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ADULT EMPLOYEE TRAINING IN A CHANGING ORGANIZATION

Abstract: The main emphasis in this paper is put on the process of organizing training for adult employees in a learning organization, as well as the training methods for this employee group. The paper presents and studies the training methods for adult employees. The methods are divided into two main groups: traditional methods and technology-based methods. Moreover, this paper gives a thorough explanation for the adequacy of training methods in terms of adult employees, as well as a selection of the most appropriate training methods for this employee group, based on profound theoretical research. The results of a practically conducted research in organizations in the Republic Macedonia will be presented in the paper. Furthermore, additional analyses are made, which allow more relevant conclusions to be obtained. The conducted research gives a practical dimension to theoretically studied matter and the whole paper presents the big picture. This paper also gives insight into other important special issues concerning this area, and there is a brief discussion about future trends with regards to employee training.

Keywords: training, adult employees, learning organization, organizing process, methods, research

INTRODUCTION

Imagine the link between the organization that teaches, adult employess and their training in such organization?! Isn't it interesting?! But why do we want to investigate this link? Simply because, firstly, the organization that learns is a concept that in today's changing and turbulent environment must be implemented. Second, every organization in its structure have employees who belong to the older group. And what about them? Should they be removed from the organization or should they be allowed to operate on the basis of their previous knowledge and experience? Such an approach is not correct. First, because they are expected to realize certain relevant results, i.e., efficiency and effectiveness. And secondly, their removal from the organization is not human nd would also createa huge sociological problem. Therefore, the best solution would be these employees to be involved in continuing education, which is provided through training. And so, slowly, we came to the essence of this paper, the relation of the three terms.

From the previuos text, the conclusion is that the key terms that will be explored within this paper are the following:learning organization, adult employess and their training.

We begin with the definition of these three terms and determining their basic characteristics in order to see if there is a correlation among them or not.

1. LEARNING ORGANIZATION

First term that must be explained is a learning organization. Like all other concepts, this idea finds its place in literature, but also in practice.

According to Senge, organizational learning is a continuous process of creating and improvement of the ability of the organization to change. A learning organizationis an organization that continuously increases its capacity for creating results it really wishes, and where new ways of thinking are developed and the employees continuously learn (Senge, p. 3).

According to the concept of organizational learning, the adjustment to the changes in the environment and the creation of the competitive advantages over the other companies, can be achieved through (Senge, p.14)):

- Adaptive learning;
- Generative learning.

The basis for the adaptive learning is in the reactive attitude of the compnay towards changesthat happen in the environment. This implies adaptation of the company to the changes and behavior in accordance with those requirements. Organizational changes by applying this approach are small, partial and usually the organization uses others experiences which proveed to be successful.

According to Senge, thereal organizational learning is the generative learning. This implies a rejection of the old learning and adoption of new knowledge.

The generative learning encompases five technologies of learning (Senge, pp. 7, 8, 9, 12, 236):

- *Systematic opinion;*
- *Personal skills;*
- *Mental processes;*
- *A common vision*
- *Team learning.*

With the systematic opinion, the employeespercieve the organization as a whole made up of interconnected and determined elements between which a cause-consequence-term relationships exist.

Personal skills should be developed as specialization of the employees, regardless of which level of the hierarchy of the company they are. A learning organization does this through its employees which actually are learning.

Mental processesare the perosnal performances, attitudes, and beliefs of the employees that influence their behavior.

The common vision enables training of the employees for making priorities in the execution of the common goals and interests.

The team learning encourages the contest between the employees in the creation of ideas and struggle of opinions among them.

It is very important to define the activities that are being realized in the learning organization. Of course, there are a lot of different approaches, but we accept the approach of Agarwal, according to whom, they are (Agerwel, 2003):

1. Systematic solving the problems;
2. Experimenting with new approaches;
3. Learning from own experience and from history;
4. Learning from the experience and best practices of others;
5.Quick and efficient dissemination of knowledge throughout the organization.

The most important reasons for the learning organizationare the following:

- *The organizations preferr attaining a high level of performance;*
- *Improving the quality in order to achieve greater competitiveness in relation to the consumers;*
- *Loyal employees who love their organization, and that can be achieved only in one and unique way- through their motivation;*
- *Management of the cahanging and turbulent environment, ie, change management.*

2. DEFINING THE TERM ADULT EMPLOYEES

Exploring through literature, we found out that different authors use different approachesabout the age range of employees. A basic principle for determining the age belonging to employees is the number of years of life. We will present two approaches.

According to the first approach, adulthood is a period of optimum mental functioning when the individual's intellectual, emotional, and social capabilities are at their peak to meet the demands of career, marriage, and children.

This period is divided into several sub-periods, such as:

- *Middle age (roughly 30 to 45 year age +/-)*

- Problems of middle age (middle age crisis, how to proceed further in life, in which direction)
- Old age (when the middle age crisis is over)– during old age sensory and perceptual skills, muscular strength, and memory tend to diminish, though intelligence does not. These changes, together with retirement from active employment, tend to make the elderly more dependent on their children or other younger people, both emotionally and physically.

The second approach is according to the authors Sterns andDoverspike.

In defining the adult and the older adult worker, these authors suggest five general approaches: chronological/legal, functional, psychosocial, organizational and life span orientation(Sterns, Doverspike, pp. 299-332).

By the first approach, the distinction between older and younger workers is most chronological age. For example, in USA, exist law, which arranged this differentiation. At the least, all of them recognize people aged 55 and older as adult and older adult workers (Sterns, Doverspike, pp. 256-293).

The functional approach is a performance –beased definition od age and recognizes that there are many individual variations in abilities and functioning at all ages. Individuals go through various biological and psychological changes, including declines, as well as gain increased experience, wisdom and judgment. Individuals can be identified as "younger" and "older" than their chronological age, based on objective measures of their performance.

Psychological definitions of adult and older adult workers are based on social perceptions, including age-typing of occupations perceptions of the adult and older adult workers, and the aging of knowledge, skill and ability sets. The individual's self-perception is also consideree, t.e. how individuals perceive themselves and their careers at a given age.

The organizational view of adult and older adult workers recognizes that the effects of age, and tenure are necessarily related and that individuals age in both jobs and organizations. A definition of adult and older adult workers based on the aging of individuals on organizational roles. As the average age of its members increases, new demand are placed on the organizational subsystems such as human resources.

The life-span approach borrows from a number of the previously described approaches but adds its unique emphasis. It advances the possibility for behavioral change at any point in the life cycle. Substantional differences in aging are recognized as critical in examining adult career patterns.

For the purposes of this paper, the term adult employeerefers to an employeewithover 55 years of age. It should be noted that, although this paper fully applies to adult training employees, this does not mean that these data on employee training are not applicable to other groups of employees. So, the whole process of organizing the training and presented methods for conducting trainings are acceptable and can be applied to all groups of employees, normally with special exceptions.

3. DEFINING THE TERM TRAINING

In the literature we can find many different definitions of training. In addition, we will mention a few. The diversity of their content is determined by the approach used by the authors.

Thus, according to some authors, the training is defined as a process in which people acquire skills in order to successfully perform the tasks (Mathis, Jackson, p. 260). The training should provide the employees with appropriate knowledge and skills which they can use at their current jobs.

According to the next approach, the training can be defined as an effort to improve the performance of the employees at their workplace or a related post. That activity makes changes to the specific knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes and behavior (Петковиќ, Јаничијевиќ, Богиќевиќ, p. 503).

Training can be defined as the systematic process of enriching and expanding the knowledge, skills and attitudes of people to provide better and more efficient performance of the work at the specific workplace (Бојаџиоски, Ефтимов, 2009, p. 151).

Of course, there is a myriad of different approaches and definitions of what constitutes a training (if you type training on google.com, 577 million pages about what constitutes training will open in 0.53 seconds).

Training is important, regardless of the age structure of the employees, but it must be taken into account that there are some methods of training specific to adult employees.

As more receptive to adult employees we can identify the following:

- ....
- ....
- ....

Neither one? Adults have a huge number of issues that must be resolved- family, children, grandchildren, work obligations, decreased ability to remember, reduced working ability, desire to enjoy the work and workplace, etc. We wil explain the methods recommended in the literature for training of adult employees, and then, with the empirical research, we will see what is the situation in our companies regarding this question.

In the literature there are various groupings of training methods from different viewpoints. For the purposes of this paper, we use the classification by Raymond, according to whom, there are: methods of presentation, hands-on methods and group methods, and then he elaborates the methods related to e-learning and mobile technology.

Presentational methods are those where participants are not participating in training, but only passive listeners, and variants of this method iclude lectures and audiovisual methods.

In the lectures, training is one-way, i.e. there is little or no participation of the listeners. The effect is the smallest and the apsorbing power of listeners is the smallest. The effect is largely dependent on the ability of the instructor (the way of teaching, the power to hold listeners' attention, vocabulary, temperament of the instructors). Despite this negativity, it is interesting that this method is the most widely used among the adult employees.

Audiovisual methods include application of technology (radio, television, etc.). Unlike lectures, there is standardization (radio or television recordingsare given once and can be used all the time). These methods are more expensive than classic lectures, but their application is particularly highlighted when things can not be perceived by listeners of the lecture (e.g., real situations that occur in the company). Also with this method, the training is one-way,i.e.there is little or no participation of the audience (a comment to a particular image or frame of the video clip).

Hands-on methods are methods for training that require active participation of the employees in the process of learning.

Methods that belong to this group are the following:

- *On-the-job training;*
- *Simulations;*
- *Case studies;*
- *Playing roles.*

On-the-job training is a structured process conducted at the employees to provide the employee with the knowledge and skills to perform job tasks (Lawson, 2006, p.2).

On-the-job trainings are held while employees are on their jobs, using funds that are part of the job. Although the literature advocates to emphasize that these methods are usually applied to newly recruited employees, and are not effective and efficient for adult employees (because of their knowledge and experience), there is not any evidence that they can be applied to them.

Simulation is a method of training where trainees learn how to perform work on real or simulated equipment used at the workplace, but in fact the training is conducted outside the workplace.

Simulation is the imitation of the operation of a real-world process or system over time. The act of simulating something first requires that a model be developed; this model represents the key characteristics or behaviors/functions of the selected physical or abstract system or process.

Case study is either abstract or real event that is described in order to find solutions by the group that must solve it.

In role play, a real situation is created, and each participant has a task-function-role to play, with precise scenario of his behavior. However, during the use of this method, realistic situations can not be accurately created.

*Group methods*are based on the premise that first a cohesion between the different actors who are members of the group has to be created and then, achieving a common rather than individual targets and developing solid interpersonal relationships between members of the group. By applying this method, employees are familiar with its features (strengths and weaknesses in relation to others).

The last group of methods are e-learning and mobile tehnology. Although new technologies take primacy over traditional, however, this does not mean it will go into history. Actually the greatest effectiveness and efficiency of training methods will be achieved in the case of combination of both methods.

We can mention training through computer application, application of CD- ROM, the Internet and mobile technology, like wifi and Bluetooth.

Unlike traditional methods, these methods have higher quality, the possibility of individual training is bigger, and knowledgecanbe acquired by simply searching on the Internet. But, on the other hand, these methids are more expensive than the traditional methods of training, and it also requires technical knowledge and proficiency in foreign languages from the adult staff, as well as a stronger focus on teaching.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

Questions contained in the questionary, have focused the research interest on elements, which, in accordance with our view, influence decisively on the getting whole and real frame about diagnosing of the condition with applied training of the elderly employees in our 70 firms.

1 Which methods of training are being used in the firms ?

First question that was set in the frames of the questionaire, is about the types of training which are applied in the elderly employees. From the answers of this question, we have constructed the following graph:
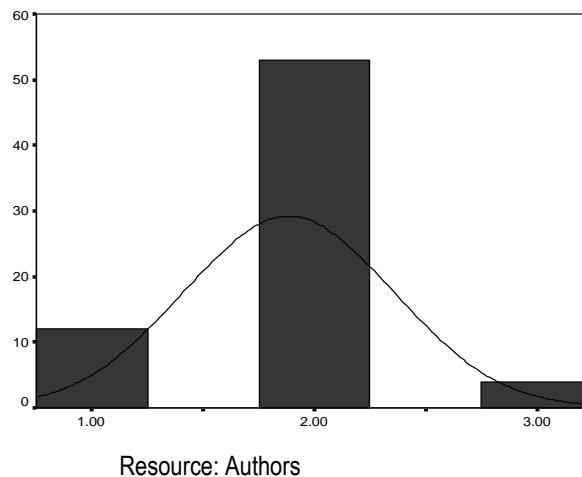(1) presentational 53
(2) hands-on   12
(3) group   5

GRAPH 1: WHICH METHODS OF TRAINING ARE BEING USED IN THE FIRMS

Resource: Authors

From the graph one can conclude that dominant place for execution of training of employees hired in the firms in R. Macedonia has presentational methods. According to the replies, for this form of training 53 out of 70 questioned had said that it has been used, which is about 75.71% from the total questioned mass, for hands-on 12 of those questioned have said that it has been implemented, which is 17.14%, and for group types, only 5 of those questioned, which is 7.14%.

On the basis of the empirical data, we have constructed a chart from which we will see that the research topic has normal distribution.

GRAPH 2: NORMAL DISTRIBUTION OF DATA

Resource: Authors

(1) hands-on   12
(2) presentational 53
(3) group   5

From the projected graph, one can conclude that the research topic has normal distribution which means that one can uses statistical tests for accepting or rejecting the hypotheses, as well as estimating of other means.

2. Does financial stance in the enterprise has influence on the application of the appropriate method of training?

Financial stance of the enterprise is a factor of the application of the appropriate type of training. Which means that between financial stance and training there exist intercorrelation. And, second financial stance determines the appropriate type fo training. In order one to confirm the hypothesis about the interrelationship between financial stance of the firm and the applied mode of training, first one must give answer on the question does on a basis of the data from the questionnaire one can determine their interrelationship. And only if the result shows their interrelationship, one can test the hypothesis about the influence of the type of the environment over the organizational design.

For that purpose, first Pearson coefficient has been estimated about the correlation between applied mode of training and financial stance of the enterprise. On the basis of the empiric results, and than and their processing correlation coefficient of 0.623 has been obtained with the level of significance 0.01, which proves that between financial stance and the applied mode of training there exists high degree of correlation and dependence. Because there exists dependence (correlation) between financial stance and the applied mode of training, one can test the following two hypotheses about the influence of the financial stance and applied method of training:

1. *If the financial stance of the firm is better, the firm uses more expencives methods of training.*
2. *If the financial stance of the firm is getting worse, the firm uses cheaper methods of training*

To test that we are using χ^2 test.

The managers have been questioned Does financial stanve of the enterprise has influence on the application of the appropriate type of training?

With the appropriate estimations froloving conclusions have been drawn:

- *Out of 53 enterprises that have good financial position (stance), 41 or 77.36% are applying more expencive methods of training. Out of 12 enterprises that have bnot so good financial position , 9 or 76% are using cheaper methods of training.*

- *On the significance level of 0.01, critical value of the χ^2 (chi-square) distribution for two degrees of freedom is lower when compared with the realized value of χ^2 test which droves use to the conclusion that one can accept the hypothesis that the applied method of training is determined by the financial stance of the enterprise.*

3. Does the employee structure according to age has influence on the type of applied presentation method?

It is considered that there is diversity in the application of the presentationl methods in dependence from the structure of the employees according to the age in the firm. In order one to see is it a rule that is respected in Macedonian enterprises, following hypotheses have been set:

- *Enterprises dominated by the elderly employees, are applying lectures as a method of training of older employees*
- *Enterprises dominated by the younger employees, are applying audiovisual methods as a method of trining of adult employees*

In order to accept or reject two hypothesis, in the questionnaire we set the following question which the manager should answer:

"Does the structure of the employees by age affects on the applied presentational method"?

After getting the answers and their processing , following table has been constructed:

Table 1 Relationship between structure accordance to age and the applied presentational method			
Employee structure by age	Presentational method		**Total**
	Lectures	Audiovisual	
1. adult employees dominate	38	15	53
2. younger employees dominate	4	8	12
3. structure is equaled	1	4	5

Resource: Authors

With the estimations following conclusions have been drawn about the dependence of the degree of applied presentational method and the structure of employees by age :

On the level of significance 0.01 , critical value of χ^2 distribution for two degrees of freedom is higher than the realized value of χ^2 test by which one can reject the hypothesis that presentational method is dependent from the age structure of the enterprise. But , if one increases the significance level to 0.05 , than the realized value of χ^2 is higher than the critical value which means that between presentational method and the age structure there is dependence.

1. About the questions associated with the applied method of training in hands-on trainings, condition is as follows:

Table 2: Applied method inhands-on training		
type	Frequency	Percentage
On-the-job	38	40.00%
Simmulations	26	27,37%
Case studies	22	23,16%
Role play	9	9,47%

Resource: Authors

2. In the group methods, there was only one question: Do you prefer their application or not?

Answers were:
Out of 70 questioned managers, 45 managers have confirmed (64,29%), while 25 managers (35,71%) did not confirm.

3. Manager need in their work to accommodate on changes in the organizational surrondings, which means there is need of constant training of the employees, no matter their age. Second, research on the organizational changes needs to be a process in which higher number of employees should participate, which will have active role in the process of their planning and comparing. And third, managers have personally to take the risk from failure from the conducted organizational changes.
From those reasons, on the basis of these hypotheses, questions from the third group have been constructed:

1. *Are you ready to make the training process in which all employees would participate, no matter their age ?*
2. *Are you preparing the employees for the neccesary continuous training, no matter their age?*
3. *Do you make prossible for your subordinates to participate in planning and conducting of the training?*
4. *Are you ready to accept the risk from the failure of conducted trainings?*

Folowing are the answers of these questions:

- *Are you ready to make the training process in which all employees would participate, no matter their age ?- 84.29% declared positively.*
- *Are you preparing the employees for the neccesary continuous training, no matter their age?– 81.43% from the examined confirmed.*
- *Do you make prossible for your subordinates to participate in planning and conducting of the training?71.43% responded positively.*
- *Are you ready to accept the risk from the failure of conducted trainings?- in totalm 85.71% from the surveyed declared that are accepting the risk in case of failure in the conduct of organizational changes.*

CONCLUSION

We divided ours paper in two parts.
In the first part, we are tooking about terms, training, adult groups, learning organization and methods of training. Central place in the first part is about methods of training.
In the literature there are various groupings of training methods from different viewpoints. For the purposes of this paper, we use the classification by Raymond, according to whom, there are: methods of presentation (lectures and audiovisual methods), hands-on methods (on-the-job training, simulations, case studies and playing roles), and group methods, and then he elaborates the methods related to e-learning and mobile technology.
It is very interesting that, lectures, is the method which is the most widely used among the adult employees.On-the-job trainings are not effective and efficient for adult employees.
E –learning and mobile technology, have higher quality, the possibility of individual training is bigger, and knowledgecan be acquired by simply searching on the Internet, are more expensive than the traditional methods of training, and it also requires technical knowledge and proficiency in foreign languages from the adult staff, as well as a stronger focus on teaching.
Central point of the part number two is survey.
We made survey in 70 enterprises in Macedonia about using methods of training. On the preseedings pages, we could see results.
First, Macedonian enterprises using traditional methods more than methods connected with e-learning and mobile technology. In the traditional methods, using more presentational methods than all others mentioned methods. Hand–on methods and group methods are using more less than presentational methods.
Financial conditions, have a significance role in the opportunities to choosing methods. In these survey, we gained that, if the financial stance of the firm is better, the firm uses more expencives methods of trainin, and if the financial stance of the firm is getting worse, the firm uses cheaper methods of training
Our survey showing that in enterprises dominated by the elderly employees, are applying lectures as a method of training of older employees, and enterprises dominated by the younger employees, are applying audiovisual methods as a method of training of adult employees.
Manager is need of constant training of the employees, no matter their age. Second, research on the organizational changes needs to be a process in which higher number of employees should participate, which

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