TRAINING OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND JOB SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT: *This paper presents the results of a quantitative survey conducted in 278 primary school teachers (teachers and kindergarten teachers) in the prefecture of Ilias with the aim of exploring their views on the impact of training on job satisfaction. In addition, it was investigated whether these views differ according to gender, age, seniority, marital status, specifity (primary school teacher or kindergarten teacher), type of employment relationship (permanent, deputy) and service area (urban area, suburban area, rural area). The research results showed that the majority of participants recognize the contribution of training to job satisfaction mainly indirectly. It is also worth mentioning that a great percentage of the respondents of the survey answer in a neutral way on several items of the questionnaire (neither agree nor disagree). These views appear to be statistically significantly different, on the basis of most predefined variables.*

KEYWORDS: Training, Teachers, Job Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The role of the educator is constantly evolving and is not limited to that of a mere knowledge depositor. The main concern of the same as of the state is the renewal and enrichment of their knowledge and skills as dictated by local, national and international evolutions. Training, which is linked to employee performance and work satisfaction (Siebern-Thomas, 2005; Schuler & Jackson, 2006; Buradas, 2003), is called upon to play an important role towards this direction.

The Brussels Council regards the education, support and training of teachers as a priority of European cooperation. Member States are encouraged to make this profession more attractive and to increase its prestige through specific planned actions and more attractive career prospects, to pay particular attention to the initial education of teachers and to train them in order to become professionally developed. In addition, it urges them to use modern tools such as e-learning adult education platform in Europe (European Commission, 2015).

Training and education contribute significantly to the increase of employee loyalty, efficiency and effectiveness of an organization, and can have a positive impact on the creation of a healthy work environment and reducing retirement, factors that can lead to increased work satisfaction (Bartlett, 2001; Schwepker, 2001).

In addition, there are researches that argue that when employees are on the verge of psychological collapse, because of the difficulty of responding to their job tasks, a properly designed training program can help them change attitudes and perceptions, empower and renegotiate their relationship and position in the workplace (Shields & Ward, 2001).

However, it should be noted that studies that highlight the direct relationship between training and work satisfaction are relatively limited (Costen & Salazar, 2011; Chian & Back, 2005). In

this context, this paper enriches the existing literature and helps to explore such an important issue.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Definition of job satisfaction

The concept of work satisfaction is multidimensional and complex, as it is not strictly linked to the professional profile of a business but also to a range of psychological, economic, social and cultural factors. Sometimes it is linked to the positive opinion, attitudes and attitudes an employee exhibits in their workplace (Saltzsteinetal, 2001), to the productivity (Trap, 1998) and to the organizational behavior (Burke, 2000).

In addition, according to Locke, it refers to the positive emotion a person feels when performing a project which is in accordance with their expectations and values (ibid, Griffin, 2009). Warr parallels work satisfaction with the doses of vitamins. When the dose is correct, then there is balance in the body. The same thing happens with the business when the factors of professional satisfaction are regulated. In addition, he concludes that there is no absolute work satisfaction, as it is transient and easily reversible (ibid, Kandas, 1993). Additionally, Wanous and Lawler argue that satisfaction is achieved when the personal needs and the specific characteristics of the individual employee coincide with the needs and characteristics of the workplace (ibid, Charalambidou, 1996).

Nevertheless, we could not overlook the link between satisfaction and financial gains, incentives, payment, working conditions and the culture of the workplace (Charalambidou, 1996). Moreover, the perfect organization and administration of the workplace, as well the adoption of policies that appeal to employees contribute to creating a climate of security, safety and satisfaction. Google, for example, has created a unique human resources management policy, resulting not only in a very dedicated staff, but above all a staff that produces unique innovations and makes the business unique in its industry (Saylor, 2012). Job satisfaction is a particular variable that affects not only man as a worker but also has a great impact on their life in general (Mullins, 2007).

Theories of work satisfaction

Theories of work satisfaction are distinguished in content theories and process theories. Content theories attempt to discover and interpret not only what the needs are but also the factors related to professional satisfaction. In the context of content theories, the most well known are those of Maslow, Herzberg, McClelland, McGregor, Alderfer. The process theories of Vroom, Hackman, Oldham, Adams, Locke, Porter, and Lawler are mainly focused on what categories of variables can lead to job satisfaction (Iliofotou, Georgiou, Sokratou, 2014).

Factors influencing the job satisfaction of teachers

Work satisfaction depends on a number of factors. One key is related to the nature of the profession (Sansgiry, 2001). A high responsibility job provokes additional stress on the employee, who is sometimes expected to handle extreme emotional fluctuations, which can bring about exhaustion, collapse, and affect work satisfaction.

In the case of teachers, a survey conducted by Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2011) has shown that work satisfaction is linked to factors such as the employee's value system and sense of belonging to the school, the support offered by the school leadership, the interpersonal relationships developed between colleagues and student parents, the ability to respond to the requirements of the profession, to apply the curriculum and to handle students. Failure to cope with their role may result in emotional and professional burnout.

According to Zembylas & Papanastasiou (2004) and Taylor & Tashakkori (1994) teachers' job satisfaction depends on their personality and experience, the pressure they receive from the parents, the nature of the education system and the working environment itself.

Additionally, candidate teachers have a different understanding of the nature of the profession based on their studies at university in relation to the working reality of the school. So they are often disappointed and dissatisfied when they become professional teachers, which can also affect their performance in the workplace (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Finally, Dinham & Scott (1998) refer to three types of factors that can affect job satisfaction or equivalent dissatisfaction among teachers. The first type concerns the inherent motivations teachers can gain in their working environment, while the latter the external factors, which are related to the educational system, such as the reputation of the school, the expectations of society, the changes in question. The third type is related to the function of the school unit and its technical infrastructure, the type of leadership applied, and the interactions between human beings.

Necessity and benefits of training

Training is associated with both the personal and social development, while simultaneously constitutes a process of continuous upgrading of knowledge and skills available to the worker (Griffin, 2009). According to Abiodun (1999), training differs from education, since it concentrates on raising abilities and skills required by employees to perform adequately on a given task or job. On the other hand education represents a rising in knowledge and abilities that are not necessarily related with particular work. Training also changes beliefs, ideas and knowledge, individual's behavioral aspects in their relationship with work groups in the organization. In addition, according to Peteraf (1993), it is one of the major mechanisms that help organizations or services achieve their targets and find a competition feature.

The training programs can have a positive impact not only for individuals and the employers but for the societies and economies in which we live as well. The benefits for individuals are that they become more employable, they can progress along the career ladder or even switch employment or even occupation. The wider benefits for them are that they feel healthier, they have a greater sense of well-being and last but not least they are more satisfied with their job. Job satisfaction is important both for individuals and employers, since employers who are stable and satisfied with their job are more committed to their organization and more willing to adapt to innovations (Bartlett, 2001). The benefits for the society and economy are many as well. Many studies have observed that training helps boost productivity and enhances the activity rates of the workforce (Barron et al, 1997; Hanushek et al, 2011). Consequently, better employment has a positive impact on health and on social cohesion.

In addition, a survey by Jones et al (2008) on a large sample of teachers in Britain has shown that teachers regard training as being of major importance and link it to confidence

enhancement, knowledge increase, practices improvement, change of management skills and work satisfaction.

Beyth - Marom et al (2006) concluded that teacher education has a positive effect not directly on job satisfaction but on a number of factors that influence it. Such factors are self-reliance, individual and personal effectiveness and sense of achievement and donation to students and society (Frijters, Shields, and Wheatley - Price, 2004). However the benefits of training should not be expected too quickly nor should they be taken for granted. In addition their success depends on how well and wisely they were designed (internal factors), but can also be highly dependent on external factors, such as societal norms and cultural practices. They should be anchored in a clear strategy that engages the right partners and reaches out to the right target group (Desjardins, forthcoming, 2017). In addition, the design and implementation of the training programs should be based on various cognitive and behavioral theories, such as adult education and team dynamics and should focus on the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of employees, organizations and services consequently (Amisano, 2010).

Training of teachers in Greece

Most of the training efforts of teachers in Greece were primarily aimed at covering shortcomings in order to improve their educational work. The official training providers are the Institute for Educational Policy and the Regional Educational Centers, which, although they were founded in 1985 (by Law 1566/1985), they were in operation in 1992 (Mavroidis et al, 2001). This law describes three types of training. Initially, introductory training for newcomers, yearly for teachers with five years of experience and periodic training on topics related to curricula, textbooks, new teaching methods and the introduction of new courses. Then, in 1995, the Ministry of Education instituted flexible forms of training with a variety of short-term programs, which teachers can follow in their leisure time. Decentralization of the programs is envisaged for access of teachers living in urban and remote areas (Matthaiou et al,1999). In 1995, the Institute of Adult Continuing Education works for the first time under the supervision of the Ministry of Education in order to meet the needs of adult education and to deal with distance learning (Filokosta, 2010).

In addition, Law 2986/2002 establishes the Teacher Training Organization, which aims to design and implement training programs for primary and secondary school teachers.

Finally, Law 3879/2010 introduces the detection and recording of adult training needs, the development of lifelong learning and its linkage to employment and the decentralization of lifelong learning actions. It also establishes a framework for the recognition and certification of knowledge, skills and qualifications and redefines the introductory training of the newly appointed teachers by the Regional Educational Centers.

METHODOLOGY

Research aim

This work comes to investigate the views of primary school teachers in the prefecture of Ilias on the impact of training on job satisfaction.

Research sample

The research was carried out on the 975 permanent and deputy teachers and kindergarten teachers of the prefecture of Ilias. The questionnaire was mainly provided by sending it to the school's e-mail. At the same time four electronic reminders were made. Out of a total of 975 teachers answered 278 (35% response rate).

Structure of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was selected as methodological tool. This tool was selected primarily because it is used often in social sciences for exploratory, descriptive and interpretive purposes (Robson, 2007). In addition, it is often used in surveys using the individual as a unit of analysis and is the best available method for social researchers interested in collecting personal data to describe a large population that cannot be observed directly (Babbie, 2011; Javeau, 2000). According to Cicourel, quantitative research is more explanatory and unpredictable in its results than is supported by the advocates of qualitative research (ibid, Bryman, 1992). Drafting a questionnaire is a complex matter and, as Oppenheim (1992) tellingly reports, good knowledge and proper handling of language are not enough. It requires discipline and precision at all stages, from the choice of questions, to its design, the pilot research, its distribution and return (ibid, Bell, 2005).

A structured questionnaire was drafted for this survey, consisting of thirty two close questions - sentences. These questions are factual questions and questions concerning opinions, beliefs and judgements, which are more difficult to compile and answer (Gillham, 2007).

This questionnaire consists of five parts. However, in this paper we will refer to two parts of the questionnaire, the first and the fifth. In the first part, the nine questions are structured as divided questions, and concern gender, age, years of service, education, area where they work (urban, subtractive, rural), working relationship (permanent or deputy), the marital status of the educators, participation in training programs. In the fifth part, the 8 questions were measured in a five-point Likert scale, with a rating scale of "not at all to very much". These questions identify the resources and benefits of the training process and their contribution to job satisfaction.

Its completion time did not exceed 10 minutes, while emphasis was given on using simple language and selecting distinct and comprehensible questions. The forms accompanying the questionnaire included the information note for the purposes of the research, the consensus form to ensure participation and anonymity of participants and the information note with full details for contacting the researcher.

Before the final distribution of questionnaires, it was deemed necessary to be distributed on a pilot basis to a small sample of ten (N = 10) of the participants in order to check the range of assessment and response.

Data analysis

The questionnaires were processed by SPSS 22. As far as the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha, the statistical index of internal consistency, as a whole was 0.88, which represents satisfactory quality of the measurement.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The research results can be separated in two categories: demographic data and opinions. Regarding the demographic data, women make up 76%, while men 24% of the population. In terms of chronological age, most participants (85%) are between 30-59 years old, while the majority have more than ten years of service (61%, N=170). Regarding their level of education, the majority have university education (73%), while only 15% hold a postgraduate degree. An important finding is that only three persons hold a PhD. 29% work in towns, 37.5% in subtractive areas and 33.5% in rural areas.80% of the participants are teachers and 20% are nursery teachers. 67% permanent and 33% deputy. 20% (N=55) of the participants has stem position, as heads, executive officers or directors. Finally, 45% of the sample have participated in a training program within the last three months (N = 124). 16% participated in a training program the last semester (N = 44), 22% one year ago (N = 62) and 17% 2 years ago (N = 48).

Regarding the evaluation of the contribution of training programs to better time management within the classroom, the majority responded in a neutral way (neither agree nor disagree). Approximately half of respondents (51.8%) replied that the program helped them manage behavioral problems in the class, while 20.2% disagreed. Moreover, 46.7% believe that the knowledge and skills acquired through the training program are related to better management of the difficulties of the profession.

It is noteworthy that a large percentage of teachers (42.4%) state that their participation in the program did not help them to limit their work-related exhaustion. 46.8% said that after the program they saw their profession more positively, while 20.5% responded negatively. 59.6% of teachers believe that their training has strengthened and helped them to be more confident about their work. Finally, participation in the program helped 47.5% of the participants redefine their educational, while the program is believed to have contributed to the increase of work satisfaction (43.9%). However, a percentage (20.5%) disagrees, while 35.6% is neutral.

Induction analysis was performed to examine the effect of sample characteristics on the main study scales. In particular, the t-test statistical tests of individual samples were used and ANOVA variance analysis. The results showed that gender had an effect on the "Training and Job Satisfaction" scale (t = -1.99, df = 121.4, p = 0.049), as women had less positive responses than men. Age had also a statistically significant effect on the scale (F = 3.45, df = 5, p = 0.005), since teachers who had a 6 to 10 year old experience had more consistent answers than those with a 16 to 25 year old educational experience (Dunnett C post-hoc control). In addition, the marital status had an impact on the average answers, as unmarried teachers were more in agreement than married teachers with children (Dunnett C control) (F = 3,19, df = 3, p = 0,024). The service area also exerted a statistically significant effect on the mean responses (F = 4,37, df = 2, p = 0,014), as teachers teaching in suburban schools agree more than teachers who work in urban schools (by Dunnett control C). Finally, specificity (teacher or kindergarten teacher) and the type of cooperation (permanent or deputy) did not exercise significant influence on the scale.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the views of educators on the contribution of training programs in their job satisfaction. The general conclusion drawn based on the findings is that the participants are in favor of training and recognize its contribution to job satisfaction mainly indirectly. It is also

characteristic of the survey that the majority of the participants answer on several items of the questionnaire in a neutral way (neither agree nor disagree). These views seem to vary statistically significantly on the basis of gender, age, past service, marital status and working area. The teachers' neutral responses may be due to the fact that the concept of professional satisfaction is quite complex and is influenced by the literature review by a number of factors. Thus, training can have a positive impact on learner self-confidence, which is an important variable that affects job satisfaction. These findings agree with those of Gatzoulas & Manousou (2015), Pazianou (2007), Davaki (2008), Jones et al (2008). Finally, we should point out some methodological limitations of this study. This study was based on a specific sample of teachers, so we cannot talk about generalizing its results. Further research is needed on a larger sample, to control the validity of the findings.

Implication for Research and Practice

This present research is an attempt to examine whether training programs detect training needs and meet teachers' expectations. In particular, whether content and methodology respond to adult learning principles, if they enhance their knowledge and skills in order to become more capable of communicating and collaborating with colleagues, pupils and parents, whether they are motivated to introduce innovative actions and methods of teaching and if training increases their self-confidence and effectiveness. Briefly, whether it contributes to personal, professional development and to their job satisfaction.

Its importance lies in the fact that the issue of the impact of training on the job satisfaction of teachers has not been extensively investigated in Greece. Thus, this study enriches the relevant literature and sets the basis for further qualitative and quantitative research in this field. In addition, its findings could be used in designing training programs which will be more acceptable since they will be more related to the increase of job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The results of the survey reveal the need to further improve the training programs according to the principles of adult education, with content and methods that respond to the needs and interests of teachers and to the educational, social, economic and demographic changes. Educational policy makers and training programs planners have to organize programs that develop and enhance skills, promote psychological support and empowerment, mitigate professional exhaustion experienced by teachers, particularly in recent years, and promote job satisfaction. Towards this direction, the state has to offer incentives, financial compensation and discharge of teaching duties during the training. Teachers need aid, encouragement, rewards, psychological support, to feel that their role and contribution are recognized.

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