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## Training Needs and the Benefits of Training for Employees of Polish Enterprises

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** The aim of this study is the identification of training needs in Polish enterprises and the benefits they bring to employees as well as the presentation of the goals set by employees related to the training.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Employees of enterprises located in Poland in the Silesian Voivodeship were selected to carry out this research process. In total, 52 enterprises were tested. On the other hand, 208 employees employed in the analyzed enterprises participated in the study. The research was carried out on the basis of the survey method, while the research tool was questionnaires composed of closed questions. The conducted surveys were anonymous.

**Findings:** The research confirmed that there is a statistically significant correlation between the size of enterprises and the perception of the need for employee training, and representatives of medium and large enterprises perceive this need more often. The same applies to the willingness to participate in training and the frequency of the desired training. It is also the employees of medium and large enterprises who see the possibility of promotion related to raising competences in the training, while the employees of micro and small enterprises take part in the training due to the possibility of acquiring practical knowledge. Employees of medium and large enterprises rate the usefulness of the knowledge acquired during the training and its practical significance higher.

**Practical Implications:** The article sheds light on the relationship between the size of enterprises and the perception of training needs as well as the willingness and goals to participate in training.

**Originality/Value:** The article presents the results of research on training needs and their benefits for employees. The article is an attempt to define the training needs and the benefits arising from them in the opinion of company employees from the point of view of their size division.

**Keywords:** Management, human resources, employee training and development.

**JEL classification:** J24, M53, M54, L20.

**Paper Type:** Research article.

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## **1. Introduction**

In a constantly changing economy, the values that are increasingly appreciated are skills and knowledge. You can notice the increasing willingness of employees to expand and acquire competences. The company's development is also greatly influenced by employees having appropriate knowledge. Research carried out in Great Britain in the 1990s showed that the development of staff, especially management, and the development of the organization are very important for the achievement of strategic goals (Walton, 1999). It can be concluded that the success of the organization depends on the qualifications and experience of the staff.

Therefore, in order to maintain sustainable development, organizations must see the continuous training and development of their employees as invaluable. Employee training is essential at all levels of the organization as skills become obsolete over time and must be supplemented (Langer and Mehra, 2010). On the other hand, the experience or problems of an organization depend on the results of its employees (Mwema and Gachunga, 2014). Today's organizations are more effective when most decisions made by employees are based on their beliefs about how to act. Rarely, better results are achieved through an injunction that they are not convinced of (Kopijer, 2016).

Employees knowing that the company invests in their development will tend to work harder. Hard work eventually leads to more returns, and this might be in terms of production or even profit margins. Trained personnel will also ask for less help, ultimately improving their own efficiency further. Employee training and development gives the workforce a good chance to realize their potential and eventually work at their highest level. When an employer realizes the potential in a staff member, and then sends that employee to class to improve his or her skills, the trained staff will be more willing to work at their best level of ability. Maximizing the potential of the workforce has a direct positive impact on the business or organization's profit levels (Oluwaseun, 2018).

For this reason, the aim of the article is to identify training needs in Polish enterprises and the benefits they bring to employees as well as to present the goals set by employees related to the training.

## **2. Literature Review**

The method of investing in the development of human resources depends on the adopted strategy and the selection of instruments. Taylor and Lippitt have identified four distinctive strategic approaches to human resource development. The first one assumes undertaking specific actions only in the event of problems with providing the enterprise with employees with specific knowledge and skills. The second approach is characterized by conducting a targeted policy aimed at creating an appropriate resource of knowledge and skills in the company. The third approach is

characterized by hiring pre-prepared employees and then checking their suitability for various jobs. The most recent approach to human resource development is to buy this potential by recruiting external employees. When they fail to meet their expectations, further cooperation is abandoned (Taylor and Lippitt, 1984). Development prepares employees to occupy positions in the firms and assists them to get future jobs (Drummond, 2000).

Training is one of the basic tools of human resource development. There are many interpretations of the concept of training in the literature. Generally speaking, it can be said that training concerns conscious activities aimed at increasing work efficiency and creating opportunities for additional development of knowledge, skills and competences in terms of promotion, relocation or organizational change (Kostera, 2010). In turn, M. Armstrong believes that training means a systematic change of behavior thanks to knowledge that is the result of education, instruction, development and experience (Armstrong and Taylor, 2016). Training is a process of investing in people, which results in better results and results in greater motivation to act (McDowall and Saunders, 2010).

Thus, it is the series of activities embarked upon by organization that leads to knowledge or skills acquisition for growing purposes. Thereby, contributing to the well being and performance of human capital, organization, as well as the society at large (Nda and Yazdanifard, 2013). According to Aswathappa training is the process whereby employees' aptitudes, skills and abilities enable them to do specific jobs (Aswathappa, 2000). Training can also be defined as a tool for the development of employee competencies. It is the basic form of employee competency development. They help to adapt employees to new challenges posed by the market. Taking the definition of training as a tool allows for a completely different view of this term. It is something that allows you to shape and develop an employee (Preus, 2013).

Learning, training and development can have two meanings for the employees. It can be perceived as an intrinsic motivator, as they support employees' growth, learning and development. It can also be an extrinsic motivator, because they give employees more tools they can use during their work for achieving their goals (Oluwaseun, 2018).

Unfortunately, often the owners of small enterprises treat employee training as an additional cost, and not as an investment in the company's capital. Many SME owners, but also management boards of larger enterprises, approach the problem of training with a distance. They believe that training is expensive, distracts the employee from work, requires vacation, delegation etc., and it is not known to what extent they affect the company's results. The lack of conviction that the money invested in professional development returns many times in various forms: higher work efficiency, lower accident rates, higher customer service culture, higher sales turnover, it is a mental barrier. Therefore, it is necessary to form a new awareness of the need to invest in employees (Ziejewski, 2013). Employees are the company's

capital, but they require an investment. Despite their value, they are profitable. Staff development allows the company to develop. Increasingly, enterprises notice that it is the increase in employee competences that causes the advantage over the competition (Serafin, 2017).

In modern organizations, there is a need to recognize training needs due to the fact that they are more and more common, and also involve additional costs. This diagnosis is the starting point for planning specific training projects. This allows to determine if there really is a problem that we want to solve by training, if specific training is really needed, what is the most appropriate type of training and it minimizes the risk of missed training (Rae, 1999 in Poczowski, 2007). In the course of the training needs analysis, the problem is examined, its symptoms, and the reasons for its occurrence, in order to then understand what changes in knowledge and skills and in the organization of work should be introduced in order to prevent its reoccurrence. The diagnosis is based on the distinction between the training component and the non-training component. The concept of the training gap also determines training tasks, the achievement of which is to prevent the problem from recurring. When defining the needs, a sufficiently detailed analysis of the problem occurrence is made to determine which people should be trained and what is the scope of the training gap for each of them to be able to prepare training addressed to groups with the same deficit levels (Sloman, 2014).

### **3. Methods and Materials**

The organization of the research included five functional stages:  
stage 1 - research programming - defining the purpose, scope, sources of information, type of statistical material, preparation of research techniques and tools,  
stage 2 - observation - conducting a survey,  
stage 3 - control, ordering, grouping and processing of the collected information,  
stage 4 - analysis of the developed material,  
stage 5 - inference based on the analysis of the collected information.

Employees of enterprises based in the Silesian Voivodeship were selected to carry out the research process. The research was conducted both for the companies participating in the research and for their employees in selected areas of the human resource management process. In total, 52 enterprises were tested. On the other hand, 208 employees employed in the analyzed enterprises took part in the study. The research was carried out on the basis of the survey method, while the research tool was questionnaires composed of closed questions. The conducted surveys were anonymous.

In order to implement the assumed research process, the focus was first on the characteristics of the surveyed enterprises. The division of enterprises by industry, the size of enterprises by the level of employment, place of business and area of operation of the surveyed enterprises was taken into account here.

The next stage of the research was the analysis of employees and their relationship with the company. Particular attention was paid here to: gender, age of employees, education, experience (seniority) of employees in a given organization, and work position.

An important indicator describing the enterprises participating in the survey is their division by industry. For the purposes of this study, the following industries were distinguished: finance and banking (15.38% of the survey sample), IT (8.17%), trade /sales (30.29%), engineering and technology (11.54%), production (16, 35%), services (3.36%), other (14.91%). On the other hand, due to the level of employment, more than half of the companies participating in the survey (51.44%) are large enterprises employing more than 250 employees, while 30.29% are medium-sized enterprises employing from 50 to 250 employees. The smallest group of respondents was among micro-enterprises employing up to 10 employees (7.69%) and small enterprises employing from 11 to 49 employees (10.58%). The vast majority of the surveyed enterprises indicated a city with more than 50,000 inhabitants as their place of business. inhabitants (79.2%). 13.3% conduct business in cities up to 50 thousand. inhabitants, and 7.5% in small towns with up to 5,000 inhabitants. Another indicator characterizing enterprises that was taken into account was the area of activity of the surveyed enterprises. The research was related to four types of markets: local (15.10%), regional (11.30%), nationwide (47.20%), and international (26.40%).

Taking into account the staff participating in the survey, 208 people employed in the analyzed enterprises took part in it. Among the respondents, 64.9% were women (135 people), and 35.1% were men (73 people). Referring to the age of employees, these studies were carried out for the following ranges:

- under 25 (10.58%);
- 25 - 35 years (42.79%);
- 36 - 45 years (26.92%);
- 46 - 55 years (11.54%);
- over 55 years old (8.17%).

An important indicator describing human capital is the experience of employees in a given organization, which is expressed in the seniority of employees in the enterprise. Employee experience was defined in four ranges: up to 5 years (35.10%), from 6 to 10 years (24.52%), from 11 to 20 years (23.08%), over 20 years (17.30%). The last indicator characterizing the researched human capital is the current job position. Most of the personnel participating in the study were specialists (38.46%), managerial (24.52%), office worker (20.19%) and production / manual worker (16.83%).

The following research hypotheses were formulated in this thesis:

*H1: The demand for training and the number of training provided is higher in medium and large enterprises.*

*H2: Employees of medium and large enterprises take part in trainings due to the desire to gain knowledge, as well as the promotion opportunities related to increasing competences.*

*H3: Employees of micro and small enterprises take part in the trainings due to the possibility of acquiring practical knowledge.*

*H4: Men and women value the same elements of training equally.*

*H5: Employees of all enterprises (due to the size of the enterprise) use the acquired knowledge during training and believe that the transferred practical knowledge is more important than theoretical knowledge. As a result, this practical knowledge should be the subject of training, and it should be outsourced to external training companies.*

#### **4. Research Results and Discussion**

The best investment in staff is employee training. The training system, and thus the qualification improvement system, should cover all employees. During the last six months, 52.40% of employees participated in training courses organized by the enterprise they work for. 28.85% of employees did not participate, and 18.75% indicated that there were no trainings organized. The research also drew attention to the number of trainings conducted in the last year. 29.33% of employees say that the number of training sessions is the same as usual, and 25% of employees do not have such knowledge. 23.08% of the respondents indicated that the number of trainings conducted increased, and in 11.06% of cases it decreased. In 11.53% of cases, it turned out that training was not carried out.

It turns out that in more than half of the cases, training is compulsory (56.25%), and in 43.75% of cases it is not compulsory. Employees are aware that employee training is needed for development (88.46% of employees), and only 11.54% believe that it is not needed. As for the subject of training, research indicates that it is imposed in advance in 70.67% of cases, and in 29.33% it is not. Most employees are eager to participate in training, as much as 75.96% of cases, while 24.04% are reluctant to participate in training.

The relationship between the answers given by the respondents and their sex and size of the enterprise was tested using the  $\chi^2$  test, while the significance level was assumed to be  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The sample makes it impossible (due to the size) to test the differences of the relevant fractions of the surveyed enterprises, however, it is sufficient for the study of the correlation between the size of enterprises (in the breakdown of small + micro / medium-sized + large enterprises) and selected research areas.

*The first research hypothesis (H1) assumes that the demand for training and the number of training provided is higher in medium and large enterprises.*

Employees most often report the need to participate in training once a quarter (52.40%), while every fourth respondent would like to participate in training once a year (25.48%), and 9.14% once a month. 12.98% of the respondents do not want to participate in training.

The research results show a correlation between the size of enterprises and the perception of the need for employee training. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The values of the correlation coefficient and the assessment of its significance for the size of enterprises and selected training assessments

Question	Measure		
	$\chi^2$	$\phi$	p
Do you think that employee training is needed?	67,383*	- 0,569	0,000
How often would you like to participate in a training?	19,485*	- 0,306	0,000
Are you willing to participate in organized trainings?	44,385*	- 0,462	0,000

**Note:** \* - values significant at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

**Source:** Own study.

There is a statistically significant correlation between the size of enterprises and the perception of the need for employee training ( $\phi = -0.569$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), representatives of medium and large enterprises perceive this need more often. The same applies to the willingness to participate in training ( $\phi = -0.462$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and the frequency of desired training ( $\phi = -0.306$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The second (H2) and third (H3) research hypotheses assume goals set by employees regarding training.

*H2: Employees of medium and large enterprises take part in trainings due to their desire to gain knowledge, as well as the promotion opportunities related to increasing competences.*

*H3: Employees of micro and small enterprises take part in the trainings due to the possibility of acquiring practical knowledge.*

Most of the employees, participating in the training, expect to gain theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. Quite often, employees also count on the possibility of promotion related to increasing competences and obtaining a certificate confirming participation in the training. There is a statistically significant correlation between the size of enterprises and the willingness to acquire knowledge during training ( $\phi = -0.518$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and the perception of promotion opportunities in them related to improving competences ( $\phi = -0.292$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). In both cases, these opportunities are more often noticed by representatives of medium and large enterprises (Table 2).

*H4: Assumes that women and men value the same elements of training equally.*

The conducted research shows that basically all the indicated elements of training are important. The most important elements in the training for employees were the

lecturers, the training program, but also the training atmosphere. The organization of the training, the availability of training materials and the ease of receiving a certificate were also highly rated.

**Table 2.** The values of the correlation coefficient and the assessment of its significance for the size of enterprises and the objectives of participation in training.

Goal	Measure		
	$\chi^2$	$\phi$	p
gaining theoretical knowledge	55,822*	-0,518	0,000
making new connections	0,227	-0,033	0,634
opportunities for promotion related to increasing competences	17,771*	-0,292	0,000
gaining practical knowledge	0,311	0,039	0,577
Receiving a certificate confirming participation	1,299	-0,079	0,254

**Note:** \* - values significant at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

**Source:** Own study.

**Table 3.** Values of the Gamma correlation coefficient and the assessment of its significance for gender and evaluation of individual elements of the training

Elements of the training	Measure		
	Gamma	Z	p
atmosphere	-0,231*	-2,858	0,004
training organisation	-0,435*	-5,537	0,000
training location	0,069	0,901	0,368
training programme	0,055	0,641	0,522
Lecturer	0,026	0,301	0,763
Availability of training materials	0,105	1,253	0,210
ease of obtaining a certificate	0,238*	3,124	0,002

**Note:** \* - values significant at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

**Source:** Own study.

In the course of the correlation analysis between gender and the assessment of individual elements of training, it turned out that men rated the atmosphere significantly higher ( $\Gamma = -0.231$ ;  $p = 0.004$ ) and the organization of training ( $\Gamma = -0.435$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), while women rated ease of obtaining certificates ( $\Gamma = 0.238$ ;  $p = 0.002$ ).

Hypothesis 5 (H5) assumes that employees of all enterprises (due to the size of the enterprise) use the acquired knowledge during trainings and believe that the transferred practical knowledge is more important than theoretical knowledge. Consequently, this practical knowledge should be the subject of training, and it should be outsourced to external training companies.

A statistically significant correlation was confirmed between the size of enterprises and the assessment of knowledge acquired during the training ( $\phi = -0.351$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and a higher assessment of practical knowledge ( $\phi = -0.278$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Employees



of medium and large enterprises rate the usefulness of the knowledge acquired during the training and its practical significance higher. However, the need for greater use of practical knowledge during training and their organization by external enterprises was not confirmed.

**Table 4.** The values of the correlation coefficient and the assessment of its significance for the size of enterprises and selected comments on training

Question	Measure		
	$\chi^2$	$\phi$	p
Do you use the knowledge gained during the trainings?	25,625	-0,351*	0,000
Do you consider the practical knowledge to be more valuable than theoretical?	14,117	-0,278*	0,000
Do you think that the training should provide more practical than theoretical knowledge?	3,688	0,141	0,055
Who do you think should conduct the training?	0,802	-0,062	0,371

Source: Own study.

## 5. Conclusion

An organization to be able to develop, it needs developing employees. Learning and development of employees is a fundamental issue that allows you to plan an efficient and effective training policy in the company. Without a proper vision of development, even the most expensive and most extensive training may not bring the desired effect. Almost every company expects employees to identify with its mission. Without it, it's hard to motivate employees to develop within it. However, adopting an overly business-like perspective, often the concern for human development is abandoned in favor of the organization's development. There is much more to gain by looking at an employee as a unique entity, especially that the workplace where he spends his time is a place where he can develop (Kossowska and Sołtysińska, 2002).

In Poland, there is a growing interest in training, which justifies the need for organizations to develop an efficient training management system, which enables rational management of financial resources allocated to staff development. On the other hand, it also contributes to building a learning organization, one that systematically stimulates the learning process of its members through self-knowledge, understanding their problems and improving themselves by drawing conclusions from experienced failures and successes (Senge, 1998 in Pochtowski, 2007). These types of organizations can be described as future-oriented because they have the skills to generate knowledge, which becomes a strategic resource of the company (Pochtowski, 2007).

The conducted research confirmed the need for employee trainings. There is a statistically significant correlation between the size of enterprises and the perception of the need for employee training - the representatives of medium and large

enterprises perceive this need more often. The same applies to the willingness to participate in training and the frequency of the desired training. It is also the employees of medium and large enterprises who see the possibility of promotion related to raising competences in the training, while the employees of micro and small enterprises take part in the training due to the possibility of acquiring practical knowledge. Employees of medium and large enterprises rate the usefulness of the knowledge acquired during the training and its practical significance higher.

Summing up, the research showed that the analysis of the training needs of employees and the training goals depends on the size of enterprises.

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