

# Employee Training in the Workplace: The Case of a Private Hospital in Attica, Greece

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the impact and advantages of on-the-job training within organizations, with a particular focus on a case study of a major private hospital in Attica. It begins with the purpose of the research followed by literature review. The methodology section elaborates on the selection of the research method. Finally, it analyzes the outcomes from surveys conducted with many hospital employees, offering a detailed assessment of the real-world application of on-the-job training. The results showed that the training of employees in the workplace is an important means for the development and success of an organization, but also for its establishment in the area in which it operates.

**Keywords:** On-the-job Training, Incentives, Barriers, Hospital

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## 1. Introduction

In the modern and constantly changing working environment, the need for continuous development and adaptation of professional skills to new data is becoming imperative. In the context of the fourth industrial revolution and the new data created by the rapid development of artificial intelligence, the continuous training of employees is emerging as a crucial part of this process, providing a springboard for the development of human resources and enhancing their efficiency. However, training in the workplace goes beyond the simple framework of vocational training, since it seeks to develop individuals in an integrated way, to enhance their overall potential and to promote innovation.

### 1.1 Purpose of the Research

The objective of this article is to examine the importance and benefits of employee education in the workplace, as well as the trends and issues encountered in this critical area. The paper focuses on the case study of a large private hospital in Attica, Greece. This study aims to solve the following important research questions:

- RQ1: What is the degree of willingness of employees to participate in on-the-job training programmes?
- RQ2: What are the barriers to workers' participation in workplace training programmes?
- RQ3: What incentives can be given to employees to increase their participation in workplace training programmes?
- RQ4: What degree of correlation is observed between the degree of willingness of employees to participate in workplace training programmes and the incentives and barriers observed?
- RQ5: What are employees' expectations of participating in workplace training programmes?
- RQ6: What basic training needs are identified?

The combined answers to these questions allow for a thorough comprehension of the issue at hand, the emergence of all of the individual parts that comprise the issue, and an assessment of its relevance while taking into account the specificities and demands of a health service organization. The first step in this approach is a survey of the international literature on adult education and adult educators, on-the-job training, various types of workplace training, lifetime learning, continuing education, and the design and implementation of relevant educational programs.

## 2. Literature Review

In today's ever-changing workplace, the necessity for ongoing improvement and adjustment of professional abilities to new data is becoming increasingly important. In the context of the fourth industrial revolution and the new data generated by the rapid growth of artificial intelligence, continuous employee training is emerging as a critical component of this process, serving as a springboard for human resource development and efficiency.

However, workplace training goes above the fundamental framework of occupational training in that it attempts to develop persons holistically, to maximize their overall potential, and to stimulate innovation (Papademetriou, 2015; 2020).

On-the-job training refers to the acquisition of new skills and knowledge by employees within the work context. It is seen as a highly innovative and effective training process, as it is targeted to the needs of a specific job or work sector, tailored to the development of an employee's skills. It is a dynamic process, which changes according to needs and adapts to the new circumstances of an organisation. According to McBeath (2013), on-the-job training has as its main objective the purposeful and systematic modification of employees' behaviour in their work environment through training programmes that lead employees to develop their level of knowledge and skills in order to respond more successfully to their job duties.

On-the-job training has been the focus of extensive research worldwide, particularly in recent years. As one of the most current disciplines in the larger discipline of human resource management, it has piqued the interest of eminent university professors and other academics who specialize in related issues.

Ruhose et al. (2019) analyze data from the German SOEP (Socio-Economic Panel) and conclude that ongoing on-the-job training considerably boosts employee participation in organizational activities while also enhancing social bonds amongst them.

Belzer and Dashew (2023) focus on adult educators and the unique abilities they must develop in order to fulfill their educational objectives. They claim that adult learners pursue learning on purpose, for a variety of reasons and in a variety of circumstances, making them a very specific group of learners who require a common strategy.

### 3. Methodology

The sample included 165 personnel from the Gynaecology-Obstetrics, and General, Paediatric Clinic at IASO hospital. The specific sample was chosen because the nursing staff members share several intriguing characteristics:

- Nursing professionals get ongoing training to be up-to-date in their field.
- Nursing professionals require continual training due to frequent department transfers.
- As medical and nursing practices evolve, nursing staff must adapt their tools accordingly.
- The organization's ongoing expansion necessitates the recruitment of new nursing staff. As a result, there is an increased requirement for training for newly hired nursing staff.

An original structured questionnaire was developed to fit the research's goal and collect a significant amount of data. It took about a month to design the questionnaire after researching the necessary literature. The primary sources on which the questionnaire's framework was based are as follows:

The General Secretariat of the National Statistical Service of Greece conducted the "Adult Education Survey/Individual Questionnaire" in Athens in 2014. Questions 9 through 15 of the questionnaire were based on this questionnaire.

National Centre for Public Administration and Self-Government, "Detection of Educational Needs and Assessment of Training Results/ Individual Questionnaire," Athens, 2011. Questions 20 through 23 of the questionnaire were based on this questionnaire.

European Commission, "Guidelines for the Adult Education Survey/ Individual Questionnaire", Athens, 2017. Questions 16 through 19 of the questionnaire were based on this questionnaire.

This was followed by a written application to the organization's Scientific Council for the awarding of a research license within the organisation, together with a research protocol for the development of a thesis. The research protocol describes the study's aim, research questions, literature review, methodology, and dates. The surveys were distributed in person by the researcher to the various nursing departments of the organization's three clinics, with on-site access available. Respondents were invited to complete them anonymously. A specific box was established in a central location in the Clinic to collect completed questionnaires, into which the respondent(s) placed their completed forms after being informed of the method and location of collecting. This guaranteed that the respondents were not subjected to any external influence or impact that could call into question or affect the honesty of their responses.

The questionnaire contains 28 questions in total and is separated into two sections. The first section includes the respondents' demographic information (eight questions), while the second section focuses on their participation in in-service training programs, motives and hurdles faced, and adult educator characteristics. The second section of the questionnaire consists of both closed and open questions. Closed-ended questions make use of multiple-choice or Likert scale responses. This is a five-point fixed-choice scale (often up to seven points), in which respondents indicate whether they agree or disagree with the questionnaire's phrasing. The five values used in the current survey's questionnaire are "not at all", "a little", "quite a bit", "a lot", and "very much". A five-point Likert scale (rather than a seven-point scale) was used because it is thought to be more user-friendly for the respondent(s), resulting in faster questionnaire completion. Furthermore, on the five-point scale, it is quite simple to distinguish between values with a very low or low degree ("not at all", "a little"), a moderate degree ("quite a lot"), and a high or very high degree ("very much", "very much") in terms of the level of agreement with the formulated proposition. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the questionnaire's reliability (Anastasiadou & Karakos, 2011; Anastasiadou, 2012; Panitsides, & Anastasiadou, 2015). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was determined to be 0.802, confirming good dependability (Anastasiadou, 2013a; Anastasiadou & Papa, 2009; Anastasiadou et al., 2010; Papademetriou 2015; Papademetriou et al., 2023a; 2023b; 2022, Taraza et al., 2023; 2024).

As already mentioned the investigation relied on 165 questionnaires issued to IASO hospital personnel between the end of October and the end of November 2023. The questionnaire data were input and analyzed with the statistical software SPSS V 29.0

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Demographic Findings**

The study sampled 165 persons, including 17 men (10.3%) and 148 women (89.7%). The unequal gender distribution of the sample stems from the fact that women outnumber men in the field of nursing professionals. The majority of survey respondents (45.5%) are between the ages of 25 and 34. This is followed by persons aged 35-44 (25.5%), with nearly equal frequency by those aged 18-24 (13.9%) and 45-54 (13.3%). In contrast, only 1.8% are beyond 55 years old. In terms of marital status (Graph 3), the sample is virtually evenly divided between unmarried and married, with the former slightly outnumbering the latter (53.3% versus 46.7%). 57% are childless, whereas 43% have at least one kid.

### **4.2 Research Question 1**

The data analysis found that the vast majority of respondents (at a cumulative rate of more than 97%) share a similar ambition, to varied degrees. More specifically, 51.9% stated that they are very likely to join in such programs, 24.1% that they are very likely, and 21.6% that they are somewhat likely. In comparison, only 1.2% responded that they are only mildly inclined to participate in in-service training programs, with another 1.2% stating that they have no such interest.

The desire to participate in in-service training programs was significantly correlated with respondents' age ( $p = 0.003 < 0.05$ ). More specifically, in the 25-34 age group, the high and very high desire is 87.5%, however in the 18-24 age group, it drops dramatically to 52.

There was a significant association ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ) between respondents' educational level and their desire to participate in in-service training programmes.

### **4.3 Research Question 2**

Lack of time due to workload appears to be the most significant impediment to participation in such programs, with 84.3% describing it as a very or very big barrier, 11.5% as a reasonably big barrier, just 3% as a moderate barrier, and 1.2% as not a barrier at all. It is noteworthy to note that Karalis (2013) determined that a lack of time due to workload is an impediment for only 48%.

Lack of time owing to family obligations is also a significant impediment, with 61.3% describing it as a very or very major obstacle, 21.2% as a moderately important obstacle, 9.7% as a little obstacle, and 7.9% as not an obstacle at all. Again, there is a substantial discrepancy from Karalis' (2013) survey results, which show that lack of time owing to family duties is a limiting issue for only 28.3%.

For a very tiny percentage, only 3%, the absence of need for schooling is a very or very major barrier; for 7.9%, it is a reasonably important barrier; for 15.2%, it is a minor barrier; and for nearly three out of four (73.9%), it is not a barrier at all. 12.1% do not see a reason to participate because they do not believe there will be a significant change in their daily lives at work (much lower than the 21.4% found in Karalis' research, 2013), compared to 9.1% who believe the change will be moderate, 25.5% who believe there will be a noticeable change, and 53.3% who expect a significant change. In contrast, a lack of appropriate trainers, the absence of a culture of ongoing education in the organization, and the training program's restricted substance do not appear to be significant deterrents.

More importantly, the timing of the training program appears to be convenient for potential participants, as nearly half of them (49.7%, comparable to Karalis' (2013) survey, which puts it at 56.5%) reported that an inconvenient schedule is a very or very important barrier to their participation. The age parameter does not appear to be a determinant, as three out of four respondents stated that they did not see considerably advanced age as a barrier to participation in in-work training programs. Finally, Karalis (2013) states that the most significant barrier is the cost of participation in a training programme. However, this component is absolutely absent from our research because the firm in which this research was done provides free training sessions to its employees, therefore financial cost has no effect on participation.

The primary association seen in the survey data is related to the participants' ages. As respondents age, they are more likely to identify lack of time due to family responsibilities ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ), lack of time due to workload ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ), and training program days and times ( $p = 0.0014 < 0.05$ ) as significant barriers to participation in in-work training programs.

#### **4.4 Research Question 3**

The data analysis reveals that 88.2% of respondents are very or very highly motivated in terms of their professional development, 13% are moderately driven, 1.9% are not very motivated, and no one indicated a complete lack of motivation. 60.5% reported having a very or very high motivation to participate in order to keep their job (more than ten percentage points lower than the 71.8% reported in the Karalis, 2013 survey), 25.9% having a fairly high motivation, 12.3% having a low motivation, and only 1.2% having no relevant motivation. Almost two-thirds (65.4%, significantly lower than 76.3% in the Karalis, 2013 survey) said they have a very or very high motivation to participate in order to increase their earnings, 23% said they have a fairly high motivation, 4.8% said they have a low motivation, and a not-insignificant 6.7% said they have no motivation at all.

More than four out of five respondents (82.7%, nearly identical to Karalis' 2013 findings) stated that they are very very or very much motivated to participate in such programs in order to increase their efficiency, while one in eight (12.3%) stated that they have quite a lot of motivation, 3.1% that they have little motivation, and 1.9% that they have no motivation at all. Almost three-quarters (73.5%, slightly less than the 79.2% reported in the Karalis, 2013 survey) stated that they were very or very strongly motivated to take part in order get additional formal qualifications, 17.3% that they are quite motivated, and nearly one-tenth (9.3%) that they are not very motivated. 93.8% of respondents said they are very or extremely driven to engage as a means of learning new things, 6.2% said they are moderately motivated, and no one said they have little or no motivation. Finally, respondents had more mixed feelings about how much they thought engaging in in-work training programmes would help them create relationships with their co-workers. More specifically, 63% assessed this form of motivation as very or very high (approximately seven percentage points higher than Karalis' 2013 findings), 18.5% as fairly high, 11.1% as low, and 7.4% as not existing.

#### **4.5 Research Question 4**

Of particular relevance is the substantial correlation observed between the degree of willingness to participate in workplace training programmes and the motivation for such participation, which relates to Research Question 4 (E4). More specifically, of those who are very or extremely willing to participate in such programmes, 63.4% have a strong motivation to increase their earnings ( $p = 0.0021 < 0.05$ ), 83.7% to improve their efficiency ( $p = 0.0018 < 0.05$ ), and 78.1% to broaden their formal qualifications.

#### 4.6 Research Question 5

Respondents reported having very or extremely high hopes from participation in similar programmes at a cumulative rate of 87%, with another 9.3% reporting having fairly high expectations. In comparison, only 3.7% reported having few expectations, and no responder reported having none. The results are similar when it comes to expectations for earning formal qualifications, with 70.2% reporting that they have very or very high expectations, 19.1% having rather high expectations, 4.9% having modest expectations, and only 3.7% having none at all. According to the Karalis (2013) survey, 79.2% of respondents have very or extremely high aspirations for earning formal qualifications.

In terms of mentality adjustment, 67.9% reported having very or very high expectations, 25.3% rather high, and only 6.8% a few. 84.6% said they have very or very high expectations of learning knowledge that will improve their efficiency, 10.5% said they have several, and 4.9% said they have few. The percentage of those who stated that they have very or very high expectations of learning knowledge that will boost their efficiency is nearly equal to the findings of Karalis' (2013) study, which was based on 86.4 percent. Finally, 84% of respondents said they had very or very high expectations for learning skills relevant to their job, 9.3% said they have several, and 6.8% said they have few. The amount of respondents who stated that they have very or very high expectations of developing skills related to their profession greatly exceeds the data obtained by Karalis in his study on incentives and barriers to adult engagement in lifelong learning (2013), which put it at 71.8%.

It is worth noting that there is a strong association between employees' desire to participate in workplace training programmes and their expectations of the benefits of doing so. Of those who are very or extremely willing to participate in such courses, 95.1% anticipate to receive knowledge that will help in their professional growth ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ), and 90.3% expect to develop work-related abilities ( $p = 0.001 < 0.005$ ). It is important to mention that, 78.1% of respondents plan to improve their professional behaviour ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ), 80.5% plan to increase their formal qualifications ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ), and 90.2% plan to expand their knowledge, leading to increased efficiency ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ).

#### 4.7 Research Question 6

According to the data, the sample respondents rate the following parameters as very or very important: training of new employees (66.1%), in-service courses of theoretical content (64.9%), in-service courses of skills (63%), continuing education in the form of seminars and workshops (59.4%), and supervisor training (57.5%).

The correlations that emerge from data analysis are related to individuals' ages and their desire to participate in workplace training programmes. 78.6% of respondents aged 35-44 and 80.6% of respondents aged 45-54 prioritise employee training as a basic need ( $p = 0.003 < 0.05$ ). Sussilo (2021) draws the same conclusion in his research. Furthermore, those aged 45-54 years old deem it significant. 86.4% of respondents believe acquiring specific job skills is vital ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ), while 86.3% value supervisor training. Similarly, those who express an increased desire to participate in workplace training programmes consider the training of new employees ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ) and the training of supervisors ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ) as key needs. Furthermore, the sample's responses to the techniques of continuing education used in the organisation are linked to Research Question 6 (Q6). This data does not show that one strategy is clearly selected by respondents as the most appropriate over the others. On-the-job training is seen as very or extremely effective by 44.2%, while in-clinic seminars and workshops are highly and very highly desired by 39.4% and in-service seminars by 38.2%.

A considerable association exists among willingness to participate in in-service training programmes and evaluation of the benefits of ongoing training within the business. Among those who express a strong desire to participate in such programmes, nearly seven in ten (69.9%) believe that continuing their education will make the organisation more attractive to new employees ( $p = 0.0014 < 0.05$ ), nearly nine out of ten (88.6%) believe that continuing education positively contributes to increasing employee performance ( $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ ), and two out of three (66.6%) claim that continuing education contributes to reducing retirements from the organization ( $p = 0.0017 < 0.05$ ).

The effects of continuing education as perceived by respondents are also related to Research Question 6 (Q6). Examining these responses, it is clear that there is a strong belief that continuing education contributes to organisational culture change, makes it more appealing for attracting new employees, increases efficiency, and reduces employee turnover.

## 5. General Discussion

Employee training in the workplace is a vital method of an organization's development and success, as well as its establishment in the field in which it operates. Adopting suitable training procedures can help employees improve their skills, knowledge, and competences, allowing them to perform their jobs more effectively (Hoyle, 2015).

It is not an exaggeration to say that, in today's work environment, the implementation of a holistic and inclusive training model is emerging as a precondition for attaining an organization's long-term goals and, in general, sustaining its sustainability (Merriam & Bierema, 2023). The research found that this fact is first and foremost recognized by the workers themselves, particularly those working in the sensitive health sector, which is the focus of this thesis. On the one hand, one of the most important discoveries is that there is a strong willingness among the organization's personnel to participate in training programs. On the other hand, this desire appears to be stronger when an individual's educational profile rises; hence, there is a clear relationship between desire and cognitive background. The combination of these two findings emphasizes the importance of developing training programs that take into account the unique requirements of each work environment (Mitchell, 2023), so that objectives, methods, and learning outcomes can be tailored accordingly, following a customized/tailored-made logic.

The study also found that the incentive to enroll in a training program in a healthcare organization results in a pattern that is particularly interesting. The findings are consistent with the previous literature (Karalis, 2023).

On the contrary, an increase in financial profits is not as important as motivation, which at first glance appears to be a contradiction. Similarly, it appears contradictory to conclude that preserving one's employment does not provide a substantial incentive to enroll in in-service training programmes. However, these anomalies are simply superficial and can be easily explained rationally and convincingly through a comprehensive review of all survey data. Throughout this process, it becomes evident that, in the end, the primary goal of those who participate in a training program is not so much to secure their current employment, but rather to increase their position in the labor market in general. As a result, their concentration is on the medium to long term, rather than the near term. According to Ocen et al. (2017), a significant portion of the workforce recognizes the strategic value of such training programs.

According to the survey, the most significant hurdle faced by employees in a health service company is the respondents' severe workload. This is not a new finding; other experts have long recognized it (Karalis, 2013). Interestingly, the second most prevalent barrier stated by the sample is the perception that participating in a training program will not result in major changes in their daily professional life.

Respondents' family duties, on the other hand, were not identified as a significant barrier, which is consistent with the fact that the training programs are most often offered during working hours, so participation does not interfere with the rest of the trainees' schedules. It is also worth noting that the sample did not perceive a lack of interest in a programming as a barrier to participation. Finally, it is worth noting the zero link between age and readiness to participate.

In terms of educational needs, the analysis of the data acquired through the questionnaires leads to the conclusion that two of them play a primary role in the development of an educational program. On the one hand, it is critical to teach newly arrived employees in a professional setting, especially if it has specialized characteristics, as is clearly the case in a health care firm. On the other hand, continual training for all employees is equally crucial, with a focus on developing skills that are more relevant to the work than others.

As indicated in the worldwide literature (Belzer & Dashew, 2023; Samoilenko, 2020), trainers are critical to the success of an adult education program. This finding is supported by the findings of the current study. It is worth noting that survey respondents stated that their trainers' substantive qualifications are more essential than their formal qualifications. Thus, in addition to a thorough understanding of the subject matter, the most crucial attributes that emerged were a trainer's practical experience and awareness of the factors that govern the working environment in which the training is offered.

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of this study could be put into effect in organisations like the one under examination. To do this, an autonomous training department is required (and, if one does not already exist, one should be established), which will be in charge of designing and implementing training programs. Such programmes should be designed

to satisfy the organisation's training needs, as defined by its scope and objectives. Such needs include training new entrants into the workforce, ongoing human resource training, and on-the-job training tailored to the specifics of the job at hand. Furthermore, the success of such a model can only be attributed to the use of cutting-edge training approaches such as interactive learning methods, cooperative learning, systematic and thorough feedback, the development of mechanisms for recognizing effort and reward, and the application of theory to practice.

Finally, it is worth noting that in a future research project on a comparable topic, descriptive mixed research might be used as a combination of quantitative and qualitative research to better leverage the benefits of each. Mixed-methods research was not undertaken in this study due to the researcher's personal relationship with the organization, which could have influenced the study's findings. This is the major limitation of this study. Simultaneously, qualitative research becomes more challenging as the time required increases. If mixed methods research is adopted in the future, it would be beneficial to collect qualitative data first, followed by the development of a questionnaire to attempt a quantitative analysis of the results.

Furthermore, the use of algorithms, analytics, and big data research with very large samples would allow for greater exploration and understanding of the topic (Souravlas. 2019; Souravlas & Anastasiadou 2021; Tantalaki et al., 2019a; 2019b).

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