

The Analysis of the Selected Factors Influencing the Selection of Employee Training Methods

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Abstract

The subject of the article is the issue of employee training as a very important human resource management practice. The article focuses on the analysis of selected factors that are important in the employee training methods selection process. In order to find up-to-date information on the status of education in Slovak companies, the research was carried out on a sample of 104 companies. Data were collected from January to April 2017 via a standardized questionnaire that was distributed in person and electronically to executives responsible for the implementation of education in their company. The aim of the research was to identify statistically significant differences in the use of selected training methods in terms of selected factors, namely the difficulties of implementing the given training method (time and money), the expected increase in labor productivity thanks to the training and the development of skills needed for the career development of employees. In order to meet the objective of this article four statistical hypotheses were tested using the Kruskal-Wallis test at the significance level of α 0.05. All hypotheses tested were accepted.

Keywords: Human resource management (HRM), HRM practices, training, development.

Introduction

Education is an underlying mean for successful functioning of any company. The knowledge of employees directly affects company's prosperity. Employee training depends on specific requirements of the company. It can be said that the constantly changing requirements, especially those coming from the external environment, give rise to the need to learn and improve the qualification of employees or managers (Dudinská et al., 2011). Education as such is necessary for the further development of one's personality. This fact does not concern only employees at the lowest level of the company hierarchy, but also managers. Employee training is an indispensable tool for professional growth of employees. Every change requires new skills and attitudes as well. Companies that do not invest time and money in this kind of development cannot hope for any benefit from ongoing external and internal changes (Cartwright, 2003).

1. Theoretical background of training and development in a company

Training is a planned effort of the company to create suitable conditions for acquiring the necessary work competencies. These competences include the knowledge, skills or behavior that are critical to successful work performance. The aim of any training is to ensure that the employees master the knowledge, skills and behavior highlighted in the training programs and apply them in everyday activities (Quinn, Anderson, & Finkelstein, 1996). Training can be seen as the most important factor in the business world, as education increases efficiency of both employees and the organization as a whole.

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Employee performance depends on various factors. However, the most important factor in employee performance is training, so it is imperative to organize various trainings and workshops (Afaq, & Khan, 2008). As Beckhard defines, organizational learning is planned, top-down, corporate-wide effort to increase organizational efficiency and health. Organizational learning is achieved through interventions in the organization's "processes" using the necessary knowledge (In Vinesh, 2014). Education has a clear role to play in achieving organizational goals by linking organizational and workforce interests (Stone, 2002). Organizational education must have a comprehensive strategy designed to change organizations' attitudes, values and structures so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets and challenges (Vinesh, 2014). Warner Burke emphasizes that organizational learning is not just "done to improve the company ". Learning and education are processes that aim to deliver specific results that include organizational reflection, improvement of the already-existing system, planning, and own analysis (In Vinesh, 2014). Investments in education and development are crucial for any company. High performance companies are increasingly recognizing the need to use the best training and development practices to increase their competitive advantage. Training and development are essential elements of every company that values its human resources. Many studies have highlighted the clear link between well-designed and strategic education and development initiatives and the nature of business as such (Vinesh, 2014).

If the company wants to gain a competitive advantage, training must involve more than basic skills development. This means that in order to gain a competitive advantage, the company should generally perceive training as a tool that creates the intellectual capital. Intellectual capital includes basic skills (skills employees need to carry out their own work), advanced skills (for example, how to use technology to share information with other employees), understanding the customer or production system and own creativity (Raymand, 2010). Education and development are important activities that increase the overall performance of the company (Iftikhar, & Siraj, 2009). Employee performance depends on many factors such as job satisfaction, knowledge or management's approach. However, according to several studies there is a significant relationship between training and performance (Amisano, 2010). This demonstrates that employee performance is important to the company's performance, and training and development are means to improve employee performance. Training also has an impact on return on investment. Organizational performance depends precisely on employee performance because human resources play an important role in increasing organizational performance (Iftikhar, & Siraj, 2009). Although many organizations focus on efficiency and cost control, education spending should increase as the organization becomes more efficient. The education is also important in terms of getting quality employees. Career development is an increasingly attractive or even basic requirement for many employees. In today's business environment, where many industries experience shortages of skilled employees, companies face strong internal and external competition when searching for quality employees. Any employer who seriously invests in education and development will benefit from the enriched work environment in terms of higher degree of employee stability as well as greater productivity and performance (Vinesh, 2014). It should be remember that traditionally most of the training places emphasis on basic and advanced level of skills. However, some experts estimate that up to 85 percent of jobs in the United States and Europe will require extensive use of knowledge. Employees will need not only to understand the service or product development system but also to share knowledge and use it to modify the product or serve the customer (Raymand, 2010).

1.1 Deciding on the use of training methods

The basic goal of any training is to help the management achieve its goals by utilizing and developing the skills of employees. Education is thus understood as a continuous and systematic activity (Vetráková, 2006). Human resources are very important and constitute the backbone of every company. They are also the key source of the company. Bearing this in mind companies invest enormous amounts into human capital because performance of employees will ultimately greatly increase the performance of the company. Performance is an important multidimensional result-oriented construct and has a strong link to strategic goals of the company. The effect of education is largely influenced by the choice of appropriate employee training methods that represent the means and practices used when providing and acquiring knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes (Kachaňáková et al., 2013). Based on the previous experience it can be stated that no method can work like a hard work does. Taking this into account, the effectiveness of employee training is crucial for ensuring a harmonious link between the objectives, topics, methods and place of education and employees and lecturers (Kubalák, 2013). The roles of employees and managers in the company influence the path which education, development and overall educational activities will take. Traditionally, employees were to perform their work as instructed by managers. Employees have not engaged in improving the quality of products or services.

However, with the emphasis on creating intellectual capital and moving towards the high-performance work systems, employees today perform many tasks that were originally intended for management only (eg. people recruitment, job planning, customer interaction, vendors) (Van Eynde, 1992). If companies use teams to produce goods and provide services, team members need training in solving problems regarding human resources as well as team skills. If employees are responsible for the quality of the products and services, they must be trained to use available data to make a decision, including training in statistical process control techniques (Raymand, 2010).

It is very important for the company to plan trainings very carefully (Armstrong, 2000). The training design should be in line with the needs of the employees (Ginsberg, 1997). Lecturers must understand that the educational content should be meaningful while the employees should have an opportunity to provide and gain feedback. The most effective way to learn is to look and interact with others. The choice of training also covers the purpose for which the training is carried out (Raymand, 2010). Those companies that develop a good training program according to the needs of employees and the company alike always achieve good results. Education planning seems to play a very important role in the performance of the employee as well as in organizational performance (Partlow, 1996). An inappropriately chosen educational proposal is nothing but a waste of time and money (Tsaur, & Lin, 2004). The types of training and development goals will depend on the personal and organizational goals identified by the strategic planning process. In any case, the education objectives have to take into account at least the following criteria (Vinesh, 2014):

- Aim.
- Values.
- Strategic goals.
- Equal opportunities rules.
- Requirements for key competencies.
- Personal and professional development.
- Requirements for professional qualifications in further education.
- Organizational change requirements.

The first step in choosing a training method is to determine the type of outcome the company wants. These outcomes can include verbal information, mental skills, cognitive strategies, attitudes and motor skills. Training methods may affect one or more outcomes. Research on specific training methods has shown that in order for the training to be effective, the teaching process must be consistent with the desired outcome. The choice of the method should be based on the required outcomes and on the features that facilitate learning and knowledge transfer. Once the method is identified, the next step is to assess to what extent the method facilitates the learning and transfer of knowledge, the costs associated with the development and use of the method and its effectiveness (Raymand, 2010). Employees are aware of ways training is provided (Armstrong, 2000). If someone does not provide training in an eye-catching way and does not capture the audience's attention, it means it's just a waste of time (Griffin et al., 2000). It is very important for the lecturer to know how to grab attention of his/her audience. It is very difficult for the employee to work well without any preparatory education (Garavan, 1997). Trained employees have better results compared to unskilled employees (Partlow, 1996). It is very important for each company to provide its employees with training in order to achieve the desired goals of the company (Flynn et al., 1995). Training and development increase the overall performance of the company. While it is costly to provide training to employees, in the long run the money is spent well (Flynn et al., 1995).

2. Methodology

In order to find up-to-date information about the state of education and training in Slovak companies, the research was carried out on a sample of 104 companies from January to April 2017. For the data collection, a standardized questionnaire method was used. The questionnaire was distributed in person or via electronic form to senior management employees responsible for education and training in their company. The aim of the research was to analyze the factors that influence the choice of training methods by the employer.

Given that the learning process (and at the same time the choice of methods) is different with respect to the type of job, attention has been paid to training methods intended for managers as well as to the fact that the use of these learning methods is time and financially more demanding. For the research purposes the following training methods were selected:

1. Job rotation.
2. Lectures, seminars.
3. Brainstorming.
4. Assessment centre (AC).
5. Workshop.
6. E-learning.

To achieve the main objective of the research, partial goals were set as follows:

1. Comparison of the utilization rate of selected training methods in terms of the complexity of their implementation (time and financial difficulty)
2. Comparison of the utilization rate of selected training methods in terms of the desired result (increase in employee productivity, development of skills necessary for career growth of an employee)

Four statistical hypotheses were tested in order to meet the set goal using the Kruskal-Wallis test at a significance level of α 0.05.

3. Results and Discussion

The first variable was the time consumption of individual training methods.

H0: It is assumed that there are no statistically significant differences in the use of selected training methods in terms of time necessary for their implementation.

H1: It is assumed that there are statistically significant differences in the use of selected training methods in terms of time necessary for their implementation.

According to the research results, respondents consider the workshop as the most challenging method, followed by AC and brainstorming, and these methods are also the least frequently used when compared with other methods. The detailed results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of selected training methods in terms of their time consumption

Time consumption	Job rotation	Lectures, seminars	Brainstorming	AC	Workshop	E-learning
Mean	2.32	2.61	2.93	3.06	3.11	2.02
Median	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
Std. Deviation	.993	1.126	1.117	1.078	1.105	1.231
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5
Inter. range	2	1	2	2	2	2

Source: output of Statistics 21

When testing statistically significant differences between these methods using the Kruskal-Wallis test, we found the values at the level $p < 0.05$, therefore we have to reject H_0 and accept H_1 . It can be said that the choice of training methods will also depend on how much time the company is willing and able to devote to the training of its employees. The results of testing H_1 are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Testing the hypothesis H1

Test Statistics	
	Time consumption
Chi-Square	94,219
Df	6
Asymp. Sig.	,000

Source: output of Statistics 21

Another important factor that companies must take into account when deciding on the choice of methods is the finances. Training and education are often seen as a financial burden, and therefore this factor undoubtedly greatly influences the choice of training methods. The research aimed at finding out whether there are significant differences in the use of individual methods with regard to their financial difficulty.

H0: It is assumed that there are no statistically significant differences in the use of selected training methods in terms of the financial difficulty of their implementation.

H2: It is assumed that there are statistically significant differences in the use of selected training methods in terms of the financial difficulty of their implementation.

Respondents perceive the method AC, workshops and lectures/ seminars as the highly costly. The least financially demanding, according to the respondents, is the method rotation at the workplace, which is also the most commonly used method together with e-learning. Specific values are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Comparison of selected training methods in terms of financial difficulty

Financial difficulty	Job rotation	Lectures, seminars	Brainstorming	AC	Workshop	E-learning
Mean	1.98	2.54	2.33	2.77	3.17	1.79
Median	2.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	1.00
Std. Deviation	.995	.994	1.161	1.256	1.153	1.204
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5
Inter. range	2	1	2	2	2	2

Source: output of Statistics 21

The statistical hypotheses were verified using the Kruskal-Wallis test, which led to the rejection of H0 and acceptance of H2, thus confirming that the selection of the individual methods is related to the amount of available funds. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Testing the hypothesis H2

Test Statistics ^{a,b}	
	Training in terms of finances
Chi-Square	109,428
df	6
Asymp. Sig.	,000

Source: output of Statistics 21

The third variable we focused on in the research was the increase in labor productivity. Our intention was to find out if companies use different methods depending on how much labor productivity increase they anticipate. According to the research results, the brainstorming, AC and workshop methods showed the greatest impact on the increase in labor productivity (according to respondents). However, these methods are also used less frequently since they are financially demanding and time-consuming. The detailed values for each method are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Comparison of selected training methods in terms of their anticipated impact on labor productivity increase

Impact on the increase of labor productivity	Job rotation	Lectures, seminars	Brainstorming	AC	Workshop	E-learning
Mean	1.971	2.50	2.8462	3.0096	2.9615	2.4135
Median	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
Std. Deviation	1.037	1.00484	1.22885	1.16997	1.08765	1.22760
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5
Inter. range	2	1	2	2	2	1.75

Source: output of Statistics 21

H0: It is assumed that there are no statistically significant differences in the use of selected training methods in terms of their impact on the increase in labor productivity.

H3: It is assumed that there are statistically significant differences in the use of selected training methods in terms of their impact on the increase in labor productivity.

The hypotheses were tested using the Kruskal-Wallis test, with the value p being in this case zero. Therefore, the hypothesis H0 was rejected and the hypothesis H3 accepted. It can be said that respondents really perceive individual learning methods differently in terms of how they can influence labor productivity. And, according to the results, it is obvious that methods that are time and financially demanding for implementation also have the most significant impact on labor productivity from the point of view of the respondents.

Table 6: Testing the hypothesis H3

Test Statistics	
	Training and its impact on the increase of labor productivity
Chi-Square	78,921
df	6
Asymp. Sig.	,000

Source: output of Statistics 21

The research also investigated how respondents perceive methods based on how their use can affect their career growth. We were interested to find out whether the choice of the training method takes into account the need for career development of employees. The results again pointed out that the brainstorming, workshop and AC methods were considered as the most effective methods of education, also in terms of their impact on the career development. The detailed values are shown in the Table 7.

Table 7: Comparison of learning methods in terms of their anticipated impact on career development

Impact on career development	Job rotation	Lectures, seminars	Brainstorming	AC	Workshop	E-learning
Mean	2.03	2.63	2.94	2.94	2.82	2.50
Median	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00
Std. Deviation	1.056	1.034	1.173	1.253	1.059	1.223
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5
Inter. range	2	1	2	2	2	1

Source: output of Statistics 21

H0: It is assumed that there are no statistically significant differences in the use of selected training methods in terms of the impact on the career development.

H4: It is assumed that there are statistically significant differences in the use of selected training methods in terms of the impact on the career development.

Table 8: Testing the hypothesis H4

Test Statistics	
	Impact of training methods on career growth and development
Chi-Square	53,409
Df	6
Asymp. Sig.	,000

Source: output of Statistics 21

Summary

Based on research results, it is clear that companies are aware of the diversity in the use of selected training methods, as all tested hypotheses have been confirmed. The first two hypotheses tested the differences in the difficulty of implementing selected training methods, confirming the existence of differences between the methods in terms of time and financial demands. Two other hypotheses tested the differences between the methods in terms of their effectiveness, namely in terms of their impact on the increase in labor productivity and the career development of employees. Based on the results of the research carried out on a sample consisting of Slovak organizations, interesting findings emerged. An interesting finding is that companies usually choose methods that are less time and finance consuming. It has turned out that from the point of view of the actual implementation of training, the most demanding methods are AC, workshop and brainstorming which, due to the above-facts, are used less frequently than methods that are not so costly and do not require so much time for the actual implementation. The most frequently used methods within the group of surveyed methods are job rotation, e-learning and lectures/ seminars, while job rotation and e-learning are considered as less costly and less time-consuming. It can therefore be stated that time and finances are very important factors when deciding on the choice of training methods. The reason for preferring methods such as job rotation, e-learning and seminars may also be that these methods are usually performed by internal staff and do not require the use of external specialists. Also, methods such as job rotation or e-learning often do not require a larger number of learners at a given time, making learning much easier and more flexible.

When analyzing the impact of individual methods on labor productivity and career development, it was found that respondents perceived AC, brainstorming and workshop as the most effective methods. However, these methods were used less frequently than the other methods examined. The reason is that their implementation often requires the involvement of external staff and education specialists, thus requiring higher involvement from the company. At the same time, these methods support a wide range of knowledge, and can develop new skills such as creativity or innovation as they are carried out in an interactive way where employees are actively involved in the learning process. Based on the results obtained, it is obvious that even though companies perceive differences in the effectiveness of individual learning methods, they prefer to use methods that are not time consuming and financially demanding although they are not as effective in their view as methods whose implementation requires quite a lot of time and money. Based on the results, it is possible to state that time and finances are more significant factors when deciding on training methods than the effectiveness rate of those methods.

Acknowledgements This work was supported by the Slovak Grant Agency under Grant VEGA No. 1/0909/16.

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