

Provided Leadership and Selected Outcomes of Trainings in Public Organizations

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Trainings as well as their impact on employability and employees' performance have been the subject of interest of theoreticians and practitioners of management for a long time. However, according to the literature study, the outcomes of employees' trainings also depend on the applied style of leadership as well as on the quality of relationships between supervisors and subordinates. This paper tries to answer the question: what are the relationships between transformational leadership, the quality of supervisors' relationships with subordinates, employees' trainings and employability, employees' quality and effort of work in public organizations? This aim will be achieved by presenting the results of literature study and empirical research carried out in public organizations¹.

Keywords: trainings, leadership, employability, employees' work outcomes, public organizations

Introduction

For years trainings have been perceived as a major factor of an organizational success (Becker, Huselid, 1998; Philips, 2005; Bartel, 2000). However, not all

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the training courses bring about the expected results, as the results are also determined by, i.a. attitudes towards the trainings, subjective norms, the perceived level of behavior control (Ajzen, 1991), variables of organizational climate (Bowen, Ostroff, 2004), variables presenting the differences in national (domestic, local) attitudes towards the trainings and employees' development as well as gender, age, educational background (Budria, Pereira, 2004), variables of cultural differences between the country of origin of a parent company and subsidiaries of multinational corporations (Beck, Kabst, Walgenbach, 2009).

The studies on factors determining the outcomes of trainings prove their large number and complexity of relations. In the process of planning possible researches to be conducted, the key issue is defining the accepted and adequate model applicable in order to reach the research objective considering the complexity of the selected research model. Striking the balance between the complexity of the relations and their multi-level character on the one hand and excessive simplification on the other hand enforces the need to search for defined categories of the relations, and not all the existing ones. Consequently, the researches concerning the factors determining the trainings are always confronted with strong arguments of “non-systemic” and non-holistic approach. However, in this case fragmenting the researches seems to be the necessity.

In the subject literature there is a clear indication of the need of investigating the situation at the stage of preparation of the trainings. This requires gathering valuable knowledge about a client, target group, educational need of the trainees and the quality of the training project (Muller, 2001, p. 323). Of less importance seem to be circumstances, determinants of training stages and the implementation of the effects of the trainings (Marszałek, 2015) or the training stages themselves and post trainings (Jaidev, Chirayath, 2012) and simplifications linked to evaluation of the trainings (Newstrom, 1978). The analysis of training evaluation model of Kirkpatrick et al. (see: Jain, 2014) allows to conclude that the widespread proposals are of universal character and disregard specific circumstances. There is insufficient number of researches into the link between specific circumstances, identified before the training as well as those that determine the permit of the trainings and their evaluation.

Therefore, given:

- a) The above presented arguments and observations concerning insufficient knowledge of circumstances at all stages of trainings,
- b) Considering the hitherto unsolved issue of reliability of the researches and the necessity of doing detailed researches that are subject to both being subjective and fragmented in terms of choice of the studied factors.

The article has been focused on mutual dependency of the leadership variable, the training process and development of employees as well as the outcomes of

the two processes. Despite many logical arguments that prove the need for such researches the analysis of the literature of their findings does not bring about complete information on the subject.

Concept framework of the research model and the research hypotheses

The presented below research model that has defined the very subject of the research and the research methodology results from several assumptions approved by the authors, which regard:

- a) correlations between leadership and employees' development, training and its outcomes identified in the literature;
- b) dimensions of leadership and effects of human resources management;
- c) value of situational approach to the researches resulting in formulating universal conclusions.

The literature study allows to determine three direction of dependency between leadership and human resources management development. The first one results from the concept that "leadership is a combination of natural abilities and organizational support for the employees with such abilities" (MSG, 2017). Potential leaders could be, then, identified during special programs of trainings and development, and – as a result – they would be provided with opportunities of enhancing the combination. The second direction proves that it is essential to create such an environment in which everyone could master the leadership skills. Personal assets of such people could only speed up the process. The trainings should include all members of an organization, become the shared understanding of the need of the existence of leaders provides a "background" for their acting. The third direction of the discussed dependency is relatively rarely represented in scientific researches. It results from a possibility impacting employees' development and their training process by the leaders. In this respect a researcher is focused on providing the leadership, including the aspect of human resources management effects. To differentiate such a type of researches from the other ones that present a single direction importance trainings in the area of shaping leadership, it is possible to call them the researches on provided leadership, where the focal point is ex post conditions, i.e. such ones that result from the outcome achieved (Peck, Dickinson, 2009) or the hope for the outcome to be reached. Such a type of leadership ought to consider: 1) leader's background; 2) characteristics of leaders and their activities (figures); 3) actual accomplishments of leaders, including development of the other people.

The justification of the need for researching the background created by leader-employees' relationships in the light of the accomplishments of Fiedler

(1967) and his successors could be considered proven. However, of interest might be the answer to the question: how strong is the relationship and in what situations (other variables of the context) the relationship is of larger or smaller significance? Taking into account the importance of this questions, the research efforts presented in this article aimed at developing – based on literature study and empirical researches – a model showing the relationships between leadership, quality of subordinate – superior relations, training and development of employees and such outcomes as: raising the level of employability of employees and the increase in the amount of effort they put in their work as well as the work quality.

The analysis of the subject literature – in the area of leadership, relationships between supervisors and employees, trainings and employability has allowed to put forward the following hypotheses:

H1: There occur statistically relevant, positive correlations between transformational leadership, quality of superior-subordinate relationships as well training and development of employees.

In line with the LMX concept the quality of the above relationships is defined as the intensity of the exchange process taking place between them (Erdogan, Kraimer, Liden, 2004, p. 310). The empirical research conducted in private sector indicate positive correlations between transformational leadership and the quality of relations between superiors and subordinates and the training of employees (see: Onukwube, 2012).

H2: Transformational leadership along with relationships between superiors and subordinates, training and development of employees positively significantly, impact the employability of employees.

The opinion that the employability is enhanced by trainings is confirmed by the empirical researches already carried out (Juhdi et al., 2010; Groot, Maasen van den Brink, 2000; Marzec, 2015). According to the findings of other researches, the employability of employees and efficiency of trainings and employees' development are also influenced by the quality of their relationships with their supervisors (Schyns, Torka, Gössling 2007; van der Heijden et al., 2009; van der Heijden, Bakker, 2011). In Polish private sector there were also recorded positive correlations between the quality of the above relationships and employability as well as subjective professional success of the employees (see: Marzec, 2009).

H3: Employability of public organizations employees positively influences quality of their work and the amount of effort put into it.

In the literature there are research findings that allow to conclude that employees' employability impacts their performance (Bozionelos et al., 2015; De

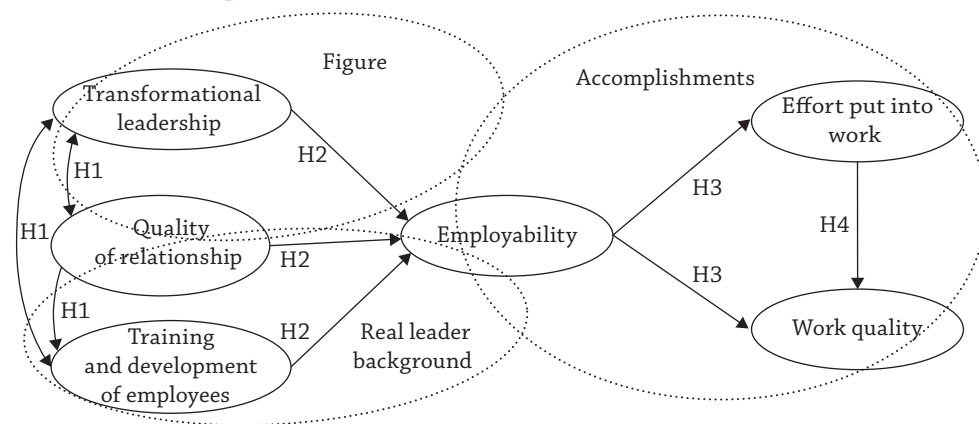
Cuyper et al., 2014) as well as their involvement (see: e.g. De Cuyper, De Witte, 2011).

H4: Employees' effort put into their work impacts quality of their work.

The effort made at work is considered to be a strong predictor of productivity and work quality (Guest, 1997; Juchnowicz, 2010), and the entire concept of High Involvement Work System highlights the significance of involvement and competences in raising the effectivity of the performance of employees (Boxall, Macky, 2009).

The value of the above hypotheses results also from the fact that the research subject concerns public organizations. Their specificity is strongly emphasized in the subject literature (see: Boyne, 2002). The conceptual model of the research combined with the proposal of provided transformational leadership is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual model (model 1) based on three dimension of provided leadership



Source: Author's own.

In Figure 1 the shared areas indicate not only the overlapping dimensions but – first of all – the effect of their mutual conditioning and a possible feedback, which have not been examined in this research.

Research methodology and outcomes

The survey research was conducted within January–April 2016 under the project “Organizational conditions of employees’ employability enhancement

in the public sector”². The research included 566 employees of organizations providing the major kinds of public services, i.e. 80 from 14 municipal/commune centers of culture, 80 from 14 public health care units, 80 from 14 county labor offices, 80 from 14 municipal/commune units of social assistance, 80 from 14 primary schools and 80 from 44 commune centers for family support as well as 86 employees employed in 33 municipal/commune offices. The criterion of selecting the sample population was the kind of public services provided by the organizations employing the potential respondents. On the level of the choice of an organization within the set group and while choosing the employees in an organization, the sample was chosen randomly. Because of the specifics of public services supplied by the organizations employing the surveyed, women constituted 81.3% and men 18.7%. the majority of the respondents had higher (Master’s degree) educational background (61.7%); 13% were graduates of vocational higher schools; 23.5% were high school leavers, and a mere 1.6% completed either vocational or primary schools. The average age of the surveyed employees amounted to 39.9 years of age (median – 39 years), and their seniority was slightly over 16.5 years (median – 15 years).

In the research the methodological approach to employability based on competences and suggested by van der Heijde and van der Heijden (2006, p. 453) was applied. According to this approach, employability is: “Permanent accomplishment, gaining or creating jobs through optimal use of competences”. In order to measure the employability, a research tool has been constructed tailored to the conducted research. Its reliability and effectiveness has been examined in the course of the research. To construct the research tool, among others, the exploratory and confirmation analyses (EFA and CFA) were made use of along with the analysis of scale homogeneity (i.a. by means of α -Cronbach co-efficients). The tool included 8 sub-scales – dimensions of public organizations employees’ employability, identified as a result of literature study and empirical researches. They include social competences, ability to adjust to changes, civic competences, knowledge and professional skill, ability to maintain balance, ethical competences, pro-active professional attitude, anticipatory strive for professional development. The whole scale consisted of 46 statements – employability index variables. The overall level of employability was measured with the average grade of separate sub-scales. The employability level measured this way was a synthesized employability evaluation (Wieczorkowska, Wierzbiński, 2007). Calculations concerning the employability were justifiable based on the assumption that the data measured in the Likert

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scales used to construct synthesized indices might be treated as continuous ones and of interval properties, which is often applicable in the researches on management (Wieczorkowska, Kochański, Eljaszuk, 2003; Nawojczyk, 2002). The remaining variables were measured on previously constructed scales, both reliable and trustworthy, i.e. quality of supervisor-employee relationship was measured with the quality of exchange between them (LMX) and the tool worked out by Liden and Maslyn (1998), Transformational leadership was measured with a modified scale based on the tools developed by Hartog, Van Muijen and Koopman (1997) as well as Avolio, Bass and Jung (1999); training and development – with the scale created by Tsui (1987); work quality and the amount of the effort put into work were measured with modified scales of Dysvik and Kuvaas (2011) as well as Redmond (2013), the efficiency of which has been also examined in this research. Within all the scales and in case of responses a seven-grade Likert scale was used (from 1 – I completely disagree to 7 – I fully agree).

To analyze the gathered data and to examine the put forward hypotheses concerning the cause-effect dependencies between the variables of the proposed model, *path analysis* and *Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)* were applied. The relationships were presented in path diagrams (Konarski, 2009, p. 27; Marzec, 2015). The model of the largest reliability (ML) was used as the method of estimation. To evaluate the suggested conceptual model the following fit measures were used: *Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)*, χ^2/df , *Jöreskog and Sörbom Goodness of Fit Index*, *Comparative Fit Index (CFI)*, *Tucker-Lewis Coefficient (TLI)*. In the presented model (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) only key variables and correlations between them have been presented, which has enhanced the asset of transparency (Byrne, 2010). In the statistical analysis that has been conducted SPSS 24.0 for Windows and Amos 24.0 programs have been used.

The set of descriptive statistics of the examined predictors is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the researched employability predictors

Variables	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Training and development	6.00	1.00	7.00	5.18	1.00
Transformational leadership	6.00	1.00	7.00	5.44	1.18
Quality of superior-subordinate relationships	4.38	2.62	7.00	5.61	0.76

Source: Author's own.

The analysis of research effects of work indicate that employees highly value the quality of their work and the amount of effort put into their work (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the effects of work

Variables	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Effort put into work	5.00	2.00	7.00	5.85	0.79
Work quality	3.75	3.25	7.00	5.70	0.82

Source: Author's own.

The analysis of the employability level and its dimensions proved that the respondents highly assess the level of their employability, although their assessment of individual dimension level is significantly varied (Table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of employability and its dimensions

Variables	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard deviation
Social competences	3.83	3.17	7.00	5.85	0.74
Adjustability to changes	4.00	3.00	7.00	5.62	0.77
Civic competences	6.00	1.00	7.00	5.19	1.09
Knowledge and professional skills	4.60	2.40	7.00	5.81	0.74
Ability to maintain balance	5.00	2.00	7.00	5.68	0.98
Ethical competences	5.00	2.00	7.00	5.82	0.80
Professional pro-activity	6.00	1.00	7.00	5.75	0.85
Anticipatory strive for professional development	5.00	2.00	7.00	5.53	0.77
Employability – overall evaluation	3.66	3.29	6.95	5.66	0.63

Source: Author's own.

Making use of structural equation model (SEM), the analysis of the proposed model was conducted (as presented in Figure 1). Due to a large number of variables and to simplify the analysis it was assumed that dimensions of employability are contained in observable variables – the set dimension was represented by an index – the average of all the items within the set subscale (van der Heijden et al., 2009). The correlation between researched variables is presented in a path chart, where

– to make the model more transparent – correlations between the main model elements and standardized values of path ratios (Fig. 2) were marked. Judge and Colquitt (2004) indicate that the mediation relation is confirmed if adding a direct path between the researched variables – in this case reflecting a direct impact of the researched predictors on the amount of effort put into work and work quality – will not significantly improve the quality of the model adjustment and will not make the indirect path statistically irrelevant (see: Fig. 2). Therefore, the tests concerned also alternative models in the area of a direct impact of transformational leadership on the amount of effort put into work (Model 2), on the work quality (Model 3), the impact of training and employees' development on the amount of effort put into work (Model 4), training and employees' development on work quality (Model 5), quality of superior – subordinate relationship on the amount of effort put into work (Model 6), quality of relationships on work quality (Model 7) and Model 0 that assumes the lack of correlations between the variables. The obtained gauges of adjustment of the tested models is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Statistics on adjustment of alternative models of relationships

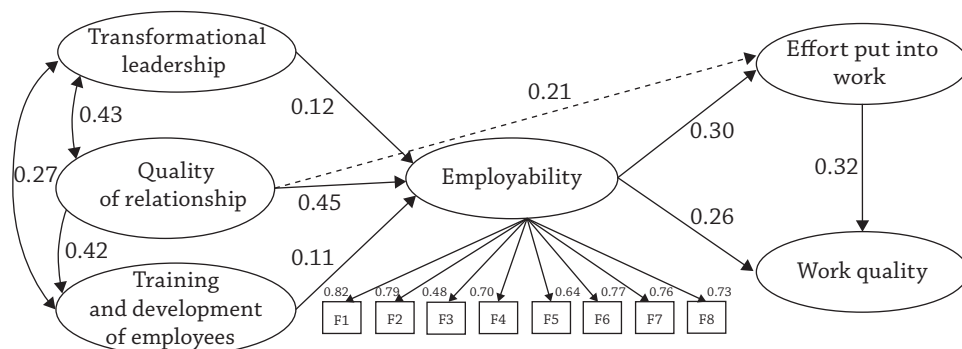
Models	Chi ²	Df	p	Chi ² /df	GFI	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
Model 1	1497.351	616	0.000	2.431	0.891	0.050	0.960	0.949
Model 2	1491.306	615	0.000	2.425	0.891	0.050	0.960	0.949
Model 3	1497.290	615	0.000	2.435	0.891	0.050	0.960	0.949
Model 4	1496.307	615	0.000	2.433	0.890	0.050	0.960	0.949
Model 5	1497.199	615	0.000	2.434	0.890	0.050	0.960	0.949
Model 6	1450.046	614	0.000	2.362	0.893	0.0490	0.962	0.952
Model 7	1496.912	615	0.000	2.434	0.891	0.050	0.960	0.949
Model 0	22730.409	780	0.000	29.142	0.140	0.223	0.000	0.000

Source: Author's own.

The conducted SM analysis proved the accuracy of the tested Model 1. Moreover, it was observed that all the researched relationships are positive and relevant in forms of statistics (Figure 1 and 2). However, as indicated by Januszewski (2011), even if the used model fulfills the criterion of accuracy, it does not mean that the model is the best and the only one. Therefore, the alternative models have already been analyzed in terms of direct influence of the examined predictors on the amount of effort put into work and work quality. Further analysis of the alternative models proves that the best adjusted is

Model 6 that considers both indirect and direct impact of superior-subordinate relationships on the amount of effort put in their work (Figure 2). The analysis conducted in line with the guidelines of Kunze, Boehm and Bruch (2011) – of the alternative models has also indicated that taking into account the direct impact of predictors on the examined effects in case of models 2–5 does not cause any significant improvement to quality of the model against the alternative models (Table 4, Figure 2). It has been observed that all the examined organizational factors have a significant and positive impact on the employability of employees (quality of superior-subordinate relationships $\gamma = 0.45$; training and development of employees: $\gamma = 0.11$; transformational leadership: $\gamma = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$). (H2), which significantly influences the effort put into work by the respondents ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$) and quality of their work ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.01$) (H3). It is worth noting here that the employability of employees is most strongly influenced by the quality of their relationships with their supervisors. However, because of the fact that adding the direct path did not make the indirect one statistically irrelevant, it could be claimed that the quality of relationships between superiors and subordinates impacts indirectly and directly the effort put into work ($\gamma = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$). The analysis of Model 6 confirmed also the assumption that there occur significant, statistically relevant, positive correlations between transformational leadership and the relationships quality ($\phi = 0.43$, $p < 0.01$), and between transformational leadership as well as training and development of employees ($\phi = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$) (H1). It was also observed that the employees' effort amount impacts positively their work quality ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$) (H4).

Figure 2. Model of correlations between selected variables – based on the findings obtained



*In the model standardized values of path co-efficients have been presented

F1 – social competences, F2 – ability to adapt to changes, F3 – civic competences, F4 – knowledge and professional skills, F5 – ability to maintain balance, F6 – ethical competences, F7 – professional proactivity, F8 – anticipatory striving for professional development

Source: Author's own.

On the basis of the obtained results it has been claimed that the quality of model 6 is good. Although the Chi^2 amounted to 1,450,046 with the degree of freedom $\text{df} = 614$, $p < 0.001$, the value of Chi^2/df index amounted to 2.362, which proves the acceptable adjustment of the model to empirical data. The remaining adjustment gauges also indicate the good quality of Model 6 (CFI = 0.962, RMSEA = 0.049, TLI = 0.952, GFI = 0.893). Although the GFI value is slightly too low, it is still acceptable given a relatively large number of the model parameters, since – as indicated by Patterson et al. (2005, p. 392), it is practically very difficult (Marzec, 2015) to reach a very high GFI exceeding the value of 0.90 with a large number of variables. Thus it should be concluded that the obtained findings do not prove the necessity of rejecting the hypotheses that had been put forward.

Conclusions

The conducted analyses have proven that there occur statistically relevant and positive correlations between transformational leadership, quality of superior-subordinate relationships and employees' training and development (H1). It has been also observed that transformational leadership along with the quality of superior-subordinate relationships and employees' training and development have a positive impact on employability of employees (H2). In turn, the employability favorable influences the quality of employees' work and the amount of effort they put in their work (H3). Moreover, the researches have proven the hypothesis that the employees' effort influence the quality of their work (H4).

The outcomes obtained prove that the effects of trainings not only depend on provided transformational leadership in an organization, but also on the relationships between supervisors and employees. They constitute a certain configuration of factors that indirectly impact the effort put into work and the work quality through their influence on employees' employability. However, it is worth noting that from among the analyzed variables, it is the quality of relationships between the superiors and the subordinates that to the largest extent impacts the employability of employees. What is more, it also directly impacts the effort put by the surveyed into their work.

Consequently, it could be considered that at all the stages of trainings (pre, during, post) the state of the provided leadership must not be neglected. The researched three specific "dimensions" of situational leadership, i.e. figure, background and accomplishments remain within the statistically relevant correlation. What is also worth emphasizing is the significance of superior-subordinate relationship. This relationship links the dimensions of background and figure as presented in the model in Figure 1.

The research outcomes also justify the statement that in the process of evaluating the efficiency of trainings it is not enough to identify the positive correlation between the training of employees provided by their organization and their effort put in work. This correlation might be of misleading kind of dependency, resulting from interdependencies between employees' training and their development on the one hand, and the quality of superior-subordinate relationships and transformational leadership that is fully provided in an organization – on the other. Within the process of planning and accomplishment of activities in the area of training employees and their development, it should be considered how the activities related to the employability of employees.

The approval of the above conclusions and their acceptance also require consideration of restraints to the presented research findings. In the presented model transformational leadership and its relations with two organizational factors, i.e. quality of relationships between superiors and subordinates, as well as employees' training and development have been the focal point. Thus, in further researches relationships between other types of leadership should be examined, e.g. transactional leadership and the examined model variables. It would be also worthwhile to work out other configurations of organizational factors that have the impact of the researched outcomes of trainings as well as the individual factors (e.g. age, gender, etc.).

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