the ideas of redesigning of up to 20%, and the ideas given by several departments of up to 30%.

Wald et al. (2013) also argue that in the overhead costs lies a hidden potential for cost reduction. Their conclusion is based on the research conducted in seven European countries on the following sample: 22 Belgian firms, 22 Dutch firms, 23 French firms, 31 Finnish firms, 138 German firms, 20 Italian firms, 23 Spanish firms, and 22 firms from other European countries. They sorted the overhead costs into 23 categories, and investigated which of the 13 techniques (methods and tools) had been used in managing these costs. The number and the importance of the applied techniques are very different in different countries, and the previously mentioned authors explain this by different organisational cultures, and the specific elements of the context. An interesting result of their research is the fact that about 83% of the enterprises from the sample had been paying much more attention to the management of overhead costs only in the previous three years (Coyne et al., 2013, p. 38), which overlaps with the time of the global economic crisis.

Williamson proposed a new business model for cost reduction, the so-called cost innovation business model. This model combines the advantages of Porter's generic strategies, because that is the only way to meet the demand of the growing segment of consumers that require "everyday low prices and increased value for money" (Williamson, 2010, p. 347), i.e. 'to do more with less'.

Heracleous and Wirtz (2010, p. 146) cited an example of the Singapore airline company, Singapore Airlines (SIA), which applies a strategy of cost leadership and a differentiation strategy, through which it successfully achieves excellent service at low costs and both standardisation and personalisation of services. In addition to other factors, this is further reinforced by a strong organisational culture.

The necessity of saving resources is not emphasised only in the literature, but also by presidents of certain big companies, who started their mandate with a savings program. Lee Iacocca (Ajakoka, 1996) was the president of the Ford Motor Company from 1970 to 1978. Immediately upon arrival, one of his first acts was to gather the top management in order to define the Cost Reduction Program. The program was called 4/50 (four fiftieth), because he intended to reduce the costs by \$50 million in four areas: production planning, product complexity, design, and the obsolete way of doing business. That way, in the three-year period, the profit would be increased by \$200 million without any increase in the turnover.

With the arrival of Hiroshi Okude to Toyota Company in 1995, production managers were given the task of saving \$800 million each year, because that would enable the company to achieve the most important goal without increasing the turnover and without any new investments: to increase the profit by 82%. This provided the basis for the popular Toyota Production System (TPS) (Chung and Kleiner, 2012). In July 2000, the Toyota Company adopted The Savings Program CCC<sub>21</sub> (Construction of Cost Competitiveness for the 21<sup>st</sup> century). The main objective of the Program was “massive cost reduction throughout the organisation with the goal of saving \$10 billion within the program’s five year plan” (Chung and Kleiner, 2012, p. 14), and its implementation was monitored by the president of the company, K. Watanabe.

With the onset of the global economic crisis in 2008, the purchasing power of a large number of customers decreased, and, consequently, the demand was reduced. According to the report of the US Commerce Department, the demand in the US in the first seven months of 2009 dropped by about 20%, compared to the same period in 2008 (Doerman, 2009). The Fund for the Development of Economic Science in the Republic of Serbia underlines the main cause for the recession in the Republic of Serbia (RS) to be a decline in export demand by 21% and in domestic demand by 7% (Krivokapić, 2009). Some authors see the only solution for increasing the demand during crisis in the reduction of sales price through cost reduction (McManus, 2009; Zorić, 2009; Veljović, 2010).

### *DEFINING RESEARCH GOALS, SAMPLE, AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY*

Considering the fact that the relevant literature on cost management and the practices of successful world companies imply that the low costs are a continual market demand, the aim of this paper is to answer the following four research questions about cost management in enterprises in the Republic of Serbia (RS):

**RQ<sub>1</sub>:** *Is there a cost management culture in enterprises in the RS, especially since 2008?*

**RQ<sub>2</sub>:** *To what extent does the application of the TCM and TQM concepts coexist in enterprises in the RS?*

**RQ<sub>3</sub>:** *Which cost management techniques are applied in enterprises in the RS?*

**RQ<sub>4</sub>:** *On what types of costs do enterprises in the RS save?*

The obtained results are expected to show whether a cost-sensitive culture has / has not been developed in the enterprises in the Republic of Serbia.

In order to answer the research questions we used:

- a questionnaire with 19 questions,
- survey results from a sample of 54 enterprises in the RS,
- interviews that were conducted by the associates of the magazine *Preduzće* with the top managers of some enterprises in the RS, and the representatives of the Union of Employers of Serbia, the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, the Agency for Energy Efficiency, the Agency for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and banks that provided financial support to enterprises in the 2008-2011 period, and
- research results of Wald et al. (2013) from a sample of enterprises from seven European countries.

A questionnaire with 19 questions included four questions of a general character and 15 referring to cost management. The general questions referred to the business activities of an enterprise, type of ownership, number of employees, and legal form. Out of the remaining 15 questions, 11 were of a closed format, while 4 were combined, i.e. included a combination of closed and open-ended response formats.

A total of 250 questionnaires were sent in electronic form to top managers in early December 2013, and they were asked to respond by the end of December 2013. In that period we received answers from 54 respondents, which represents a little more than 1/5 of the questionnaires sent, so the paper analyses the results from these 54 questionnaires. Table 1 contains the "identity card" for 54 enterprises in the RS. Namely, it contains information about their: business activity, number of employees, type of ownership, and legal form.

Table 1. General characteristics of respondents

Elements of Identity Card	Structure					Total
1. Business activity	Production 24%	Services 44%	Trading 13%	Production-trading 13%	Banks and other financial institutions 6%	100%
2. Number of employees	Micro 26%	Small 35%	Medium 19%	Large 20%		100%
3. Type of ownership	Domestic-Private 70%	State-owned 15%	Mixed 9%	Foreign-Private 6%		100%
4. Legal form	Limited Liability Company 61%	Joint-stock company 20%	Public 11%	Entrepreneur 8%		100%

Source: Authors' calculations

According to the Law on Accounting (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 62/2013), *according to the number of employees*, enterprises are divided into micro, small, medium, and large enterprises. The analysed sample shows the largest number of small enterprises which, combined with micro enterprises, make up for as much as 61% of the total. Small and medium enterprises make up 80% of the total sample. Only 20% of enterprises from the sample are large enterprises. Such structure represents a suitable base for the construction of a cost-sensitive culture.

*According to the type of ownership*, 76% are privately owned (70% of domestic and 6% of foreign capital). Private ownership is a very strong motivator for saving, so the assumption is that the stated number of enterprises is going to have a positive attitude towards cost reduction. 15% of enterprises from the sample are state-owned, and state-owned enterprises in the RS are not a good example of saving, mainly because they employ a higher number of workers than necessary. Therefore, on 6 December 2013, the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia passed a Law on Amendments and Supplements to the Law on the Budget System (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 108/2013).

*As for the business activities*, the largest share is that of service enterprises (44%), and these include all types of services other than trading and financial services (7 for transport services, 6 for consulting, 3 for tourism, 3 for utilities, 3 for maintenance, 1 for the catering industry, and 1 for photocopying). The second place is held by the strictly production-oriented enterprises with 24%, and the third place is held by the production-trading enterprises with 13%, and the trading enterprises with 13%. Production-trading enterprises are those engaged in production, but they also have their own sales network. Banks and other financial

institutions have the smallest share (6%). Such diverse structure shows the widespread nature of the cost-sensitive culture.

*Structure according to the legal form* is interesting. Very few are registered as entrepreneurs (only 8%), although, in recent years, entrepreneurship has been increasingly promoted and encouraged in the RS. Enterprises with private capital rather choose the form of a limited liability company, because in that form they are only liable with the capital of the enterprise, and not with all of their assets. As much as 61% of the enterprises from the sample exist in the form of a limited liability company, which is understandable bearing in mind the volatile and uncertain business conditions. Since shareholding in the RS does not have a long tradition, the participation of joint-stock companies with 20% is satisfactory. These are joint-stock companies that issue common shares, and the propensity for taking risks is present, since the shares bring dividends only if a profit is gained. Ownership share through the stocks is a prerequisite for the cost-effective behaviour of the employees.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

Testing of the research questions is performed through the discussion of the results gained in the survey.

*RQ<sub>1</sub>: Is there a cost management culture in enterprises in the RS, especially after 2008?*

Several questions from the questionnaire can point to a culture of saving as the ultimate result of cost management (Table 2). The structure of answers given in Table 2 (to questions 1 through 6) shows that there is a very high level of awareness about the importance of saving. What is unsatisfactory is the percentage of positive answers to question 7, which requires the least effort to *sometimes* move from periodically being informed about saving to being informed continuously, and therefore increases the percentage of being informed by 42%, i.e. to 89%. Likewise, with question 4, some type of saving award could be introduced, which would provide the employees from the additional 22% enterprises from the sample with the incentive to save.

Since the global economic crisis started in 2008, the answer to question 8 in Table 2 should show whether the respondents have been paying more attention to saving after 2008. The answers offered were *yes* and *no*. 21% of the respondents added the answer *considerably*, suggesting that the awareness about saving has increased after 2008. If you add the 58% of the answers *yes*, then there are 79% of positive answers compared to the 70% of positive answers to the question: "Do you always save in your enterprise?"

Table 2. Questions and answers regarding the respondents' culture of saving

Questions	Answers			Total
	Yes	No	I don't know	
Is it useful to save?	98%	2%		100%
Do you plan cost savings regularly?	85%	9%	6%	100%
Should incurred costs be controlled?	100%			100%
Do you reward those who save?	78%	22%		100%
Should all employees save or should only production workers save?	98%	Only production workers 2%		100%
Do you always save in your enterprise?	70%	21%	9%	100%
Do you inform your employees about the savings?	47%	42%	11%	100%
Have you been paying more attention to saving since 2008?	58%	21%	21%	100%

Source: Authors' calculation

According to this research question, three conclusions can be drawn:

- the respondents are highly aware of the importance of saving, and this awareness has increased even more after 2008;
- being better informed about the results of saving and greater incentives for saving could be used to increase this awareness;
- the culture of cost management in enterprises in the RS is in the construction phase.

*RQ<sub>2</sub>: To what extent does the application of the TCM and TQM concepts coexist in enterprises in the RS?*

The TCM concept involves continuous management of all types of costs by all employees in an enterprise. Each employee can contribute to cost reduction while performing their duties, and, therefore, cost reduction is obligatory for all employees. Any form of trade-off is unacceptable, because saving by some employees and on certain types of costs cannot compensate for the excessive expenditure of other employees and other types of costs. The application of the TCM concept can be tested from answers to the corresponding questions from the Questionnaire (Table 3).

Answers to questions 1 and 2 from Table 3 are directed at the continuous cost management, because 85% of the respondents regularly plan cost savings. If you add the percentage of those who plan to save *sometimes*, i.e. 9%, then 94% of respondents are aware of the importance of planning savings. In addition, 98% of respondents believe that all employees should save, and that they should always do it. However, actual behaviour does not



match the planned behaviour, because only 70% always save (answer to question 5). The 21% of those who do not save is quite high, especially since the percentage of those who have given the answer *no* to the question “Have you been paying more attention to saving after 2008 (during the crisis)?” (question 8 from Table 2) is the same (21%).

Answers to the question “Who controls the costs?” are typical for enterprises with traditional management in general, and even with traditional cost management: 93% of respondents said that cost control at their enterprises is done by the enterprise management (in 38% of enterprises immediate managers, and in 55% of enterprises senior managers). Only in 7% of the respondents was the spending controlled by the employees themselves.

According to the TCM concept, senior managers should serve as an example of saving and should support saving in an entire enterprise: they should be the so-called *saving champions*. Immediate managers are in direct contact with the employees, and therefore have the best insight into the spending of resources. They should act as coaches – to educate the employees about the importance of saving, to assist them in the implementation of the proposed saving measures, and to encourage them to propose such measures themselves. Employees are the ones most familiar with their own work, and can thus propose the best solutions for saving.

Table 3. Questions and answers of respondents about the level of application of the TCM and the TQM concepts

Questions	Answers			
Should all employees save, or should only production workers save?	All 98%	Only production workers 2%		Total 100%
Do you plan cost savings regularly?	Yes 85%	No 6%	Sometimes 9%	Total 100%
When is it the most important to save?	Always 98%	During crisis 2%		Total 100%
Who controls the costs?	Employees 7%	Immediate management 38%	Senior management 55%	Total 100%
Do you always save in your enterprise?	Yes 70%	No 21%	I don't know 9%	Total 100%
Should we save on the expenses of decreasing the quality of products/services?	No 94%	Yes 0%	If necessary 6%	Total 100%

Source: Authors' calculation

Since the concept of TCM emerged as a counterpart to the concept of TQM, the questionnaire asks a direct question about the connection between these two concepts. To the question “Should we save on the expense of decreasing the quality of products/services?” 94% of the respondents said

*no*, and 6% answered *if necessary*. Since the answer *if necessary* was not offered but was added by some of the respondents, they also provided explanations. By answering *if necessary* they assume that if a customer cannot pay the price for the quality of products/services offered, then the enterprise should offer a lower quality at a lower price.

This additional explanation and the results given in Table 3 confirm that:

- the respondents are aware that quality has a price, but the customers should be offered the quality of products/services they can afford (provided that a lower quality does not jeopardise the health and safety of the users);
- products of poor quality can be more expensive than the high quality ones owing to the costs of complaints, additional processing, and the loss of reputation;
- this indicates their awareness of the coexistence of the TCM and the TQM concepts.

*RQ<sub>3</sub>: Which cost management techniques are applied in enterprises in the RS?*

*Table 4. A comparative overview of cost control techniques*

Types of cost control techniques	European countries (%) <sup>*</sup>	Results of our research (%) <sup>**</sup>
1. By comparing to planned costs	62.8	49
2. By comparing to actual costs from the previous year	-	46
3. Negotiations	60.1	-
4. Supply prices analysis	43.5	-
5. Benchmarking (Comparing to competition)	43.5	5
6. Comparing to the prices of the acquisition firms	32.2	-
7. Contract management	30.2	-
8. Balance of cost allocation	29.6	-
9. Allocation of internal costs	28.6	-
10. Supplier assessment	26.9	-
11. Ratio systems	23.3	-
12. Analysis of general costs	12.0	-
13. Check lists	11.3	-
14. Other	0.3	-

<sup>\*</sup>Source: Wald et al., 2013, p. 32

<sup>\*\*</sup>Source: Authors' calculation

The awareness of saving can be assessed on the basis of the number of techniques used to manage costs. In the Questionnaire, one of the questions pertains to that problem: "How do you control the incurred costs?" There were three types of responses offered, and also an additional possibility to add other techniques; however, no alternatives were added. 49% of respondents answered that they controlled the real costs by

comparing them to the planned costs, 46% by comparing to the actual costs from the previous year, and 5% by comparing to the competition. These 5% include transport enterprises that work in concert to adjust the prices, which is why they are familiar with both the prices and costs of the competition.

If we compare this structure of answers with the research results performed by Wald et al. (2013, p. 32) in enterprises in seven European countries (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Finland), and only for the management of overhead costs, it can be seen that the structure provided by our respondents is very modest and, except in *comparison with the competition*, belongs to traditional control techniques (Table 4 presents a comparative overview).

*RQ<sub>4</sub>: What types of costs do enterprises in RS save on?*

Although we believe that an enterprise can save on all types of costs, in the Questionnaire we offered only 10 possible types. The respondents expanded the list to 18, where the number 18 contains answers: *on all business costs; on everything; other*. The added answers confirm our opinion. Table 5 contains the structure of answers to the question: “What do you save on in your enterprise?”

*Table 5. Types of costs that the respondents save on*

Type of cost that is saved on	Structure of the ratio of the number of respondents (%)
1. Representation costs	20.0
2. Business trip costs	19.0
3. Advertisement costs	16.0
4. Electricity costs	13.5
5. Overhead material costs	8.0
6. Water costs	7.0
7. Salaries	6.5
8. Raw material costs	5.0
9. Telephone services costs	0.5
10. Fuel costs	0.5
11. Costs of special deliveries in case of production delay	0.5
12. Rebate, cash discount, and other discounts in procurement	0.5
13. Leakage, dispersal, and breakage	0.5
14. Goods distribution costs	0.5
15. Planned rejects costs	0.5
16. Costs of reducing the defects and poor quality	0.5
17. Unnecessary costs	0.5
18. - All business costs	
- All of the mentioned items	
- On everything	0.5
- Other	

Source: Authors' calculation

The first six types of costs on which the respondents are saving are in the category of overhead costs, while the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> place are occupied by the direct costs (salary and raw material costs). Such responses are consistent with the results presented by Wald et al. (2013), which show that in the RS enterprises' overhead costs also represent a hidden potential for saving.

*COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH THE RESEARCH RESULTS FROM  
THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE "PREDUZEĆE"*

*Preduzeće* (eng. *Enterprise*, publ. by Ekonomist Media Group, Belgrade) is a professional magazine that deals with the issue of reduced demand and providing solutions for its increase. Professional associates of the magazine based their articles on the interviews with enterprise executives and representatives of the Union of Employers of Serbia, Serbian

*Table 6. Saving measures according to articles in the magazine Preduzeće*

Professional associate of <i>Preduzeće</i>	Applied saving measures
Radmilac-Đurđić, 2007, pp. 16-22	Facility management
Krivokapić and Radmilac-Đurđić, 2008, pp. 16-24	Costs of exhibiting at fairs (common appearance)
Krivokapić, 2008, pp. 16-27	Everyday precise record including the smallest costs Purchasing second-hand equipment, since its price is around a quarter of the price of new equipment Joint purchasing, since it offers a discount Purchasing on time: neither too early, nor at the last minute Saving water, electricity, and fuel Print management Paying in cash to gain a discount Avoiding penalty interests Using free online applications Decreasing the number of hierarchical levels Outsourcing Not creating judicial costs Saving on the phone costs by networking the employees Using a larger number of suppliers
Lapčić, 2008, pp. 26-27; 2009, pp. 36-37	Merging communication Increasing the production process Reducing the quantity of products with error
Krajnc, 2010, pp. 46-47	Energy efficiency (rearranging the business space, energy efficient lighting, energy star equipment)
Krivokapić, 2010, p. 21	Internal costs control Merging business processes None of the types of saving should influence the quality of the finished products

Chamber of Commerce, the Agency for Energy Efficiency, the Agency for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and banks that provided financial support to enterprises of the RS in the 2008-2011 period, and accordingly created a list of saving measures undertaken by the enterprises in the RS in the stated period.

An overview of the applied measures from Table 6 supports the results of our survey pertaining to the fact that enterprises can save on all types of costs and to the coexistence of the TCM and TQM concepts. Since the articles for *Preduzeće* analyse the period of the crisis, Table 6 shows the increased importance of saving during the crisis.

### *CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DECISION MAKERS*

The obtained conclusions represent the answers to the research questions and the base for a proposition of measures for constructing cost-sensitive culture.

From the answer to the first research question ( $RQ_1$ ) it can be concluded that the enterprises in the RS are more increasingly aware of the importance of saving (98%) than they are willing to actually implement saving measures (70%). The crisis of 2008 necessarily increased this awareness, so it can be concluded that the saving culture in enterprises in the RS is in the construction phase.

The answer to the second research question ( $RQ_2$ ) is satisfactory in the sense that there is an awareness that all employees need to save and that this should not be done at the expense of reducing the quality of products/services. The situation with cost control is very bad, because 93% of the respondents believe that the control of spending should be carried out by the enterprise management. This is precisely why the traditional position, according to which the basic function of enterprise management is control, should be overcome, and a culture where enterprise management is a saving champion while employees are saving actors and controllers should be developed.

The structure of the answers to the third research question ( $RQ_3$ ) is very modest. Although it was possible to add additional answers, apart from the three offered alternatives, nothing was added. Apart from that, two alternatives represent the traditional control techniques, and they are applied by 95% of the respondents. Since the enterprises in the seven stated European countries apply as many as 13 techniques for overhead cost management, enterprises in the RS have a high potential of unapplied techniques for total cost management at their disposal.

With the fourth research question ( $RQ_4$ ), the respondents expanded the initial list of 10 offered answers to 18, and some of the added answers include *all business costs* and *the costs of reducing the planned rejects, defects, and poor quality*. These answers indicate the willingness of the

respondents to apply the concepts of the TCM and TQM simultaneously and also their awareness of the coexistence of the two concepts.

Based on the conclusions from the research questions, two general conclusions can be drawn:

- the global economic crisis has increased the awareness of the necessity of saving and the need for controlling all types of costs, and
- offering products/services of poor quality is not considered as saving.

Such conclusions show that a cost-sensitive culture in enterprises in the RS is still in its construction phase. Sample size can be seen as a limitation for the validity of the derived conclusions. This further shows the necessity for undertaking measures that would build trust between the academic researchers and enterprise management in the RS, since that would give way to a productive, continual cooperation. Furthermore, the results of the empirical research would be more valid and more useful in business management.

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## **ИЗГРАЂЕНОСТ ТРОШКОВНО-СЕНЗИТИВНЕ КУЛТУРЕ У ПРЕДУЗЕЋИМА У РЕПУБЛИЦИ СРБИЈИ**

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### **Резиме**

Портер је предложио три генеричке стратегије за стицање конкурентске предности: стратегију лидерства у трошковима, стратегију диференцијације и стратегију фокусирања. У савременим условима, предузећа не могу постићи одрживу конкурентску предност имплементацијом само једне стратегије, а у време кризе то им не омогућава опстанак. Зато се у пракси, најчешће, истовремено имплементирају стратегија лидерства у трошковима и стратегија диференцијације. Williamson је креирао пословни модел који комбинује све три генеричке стратегије. Интересантно је да је такав пословни модел предложен 2010. године - у време глобалне економске кризе. Суштина модела је захтев да предузећа са мање ресурса производе што више, јер је куповна моћ највећег броја потрошача опала. То значи да цена коштања производа треба да пада, што се постиже редукијом трошкова

Преглед литературе је показао да се редукија трошкова сматра континуираним захтевом потрошача, а преглед праксе да су успешне светске компаније редовно примењивале неки вид "сасецања" трошкова, комбинујући га са стратегијом диференцијације и стратегијом фокусирања.

С обзиром да глобална економска криза из 2008. године није мимоишла ни предузећа у Републици Србији (РС), као циљ рада смо поставили утврђивање да ли у предузећима у РС постоји трошковно-сензитивна култура, а посебно после 2008. године. Тај циљ смо операционализовали преко четири истраживачка питања, на узорку од 54 предузећа.

Општи закључак је да је трошковно-сензитивна култура у предузећима у РС у фази изградње, а спремност за изградњу такве културе је већа после 2008. године. Свест о њеном значају је на вишем нивоу од спремности да буде имплементирана у пракси. Боља информисаност о резултатима штедње, о томе како се оно што је уштеђено троши и већа мотивисаност за штедњу преко система плаћања су мере за изградњу трошковно-сензитивне културе, а које предлажемо доносиоцима одлука. Такође, изградњу поверења између академских истраживача и менаџмента предузећа видимо као услов за бољу сарадњу и валиднија емпиријска истраживања.