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A Model to Identify the Influence Factors of the Adults Professional Training Process

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Abstract:

The article offers a model that can be used to identify the influence factors of the adults professional training process. An important place in the paper is covered by the description of the influence factors derived from the human behavior which are mostly subjective (lack of special concern for improving adult training; sincere but mistaken views; maintaining skills and attitudes; lack of time; lack of self –control; vanity and interests, external to adults training process).

The paper underlines the practical importance of knowing the influence factors in choosing the analyzing procedures and techniques, adequate for each concrete situation from every entity which carries on adult professional training activity, as premises for the substantiation of the decision making process, for a continuous improvement of the activity.

Keywords:

Adult professional training, influence factors, exogenous factors, endogenous factors, homogenous factors, heterogeneous factors, quantitative factors, qualitative factors, objective factors, subjective factors, main factors, secondary factors, SWOT analysis, system, process.

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Introduction

The factors represent the whole elements or conditions contributing to a particular process, action or phenomenon.

Factors planning and quantification is part of a complex interdisciplinary analysis that involves statistics, mathematics, law, sociology, economics and so on (Androniceanu, 2008). Three methodological sides can be distinguished by studying the influence factors:

- Identification of the influence factors of phenomena and processes subjected to study and revealing of their inner relationship;
- Quantification of each influence factor acting on the studied phenomenon;
- Decision making for the activity continuous improvement

A Model to Identify the Influence Factors of the Adults Professional Training Process

The adults' professional training activity is influenced by a great number of factors acting with different intensity in time and space, sometimes going opposite directions even cancelling each other. The factors identification and prioritizing according to their role in the adults professional training activity, establishing connections between the analysed factors and quantifying their influence is made up by grouping them according to different criteria (Boeru, 1995).

The exploratory and explanatory research (Sandu, Alexa, Ponea, 2012; Ponea, Sandu, 2011) conducted by us have offered information on the way in which the adult professional training process is carried on in existing environmental conditions directly related to the factors of influence (Pichiu, 1996).

The main data collection techniques were observation and questionnaire – based survey.

The information obtained allowed us to identify factors of influence, to group them according to different criteria, to define the content of each group with explanations and examples as follows:

A. According to the place they occur:

- *Exogenous Factors (external)*. Acting outside the entity, they cannot be changed but they can be known and used in order to achieve objectives.

For example: training needs and demand of the labour market, economic conjuncture, the competitive environment, legislation, technical progress, etc.

- *Endogenous Factors* (internal). Acting inside the entity, they can be controlled and organized to ensure the company's responsiveness to labour market needs (Kermally, 2009).

The large number of internal factors allows their dividing into several subgroups, namely:

- Factors related to the organization and conduct of courses;
- Factors related to the promotion of training programs;
- Factors related to the evaluation of training programs.

B. According to their content there may be :

- Homogenous Factors (simple) They refer to a restricted number of elements, eg : the lack of specific furniture fitting learning activities.
- Heterogeneous Factors (complex). They refer to a large number of elements that give a complex character to our analysis. For example: the evolution of the number of participants is influenced by the dynamics of training need and demand, which in turn are influenced by complex economic, social, psychological factors (Knoll, Hinzen, 2005).

C. According to their qualities they may be:

- Quantitative factors. They influence the quantitative results of the activity. For example: the increasing of the number of students increases the number of graduates.
- Qualitative Factors. They influence the quality of the results obtained. For example: refinement of the learning methods influences students' progress in acquiring knowledge and skills training (Lock, 2007).

D. According to the degree of influence they may be:

- Main Factors (essential). They have a great influence on activity. For example: training and trainers work directly influences the quality of the entire training process.
- Secondary Factors (unessential). They have limited influence on activity. For example: spaces that do not rigorously meet specific requirements for the learning process.

E. According the degree of reflection of reality, there are:

- Objective Factors. The results of these factors do not depend on the company's activity. For example: the influence of labour market dynamics phenomena.
- Subjective Factors. Particularly related to human behaviour, their influence, although not quantifiable, determines significant changes in the quality of training (Martin, Jackson, (2008).

Within each group we identify all the influence factors, the causes that led to their manifestation and the relationship among them (Earl, 2010). For example: Endogenous factors group comprises a large number of factors, with positive or negative influences on the way in which the management functions and principles of the PDCA (planning, organizing, control, continuous quality improvement).are carried on These factors may refer to:

- Quality of the training plan and program;
- Organizing activity;
- Monitoring and evaluation process etc.

For each factor is necessary to establish causes. For example: the poor quality of the training program can be due to the lack of the specialised training of the persons involved in the programs elaboration, lack of interest in performing quality work, lack of team spirit and cooperation. Each of these causes have explanations that have to be identified in order to be able to formulate concrete solutions for improvement of the training activity (Jigău et al, 1998).

The trainers training is included in the essential factors group as this may have a negative influence on the entire activity by cancelling the positive influences of the other factors (Nica, Iftimescu, 2008). That needs further analysis to determine the causes of these influences. These could be:

- lack of criteria in selecting trainers;
- lack of systematic monitoring;
- lack of concern for an objective evaluation of the activity;
- lack of strong measures for deficiencies remediation etc.

In systemic approach plays an important role the knowledge of influence factors. This provides useful information for substantiating decision making process concerning the improvement of the professional training of adults. In the research conducted we identified a number of factors, largely subjective. We gave them a wider space as they influence the entire FPA activity

They are:

- *lack of special concern for improving adult training,*
- *sincere but mistaken views,*
- *maintaining skills and attitudes,*
- *lack of time*
- *lack of self-control;*
- *vanity and interests, external to adults training process.*

Lack of special concern for improving adult training sometimes occurs in the phase of developing training programs. Superficial formulation of objectives, skills, activities, their lack of correlation with SO/SPP leads to losing sight of what constitutes the content of training. *As a result, training programs do not provide neither learning methods to be used based on information provided by adult pedagogy nor educational resources appropriate for the themes objectives and content.*

From the study of 55 professional training programs submitted to the Commission for Authorization of Training Providers, Iasi County, through Technical Secretary in Iași County, revealed that in most cases, the learning methods provided are inappropriate to the contents resulting from occupational standards and training standards, such as: *case study and brainstorming*, which occur frequently in training although they are not appropriate in content. Discussions led to the conclusion that case study is resumed to an example and brainstorming is limited to some opinions expressed by students when giving answers to different questions.

This way methods are emptied of content whether they would be appropriate in content and prepared in advance they would have positive effects in *cooperative learning* (Pop, 2008).

The lack of special concerns relating to improving training results from the fact that they do not know and therefore do not provide training programs *that use group as a resource for each of its members* such as: training-group-teambuilding (team development), techniques such as : aquarium, mosaic, forced choice and so on (Godeanu, Roșcan, 2010).

Sincere but mistaken views. In this category we include opinions coming from surveys based on questionnaires according to which:

- in terms of training providers, trainers do not need a special teacher training for adult training;

- courses could be reduced only to support study course without attending theoretical and practical activities;
- no organized activities to achieve cooperation between trainers.

Such views cause a rudimentary approach of training content and process losing sight of the fact that any efficient course *pose serious problems in the design and conduct of, as well as involving students in the activities.*

The lack of cooperation between trainers reduce opportunities for interdisciplinary approaches of the themes, as well as overlaps, repetitions and so on., which negatively influences continuous improvement activity.

Maintaining skills and attitudes – resistance to change. Permanent search of suitable methods and adult training devices is, in our opinion, essential Maintaining inadequate skills decreases the degree of receptivity to change. Therefore, the outdated , inadequate, improvised way to organize and conduct courses is kept and the new methods and means provided by adult pedagogy are not used and sometimes even ignored. Moreover, those concerned are convinced that what they do, they do very well.

Lack of time is cited by most trainers.. Actual situation is due to the fact that adult learning activity is additional work that trainers are doing daily to companies, institutions, schools where they are employed.. Lack of time leads to the maintenance of some old procedures, methods, means adapting provisory solutions, sometimes with the intention to improve or replace when time will allows. In fact, time passes, pass rates, without interfering anything new and methods are becoming increasingly ineffective.. The phenomenon shoots, when in addition to the core business the same trainer supports courses at two or three modules (subjects) with completely different content.

Lack of self-control –self evaluation. In our opinion, self evaluation is crucial for adult training activity Discussions in the interviews revealed that both training providers and trainers have difficulties when put in position to observe and critically report their own activity. Typically, as shown above, it is considered that everything is done right and there is nothing to be added. In reality, it is shown that there are so many requirements in the training activity organization and conduct of a course that can never be fully satisfied. This ignorance creates great difficulties in self evaluation and adaptation to specific requirements of those lacking teaching experience and pedagogical knowledge.

In such situations it is not recognised that the progress in human thought in general, *represents, largely a breakthrough in man's capacity to formulate his ignorance* (Clemmer, 2006). The lack of this ability is manifested in some trainers when for an additional income, without taking into account the specialized training and experience, a greater number of hours, regardless of discipline is pursuit.

If we add to all a course support designed and built (if not copied from various sources) outside the basic requirements of a manual, the picture is complete. We fully endorse the opinions as follows: sufficiency is prerogative of ignorant and ignorance is omniscient, so, the less we know the more we have fewer doubts. Only a well organized mind is able to critically integrate what is new (Palaghia, Miftode,2012) what science, social and individual experience creates permanently. Intellectual mimicry, rapid, smoothly and no reserve adaptation expressing lack of dynamic and harmonious mental architecture.

Vanity and interests, external to adults training process. Although small scale there is some influence of such factors like ambition, the desire to make an impression, self conceit and lack of self evaluation ability to self evaluate are enemies to be feared of cooperation and team working. Their absence makes it impossible to seriously alter information exchange and professional training content. If we add personal interests the situation becomes totally alien even hostile to adult training activity.

Conclusions

Knowledge of the factors of influence and the links between them have practical importance in choosing appropriate means and analytical techniques for specific circumstances of each entity (Drucker, 2010). The information obtained can be used in the SWOT analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, the organization and monitoring of evaluation and finally, the foundation of decision making processes.

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