

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF IN-COMPANY TRAINING TO SKILLS IMPROVEMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

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**ABSTRACT:** *The following research comes to explore the importance and contribution of in-company training human resources to the business. The literature review shows that education, as a tool for shaping attitudes and attitudes and developing new skills, can play a key role in improving staff skills and thus influencing the overall growth and competitiveness of an enterprise. In the present study, a survey of mixed methods was conducted with quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interview) data and with sample employees from the Greek construction company "Avax". Answers confirm that education provides employees with all the skills and support they need in order to be more efficient and thus increase their competitiveness and productivity. This research adds further data to the area of in-company education and training, since this kind of research in Greece is limited. In addition the impact of the economic crisis and the change in the culture of businesses trying to survive through training and investing in human resources is highlighted.*

**KEYWORDS:** Adult Education, In-Company Training, Human Resources, Educational Needs, Skills.

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### INTRODUCTION

Contemporary international, social and economic changes are creating new demands. People who have completed their studies are facing new challenges on a daily basis and expressing continuing educational shortcomings. "The rapidly changing conditions in the external environment of enterprises, the rapid increase of knowledge in all scientific fields, the continuous technological developments and the increased domestic and international competition make it necessary for the Continuing Vocational Training of the personnel of each enterprise" (Papastefanakis, 2009: 11 ). Moreover, globalization, the rapid increase in the speed of information transmission and the aging of the population have greatly altered the nature of the work by creating new forms of learning and new needs. The knowledge economy, as Prokou (2004) claims, requires employees to have higher education and more specialized skills. More specifically, in the business sector it is noticed that the various businesses are now called upon to act within a globalized environment where competitiveness and the need for higher productivity and quality have risen sharply. Technological developments and the human factor are the main tools in the hands of each business to make them more flexible and adapt to the new order of things. Apart from adaptation, companies seek to grow and increase their competitiveness by using their productive resources (Chittiris, 2001). According to Cedefop, as reported in Gerbessioti (2007), businesses reorganize production processes and require new skills. In recent years, therefore, in order to cope with the frequent changes and demands that these imply, businesses pay particular attention to labor education, since they consider human resources to be a key factor in business development and competitiveness (Papagiannis, 2008).

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **In-company training: the conceptual framework and its directions**

The scientific field of adult education involves vocational training. Adult learners have particular characteristics and needs to be taken into account so that the learning process has the expected results and learners themselves are actively involved and focused on their educational and work experience. Under these circumstances, a program can achieve its purpose and be an investment, and not merely an expense for the organization that provides it. In the field of adult education, therefore, the training of employees of an enterprise may also be included, since it is also a form of adult education and is based on the same principles. In order to understand how this sector has emerged, we must observe the social, economic and labor changes of recent years. In the past, business conditions used to remain stable for a long time, since the work was simpler and the technology had not had such a rapid growth. Besides it did not play such a decisive role in the operation and development of the business as today (Evans, Pucik & Barsoux, 2002). According to Kokkos (2008), adult education has developed particularly over the last decades due to the contemporary economic, technological and socio-cultural needs.

The aforementioned developments have created new requirements. To be able to cope with these, businesses try to gain flexibility and competitive advantage. As a result, it is necessary to continuously renew the working methods and to have uninterrupted specialization and adaptability, as scientific and technological developments devalue rapidly the professional knowledge of adults (Kokkos, 2008). Therefore, the key areas that need continuous development and focus on business are technology and human resources. This need comes to cover the training provided by the company to its employees and is based on the specific needs that exist at the moment. This type of education is called in-company training and belongs to non-formal adult education. It has a more specialized character, in the sense that the content and the way of education are determined by the requirements of the company and the tasks that the employees are called upon to fulfill in order to improve their profitability (Chitteris, 2001). Such programs are conducted in a specific space and time frame and their total or daily duration depends on the following factors, according to Karalis (2008):

- Subject of training
- Purpose and purpose of the program
- The target group to which the program is addressed
- Previous training and professional experience of the participants.

All the above will determine when, how and why an in-company training program will be developed. Each enterprise either has its own department that deals with the training needs of its employees or collaborates with outside bodies. The importance the business attaches to education is called the "learning philosophy". Businesses with a positive philosophy have perceived the comparative advantage of developing and enhancing the skills of their human resources and addressing in-house training as an investment (Bourantas & Papalexandri, 2003). So they have time and money to offer new knowledge and skills to their potential in a variety of ways and approaches.

Continuing with the presentation of the core points of in-company education, it is distinguished, according to Paleokrassas (1990), to "on the job training" and "off the job training". In the first

case, which may include rotation or transfer to another part of the enterprise, coaching and mentoring, training is done through work itself by more experienced workers or trainers. The second case refers to the training that takes place in the workplace, but not at the same time as the work of the employee, and may consist of conferences, workshops, simulations (Armstrong, 1995). It can also be complementary training or continuing training. Complementary education comes to meet needs that may arise, while continuing is scheduled from time to time to keep employees informed of developments in the industry and their sector. Continuing training can be done with up-dating training or upgrading training. Each business, depending on its strategy, goals, time, resources, needs and learners, chooses a different type of education and a different approach (Nassazi, 2013).

Unlike secondary education or higher education institutions aimed at the general education and development of the individual, in-company training has a more specific purpose and seeks to cover educational needs that come from the nature and requirements of the job. Also, human resource education can also contribute to the development of attitudes and behaviors that will help the employee to become more efficient (Vergidis, 2008). These can be team building and smooth and creative cooperation among its members, taking initiatives and quick decisions, providence, effective communication, and so on. Therefore, it is obvious that in-company training not only covers technical needs but also needs arising from the lack of social skills. Thus, through various educational techniques and methods, it can be conducted individually or collectively and cover specialized and non-business needs. Some of these methods are mentoring, seminars and conferences, simulations, but also more formal and organized training programs organized by the business and are done either within or outside the workplace by appropriate adult trainers (Nassazi, 2013). We conclude that in-company training has a more specific and specialized character than general adult education.

### **In-company training and its relationship with the development of human resources**

The new skills required in the workplace have led to the need for a specific form of education focusing on the exploration of training needs and on the design and implementation of programs aimed at developing human resources. The term “human potential” has been widely used in recent years and is preferred to the term “staff or employees”, since it emphasizes the importance of human factor in modern enterprises (Papagiannis, 2008). The people of a business are the most important factor that can contribute to its development and help it stand out. These people and their development are an object of concern by the human resources department of the particular business. This department is looking to provide a business, not only with employees, but also with suitably trained employees who will be able to evolve and develop the business. Human resource needs vary at individual and team level and set separate goals for growth and efficiency improvement (Everard & Morris, 1999). Different people have different knowledge, skills and experiences, multiple identities and roles, different motivations and consequently different needs (Vergidis & Karalis, 2008). Newcomers, before they start working and producing, need training on the subject, but also on the business processes.

Providing appropriate training ensures the high productivity of young workers and their best utilization (Paleokrassas, 1990). Older workers need to be trained to cope with new requirements, improve and prepare for more and more tasks. Therefore, the needs may be different, according to population target, but the need for additional training is present across workers. Taking into account the different needs, in-company training includes a learning process that aims at acquiring knowledge and skills that a worker does not at all need or needs to renew and develop in order to use them to meet the demands of the job of (Chittiris, 2001).

Through training, a more general attitude towards quality, skills and self-integration can be promoted (Papagiannis, 2008).

Therefore, education is directly linked to the development of human resources, since it aims at developing new skills from employees in order to make better use of their work requirements. Considering the people of a business as the most important development factor, in-company training focuses on this and on the best possible coverage of the training needs of employees. The contribution of in-company training to the development of human resources skills education has several positive effects on the development of human resources. According to Phillips (2009), a trained and competent potential can handle more effectively the resulting changes. Also, as stated in the same article, most businesses consider it very important to help their potential not only to acquire new and specialized knowledge but also to develop communication, team and flexibility skills. In particular, Prior (1998) has summarized the benefits of training in human resource development, highlighting the need for business education, to:

- Change
- Increased productivity
- Specialization
- Reduction of errors
- Security

As Peel (1994) points out, technological development, change in consumer needs, new laws and regulations, changes in the environment, new materials and systems and new services, emerging to meet new needs, contribute to the reconfiguration of professions and requirements. Thus, there is a need for constantly redefining and reviewing the skills of employees so that they can respond to the work they are already doing, but on a new basis with new facts. In addition, according to Halas (2009) points out, organizations learning and developing organizational knowledge have the potential to evolve continuously and always be ahead of the competition.

Beyond knowledge and skills, the change in the philosophy that education brings to human resources and business in general plays a very important role. Changing employee attitudes often contributes decisively to business development. A worker needs to participate, help, solve problems, express innovative ideas and make decisions. With the development of human resources, therefore, a social framework is created within the enterprise, where creativity and the development of ideas and innovations are encouraged (Gibb & Waight, 2005). Their attitude towards customers and colleagues, trust and tolerance provide a climate of confidence and calm within the business, which helps to improve individual and collective profitability (Hatzipantelis, 1999).

In order for these changes to take place, it is important that the employee has an incentive in this direction through various incentives offered to him, such as the provision of educational programs (Papagiannis, 2008). Truit (2011) adds two more important benefits to education: developing entrepreneurial thinking and creativity of employees, as well as the satisfaction they get from their work. Stoner (1996) continues to talk about efficiency. He defines it as the ability to produce the desired result by using as few resources and efficiency as possible as the ability

of employees to achieve business goals. The productivity of the company, its reputation and its quality level are shaped and influenced, according to Papalexandri and Bourantas (2003), by the employees' qualifications, their availability, the satisfaction of their work, the sense of justice and their active and practical participation in common goals. Efficiency of a worker is defined by his contribution to achieving specific business objectives in relation to predetermined standards of precision, completeness, cost and speed (Nassazi, 2013).

Effectiveness also greatly contributes to avoiding mistakes. Dimou (2003) mentions the reduction of accidents at work, the avoidance of waste of material and the effective handling of operational problems as some benefits of avoiding mistakes. Occupational health and safety can also play a key role in any kind of business, since the physical integrity of workers must be of utmost importance to employers. Beyond the above, the emotional and personal security that an enterprise offers to its employees can greatly contribute to their performance and efficiency. As Skoulas & Oikonomakis (1998) point out, employees who participate in education and development programs are more committed, feel more secure and therefore improve their performance in terms of quality and quantity. Also, indirectly through education, they are motivated for more intensive and effective work (Dimou, 2003).

Finally, in the age of specialization, education has as a primary role to cover specialized knowledge that is neither taught in universities nor even the period of study of each employee. Through training, human resources can acquire more specialized skills to meet particular requirements. Thus, it gains a competitive advantage over other companies in the same industry. Utilizing new technologies, for example, is one of the specialized knowledge that requires continuous renewal. Technology applications help reduce time to work, and thus increase efficiency, as well as the use of innovative methods that give it superior quality results and a competitive edge over other companies that follow more traditional methods (Peel , 1994). Thus, spending on human resource education can be a very good and long-term investment, as it affects all the areas mentioned above, and it is an investment that produces fruit and brings profit to its inventor (Mardas, 2000).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Objective, Methodological Tool and Sample**

The aim of this research is to investigate the necessity of in-company training and its contribution to the development of human resources, through the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the views of the employees of a large construction company. The method used to conduct the research is mixed, using mainly quantitative and, secondarily, qualitative approach to ensure greater validity and reliability in the results. Priority was given to the quantitative approach, since, according to Creswell (2011), it is best suited for describing and explaining the relationship between two variables and how they affect each other. In our case, these variables are education and human resources development.

The company selected for the purposes of the present investigation is the construction company Consortium: J & P - Avax SA - GHELLA S.p.A. - ALSTOM TRANSPORT S.A. The company was chosen because it fulfilled the prerequisite for providing in-company programs. After the permission was sought and the consensus and cooperation of the company were secured, human resources were set as a unit of analysis. This company is one of the most powerful construction companies in Greece and undertakes various construction projects such as

buildings, harbors, roads, energy. It designs and organizes training programs for all newcomers in the company, as well as subsequent training programs for old and new employees aiming at continuous information on safety and health issues in the workplace, technological developments in the construction sector as well as quality assurance strategies with the international ISO standards. The target population is the employees of the company that are employed in the project "Attiko Metro: Extension of Line 3, Department of Haidari-Piraeus". The sample, therefore, consists of men and women of various ages with a small, medium and long-term course in the company and in the construction industry in general. The sampling was simple and random, as the questionnaires were shared across the workforce and no specific people were selected to respond. Thus, any trend in the population is equally distributed among the people who were asked to complete the questionnaire (Creswell, 2011).

### **The Quantitative Approach**

A questionnaire of a closed type of 22 questions was developed to explore the views of the employees, serving the research objectives and ensuring the reliability and validity of its results. The questionnaire was constructed from the beginning but it was based on several points in the questionnaire of Aidah Nassazi's (2013) diploma thesis "Effects of Training Employee Performance." Thus, the final questionnaire was formulated to meet the needs of this research. Also, considerations of reliability and validity were taken into account, since the questionnaire was initially tested on a pilot basis and in the analysis of the results passed from reliability testing. It should be noted that for statistical analysis only responses from participants who met the prerequisite for participation, who were involved in an in-company training program, were recorded.

The questions are divided into 4 parts: a) demographic data with 6 questions about the sex, age, work place and level of study; b) the frequency and purpose of the in-service training programs with 5 questions about the frequency, quality, purpose and educational techniques of programs; (c) the contribution of in-company training programs to worker skills development with 5 questions on the impact of these programs on performance; correspondence and skills of employees and d) connecting the personal development of employees with business development with 6 questions about the areas which positively influences the-job training according to respondents. The questionnaire was created to be brief, clear, and to record employees' views on the subject of in-company training. In order to test the credibility, validity and functionality of the tool, it was initially a pilot application to a small number of participants. Once the above had been secured and the necessary corrections had been made, the anonymous questionnaires were printed and distributed to be completed by the sample. After 20 days, 80 questionnaires were returned, 74 completed and 6 invalid and blank. Immediately, the preparation, encoding and recording of data in an excel table was started so that they can be statistically analyzed.

Then, they were analyzed on a computer using the SPSS statistical program. In addition to the statistical analysis of the data, the factor analysis technique was used to test the reliability of the results. In particular, the Cronbach Alpha index was chosen as the most appropriate for the number and format of our data, which showed that the study was judged to be satisfactory with a value of 0.789.

## **The Qualitative Approach**

In order to complete the results of the statistical analysis, non-directed and focused interviews were also conducted. The eight participants were people with different positions and experience in the company. Four of them were engineers, one a foreman, one a staff member, and two were from the security and quality department. The contribution of the interviews was considered necessary to achieve the objectives of the research as it offers a more personal communication with the respondents as well as non-verbal indications, so that not only the opinions of the participants but also their mood and attitude can be recorded the subject of in-company training.

An interview protocol specially tailored for the people to whom it is addressed was created, which included information on the interview and the eight questions. The interviews were recorded with a mobile phone and after they were completed, they were transcribed and converted into a written computer file. Then, their analysis was done manually and not using software since they were quite short. The content analysis method was followed for analyzing the interviews. The interviews are a source of textual data for a qualitative study (Creswell, 2011). The texts are taken as evidence and a common method of document analysis is content analysis, which helps to identify data in order to derive valid conclusions in relation to the questions (Robson, 2010). According to Robson (2010), content analysis highlights the direct relation of the content of the presumption to its purpose and its institutional, social and cultural aspects. The analysis focuses on issues related to the subject of study and responds to the needs of this research to enhance and support statistical data.

Initially, a preliminary exploratory analysis was performed to look at the data and gain a general picture of its content and organization. Then, in order to facilitate the analysis process, the data were collected and transferred, as defined by Kerlinger, into categories, and were coded (Cohen & Manion, 1994). The categories were determined by the content of the questions and they were similar to the questionnaire analysis units. The categories were as follows:

- The number of programs shows the experience of the respondents in training programs.
- The purpose of the programs records what each program wanted to achieve.
- The quality of the programs presents the participants' view on the quality level of the programs.
- The frequency of programs highlights the issue of regular or non-training programs.
- Needs coverage records the satisfaction of participants from these programs in relation to their own needs.
- Participation motivates the incentives that motivate employees to participate in a program.
- The contribution to performance highlights whether and to what extent employees believe that participation in such programs affects their performance.
- Contribution to effectiveness highlights whether and to what extent workers consider their effectiveness to be affected.
- The necessity of programs to record whether training programs are considered necessary and necessary by employees.

- Examples of incidents that give a fuller picture of the impact of education on the day-to-day performance of workplace tasks.

Controlling and ensuring the reliability of such methods is a fairly complex and peculiar piece. In this qualitative analysis, reliability was checked using the observer's consistency method. It was checked whether the same data from content analysis gave the same results at different times (Robson, 2010). Since there was no second researcher, consistency was measured in the recorded results of the first. The different types of data collected through a quantitative and qualitative approach relate to the same phenomenon, the contribution of in-company training to business development. The use of data derived from different approaches is called triangulation research (Creswell, 2011). By triangulation, the advantages of the two approaches are taken into account, while their disadvantages are limited.

## FINDINGS

From the statistical analysis of the questionnaires, it was found that the final sample consists of 47 men and 27 women. In the qualitative approach male gender prevails, as of the 8 interviewees, 6 are men and 2 women. The majority of respondents (83.7%) are aged 18-55. In the interviews, the participants mainly belong to the age group 36-55. Regarding the educational level, the overwhelming majority (79.7%) have completed higher education, either at undergraduate or postgraduate level of study, and this is also the case with the interviews. Inside our sample, besides engineers who make up the highest percentage of 40.5%, there are also administrative staff at the construction site, technicians and workers who have undergone some kind of in-house training. A similar percentage exists in the interviews, as 4 of the eight interviewees are engineers, a foreman, a health and safety manager, one in the quality department and one administrative officer. In addition, some had attended a very small number of programs, such as 2-4, while others with long experience had the opportunity to participate in up to 50 programs.

The content of the programs they attended was mainly about security issues at work. Some other programs were about managing human resources, computers and foreign languages, as well as extra training and specialization on their work. It was recorded that 50% of employees believe that their needs are taken into account when designing educational programs. On the contrary, a significant 32.5% is not so sure about it. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents (83.7%) consider that education influences its performance and abilities to a great extent, as it considers it necessary for the optimum response to the job requirements (93.2%). Participants, responding and through their experience, said 72.9% said their knowledge and skills had improved well enough to participate in a training program. This is reinforced by the views of the interviewees who, when asked if they believe that education contributes to improving their performance, all responded positively. They believe that proper education can help employees work well, qualitatively and safely, remind them and keep them informed about good workplace practices and the quality standards that business has and enrich their experiences. A typical employee response is: "Education influences, because [the employee] can deepen through the analytical presentation of cognitive and non-material objects, motivates for competition, improves knowledge and behavior among staff".

The question about the contribution of education to employee skills leads to another question about how much training is needed to enable workers to meet the demands of their work. 93.2%



said that education helps workers work properly and effectively on their duties. This conclusion is reinforced by the interviewees' answers, who have been asked about whether they consider conducting training programs in the company to be necessary. According to their responses, training programs are absolutely necessary. Their necessity is based on the fact that employees consider it of the utmost importance to be informed and trained on safety issues at the workplace to ensure the smooth and safe conduct of their work. In addition, knowledge of new technologies and methods that are constantly appearing in the industry can only be acquired through such programs and help to upgrade human resources. Some other areas in which education is crucial and that is why it becomes necessary is communication and good behavior among employees, the formation of an informed, trained, responsible and committed staff and the best and qualitative response to the demands of the work .

86.5% consider enough or very likely to re-enter an in-company training program. In addition, most respondents replied that the most developed skills were planning, organizing (48.6%) and avoiding errors (73%). Also, communication, cooperation and flexibility were among their responses. The interviews also show that workers as a whole believe that the contribution of education is certainly positive and important as it helps them evolve and specialize, get informed about developments in the industry and get in touch with new methods and techniques, develop their judgment and management skills, and become more responsible employees. Regarding more personal characteristics of the employees, the respondents stated that education had a special contribution to their safety (58.1%) and a feeling of certainty (47.3%). Still, some consider their self-confidence and the satisfaction they get from their work. In the interviews, in addition to the practical part, the participants stated that what helps to increase productivity and can be improved through education is workers' psychology, a sense of satisfaction and creativity and good and effective communication between the members of a group. One of the interviewees put it this way: "This [proper education] has not only a return to work but also a performance in human psychology. It feels full. Our job is construction, that is creation. When the end of the shift finds you have done something, a creation, whatever it is, you are pleased that during those hours you were there offering something.

Following the questionnaire, they were about their participation in training programs that deal with health and safety at work. 74.3% of the respondents consider that these programs have contributed quite satisfactorily to the reduction of accidents at work and, as a result, to the loss of business. This is also apparent from the interviews as, as noted, workers see better and more effective work-life and problem-solving. One of the employees says: "We worked in other conditions a few years ago, and now we have evolved and we are working more humanly and with better security measures. Now we see the mistakes, the dangers, so we take all the measures and that's why we have, as much as we can, fewer accidents".

68.9% of workers believe that in-company training contributes decisively and to a great extent to ensuring a higher quality service and thus to increasing the company's competitiveness. And from interviews they seem to think that through education programs they can fill potential gaps, thus improving the processes and quality of their work. This is what we see in the words of an engineer: "That is, when you know a job and you know the specifications, the way, the result will be much better. So, your productivity is on the rise. Participants were then asked about the credibility and solvency of the company and whether these two characteristics are influenced by training programs aimed at developing and expanding employee skills on negotiation and communication issues. Participants in the research consider that these training programs contribute to the development of a reliable company profile to a large extent. 71.6% of

respondents believe that education helps enough, to a great extent, to have good and correct communication between employees and external partners and to create trust relationships. Within the group, better relationships are created, and as the interviewee says: "People work in an environment which they trust, know and feel better".

The last question attempted to investigate whether employees believe that in-company training can help them develop responsible and autonomous decision-making to reduce the time of supervising new employees by the more experienced and thus increase the profitability of the company. It was found that 52.7% believe that the role of education is very ancillary in this direction. This is also the case for the content of the interviews. Participants responded that training time is saved due to the knowledge of the right and effective procedures. A worker on the construction site explains by saying: "... they know, they do not make unnecessary moves, so this automatically means that time is not lost from the working time. An example is two colleagues working on the construction site who do not need to sit down to explain to each other why and how their other job should be done".

Finally, the analysis of the content of the interviews resulted in some other data not identified in the questionnaire replies. It was mentioned that education contributes to the development and better functioning of the team, as well as to the increase in quantity and quality of production. Also, the reasons why the respondents chose to participate in educational programs organized by their company were recorded. Thus, some of the reasons why these individuals participated in in-company training programs are personal interest, the need for information on risk management and the avoidance of errors in the construction site, so that they can work safely, the desire for additional updating and specializing on their business issues, professional development and even getting to know colleagues.

## CONCLUSIONS

In order to capture the results of the research and to draw the corresponding conclusions, an attempt was made to approach the subject objectively by choosing a mixed methodology with quantitative and qualitative data. The limitation was mainly arithmetic, since in Greece it is quite difficult to find and gain access to companies with a very large number of employees and to provide organized in-company training programs. We believe that the results of the research can be used supportive and complementary to confirm empirically what has been said in the theoretical part and to enhance the results of the bibliographic review. From the answers and the questionnaires and interviews, it is clear that the training programs that are now organized in the company have been greatly reduced during the economic crisis. So, the frequency is not satisfactory for employees and their training is considered rather occasional rather than lasting. Regarding the purpose of the programs, it is case-specific and is based on the needs and shortcomings of the human resources.

This is very important as, as stated by Vergidis (2008), active participation of adults in educational programs is increasing when they feel that their needs are taken into account and covered by the curriculum. According to Kokkos (2008), changes and developments at the economic and technological level have created new requirements and new needs for workers. From the participants' responses, it seems that personal and collective needs are taken into account when designing the training programs and this is a basic prerequisite for a successful program. The need for training, specialization, safe work and good communication are some

of the issues that are sufficiently addressed by in-company training. Thus, although the frequency of programs has declined, their quality remains high, managing to meet satisfactorily the needs of the staff.

Continuing, an attempt is being made to investigate whether training programs contribute to the development and improvement of human resources skills and how. The responses that have been recorded have shown that employees believe that through education programs they can acquire new skills and improve existing ones. This view justifies that all participants consider intra-corporate training as absolutely necessary and most of them are positive in their future participation in a program that will be organized. The same views were expressed by the participants in the Nassazi research (2013), where it was shown that the main purpose of in-company training is to acquire and improve knowledge, skills and skills related to the requirements of work and, consequently, to improve performance and productivity gains. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, some of the skills that can be developed through in-company training and can make a decisive contribution to business development are communication, teamwork, planning, organization and problem solving (Bourantas & Papalexandris, 2003). Through the participants' answers, the above are confirmed, as the skills they themselves think they have developed or can develop from attending training programs are organizing, fulfilling their duties in a safe manner, avoiding mistakes, good communication and co-operation with colleagues and external partners and customers and a sense of confidence and confidence.

In addition to the skills directly related to work, education can also be offered at a psychological level, helping employees find meaning and motivation in what they do. As has been said by Vergidis (2008), developing skills and attitudes can help the worker become more efficient in his work, but also give him a sense of satisfaction and completeness. This was confirmed by the words of another participant who told us that "meeting the needs of the employee does not only affect their work but also their psychology as a person, as they feel full and satisfied when they go to work". Through training, a more general attitude towards quality, skills improvement and self-integration can be promoted (Papagiannis, 2008).

Finally, it is noted that meeting needs and education is vital to employee performance. Still, according to resource theory, which was the basis of the research and in combination with the strategy of scientific expertise, well-trained workers, who perform better, play a key role in the diversification and emergence of a business. According to Prior (1998), there are many benefits of training in human resource development: change, increased productivity, specialization, reduction of errors and security. Changes in organization, technology and processes are factors that affect the proper and smooth operation of the company's production line. From the participants' responses, it seemed that updating and acquiring new knowledge helped them do their jobs more properly, adapt and not stay behind in terms of technological developments. Also, the productivity of the business is growing, as workers learn more efficient and quick ways of doing a job than the past. Errors and accidents at work are greatly reduced, as staff is well-trained and this leads to cost savings for the business and preserving its credibility. The health and safety programs in the workplace organized by the company play a decisive role in avoiding mistakes, since employees' physical integrity is of utmost importance to employers. It seems that by providing the appropriate training, the high level of productivity of the young workers and the best possible exploitation by the company is ensured (Paleokrassas, 1990).

The productivity of the company, its reputation and its quality level are shaped and influenced by the skills of the employees, their willingness, the satisfaction of their work, their sense of justice and their active participation in common goals (Papalexandri & Buranda, 2003). Thus, when people have the right knowledge and skills, the company enjoys a qualitatively superior product. This was also shown in the Garcia (2005) survey, which emphasizes that education has positive effects on both business performance and human resource productivity. Benefits are multiple and are not limited to a single domain. Thus, in-company training continues learning in adult life with the ultimate goal of achieving the business goals. That is why it is also an investment for the business.

### **Utility of Research**

The usefulness of this research is that the findings add little more to the segment of in-company training and reinforce the already recorded data of other theoretical and empirical research. Our suggestion for future researchers is to explore in-depth the in-company training in Greece through examples of other companies and to listen to the views of the employees. The importance of this investigation lies in the fact that the shortcomings and weaknesses of this industry have to be identified and the impact of the economic crisis on the development of human resources and businesses is recorded. It is also important to make more approaches to education as a factor that greatly affects the entrepreneurship and economy of our country. We believe that the results of this research will also help highlight the beneficial role of human resource education not only for the professional development of employees but also for the company itself. And this is because the development of human resources involves individual, professional and business development with the aim of maximizing productivity, quality and satisfaction of all members of the organization working together to achieve their goals (Pace, 1991). We conclude that the development of human resources through education gives enterprises the excellent opportunity, but often ignored, to become “knowledge-producing organizations”, to constantly improve and innovate (Kazamaki, 2004).

### **Epilogue**

In-company training, as it turned out from the presentation of the results, is filling gaps, correcting situations, developing new knowledge and providing solutions so that the company develops and maintains a positive course. This is confirmed by the theory of human capital, which states that companies can differentiate and differentiate according to their resources and their effective utilization. It has been found that through training, human resources can acquire more specialized knowledge and skills to respond to more specific requirements. A more experienced and properly trained staff can also lead to better business operation, productivity gains, cost savings, and high quality product sustainability. That is why the human potential must be treated as the intellectual capital of the enterprise, which can be the source of a competitive advantage. The above conclusions can be complemented and strengthened by Papastefakis (2009) conclusions, which concludes that the primary objective of intra-company training should be to improve the efficiency of the company by using a targeted and specific strategy on a case-by-case basis. Also, education has to be directly related to the other functions of human resources management, but also to the wider business strategy. We conclude, therefore, that in-company training must have clear objectives and be continuous in order to maintain and improve the position of a company over its competitors.

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