

# Study on Employees' Perception of the Characteristics of the Activity Improved through Training and Personal Development

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## Abstract

*While some organizations operate in a stable business environment, others operate in sectors facing changing technologies. The latter must train and retrain their employees continuously. Moreover, changes in the production process influence the rate of formation and development. These changes require not only highly trained employees but also constant learning to adapt to the processes. The paper aims to identify the most critical areas of activity in which employees consider that TPDPs had a significant influence. Following the research of the specialized literature, we identified specific areas: knowledge about the workplace, skills, confidence at work, morale, general performance.*

**Key words:** employees' perception, TPDPs, skills, knowledge, morale, confidence, performance

**J.E.L. classification:** M53

## 1. Introduction

In the contemporary world, organizations use TPDPs for various reasons (Lynton and Pareek, 2000). For example, the approach to the organizational development of the TPDP process is based on the needs of departments, while the systematic approach to training needs is based on the identification of training needs of organizations (Mondy and Martocchio, 2015). On the other hand, the political approach of the TPDPs process favors the privileged workers and is faithful to the authoritarian figures in the organization (Olaniyan and Ojo, 2008).

Successful business in the global economy requires new knowledge and skills. Therefore, a concerted effort must be made to identify the needs of TPDPs (Armstrong, 2014). As companies evolve through various technological and environmental changes, employees and managers need to keep up with these changes to adapt. This can be done through TPDPs programs. That is, as structural changes in the economy occur, management must respond to such changes. Constant changes in production technology and work practices require continuous interventions by TPDPs.

The paper's purpose was to determine the most critical areas of activity in which employees consider that TPDPs had a significant effect. For this purpose, following the research of the specialized literature, we identified the following fields: knowledge about the workplace, skills, confidence at work, morale, general performance. The structure of the paper consists of five sections. First, after an introduction and a presentation of the research context, we presented the research methodology and its results. Finally, the paper ends with the conclusions of the research.

## 2. Theoretical background

TPDPs programs can also improve critical skills and knowledge to help employees stay motivated and build an organization's competency pool. This is important in today's business environment, where jobs and work processes constantly change (Armstrong, 2014). The average age of the workforce is rising, and most are unskilled workers. This creates a need for TPDPs of new and young employees to replace the older ones who will eventually retire (Blanchard and Thacker, 2010). The threat of layoffs also motivates organizations to engage in training initiatives to retain qualified and loyal employees.

Several environmental factors can affect the content of TPDP programs. Organizations are complex and are influenced by many environmental factors (Varzaru et al., 2012; Vărzaru and Vărzaru, 2015a; Bocean and Sitnikov, 2015; Sitnikov and Bocean, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to measure these factors before adopting the decision on the training and development (Rue et al., 2015).

Some organizations adopt TPDP programs to comply with the organization's policy. That is why we can say that a company's attitude towards TPDPs programs is reflected in its policy (Valentine et al., 2019), and such a policy stipulates the importance, standards, and scope of TPDPs programs. Other organizations use TPDPs because they allow human resources departments to train future managers and develop the potential of employees for their future and current career prospects (Bocean, 2007; Bocean, 2015; Vărzaru and Vărzaru, 2015b; Vărzaru and Vărzaru, 2016).

Like all organizational strategic options, the activities of TPDPs face many challenges. One of the major problems is the lack of support from top management and an organizational culture that can prevent any predicted change (Beardwell and Claydon, 2010). Huang (2001) found that strong support from senior management is positively associated with the effectiveness of TPDP activities. Therefore, the successful implementation of TPDP activities depends on the sincerity and commitment of top management (Mathis et al., 2016). When top management and the organizational climate oppose the intent and efforts of TPDP programs, the exercise can be fruitless and challenging to implement. Some managers and employees do not want to take the time to be involved in TPDP programs. They see TPDP programs as an unwanted interruption of work.

## 3. Research methodology

Starting from the purpose of the research on identifying the areas of influence of TPDPs, we also defined the organizational levels within which employees consider that TPDPs have a more significant influence. These are set as follows: organizational level, job level, personal level, at all the levels. In order to investigate and explore these correlations, we conducted a qualitative survey based on a sample of 127 employees who work in four public organizations from Argeş County. The research variables were: evaluation of TPDPs by employees, areas, and levels of influence of TPDPs. The research hypotheses were formulated taking into account the areas and levels of influence of TPDPs:

H1. Within Romanian public organizations, employees believe that TPDPs significantly influence employees' knowledge and performance.

H2. Within Romanian public organizations, employees consider that TPDPs have a more significant influence at all levels of the organization.

For the research, testing, and validating the hypotheses, we used the analysis of the artificial neural networks analysis within SPSS v20.

## 4. Findings

Before analyzing the influences of TPDPs on knowledge, skills, confidence, morals, performance, we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficients, which characterize the relationships between the variables TPDPs, knowledge, skills, confidence at work, morals, performance (table no.1).

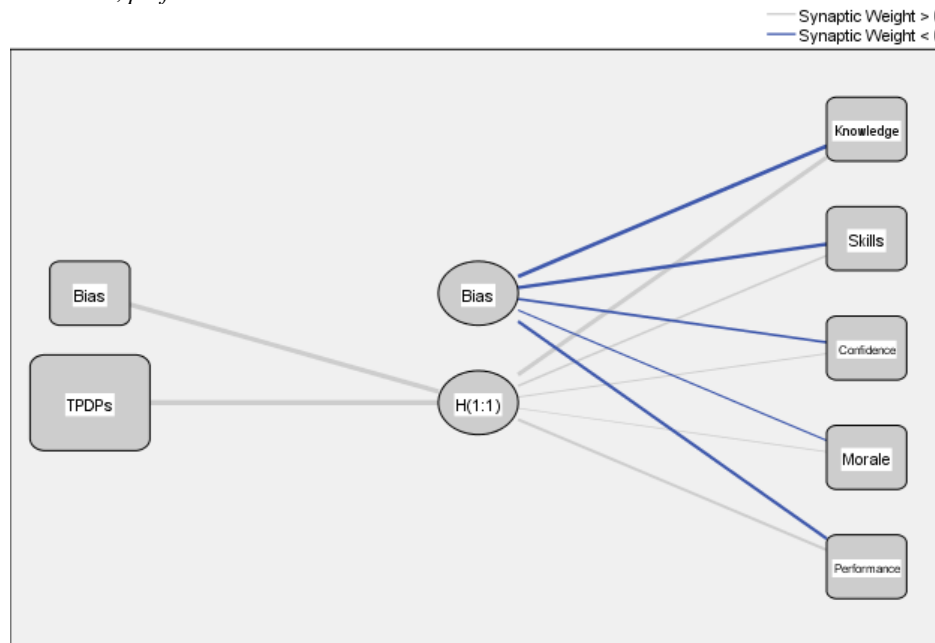
Table no. 1. Correlations among variables TPDPs, knowledge, skills, confidence, morale, performance

		TPDPs	Knowledge	Skills	Confidence	Morale	Performance
TPDPs	Pearson Correlation	1	0.398**	0.161	0.123	0.134	0.253*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.111	0.223	0.185	0.012
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	0.398**	1	0.772**	0.744**	0.627**	0.749**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Skills	Pearson Correlation	0.161	0.772**	1	0.844**	0.790**	0.795**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.111	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
Confidence	Pearson Correlation	0.123	0.744**	0.844**	1	0.757**	0.768**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.223	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
Morale	Pearson Correlation	0.134	0.627**	0.790**	0.757**	1	0.813**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.185	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.253*	0.749**	0.795**	0.768**	0.813**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

Source: Developed by the authors using SPSS v.20

It can be seen from Table 1 that there is a strong correlation between TPDPs and knowledge and an average correlation between TPDPs and performance. To deepen the investigation, we performed an analysis of artificial neural networks (ANN) established between the investigated variables. TPDPs represent the independent variable while knowledge, skills, confidence at work, morale, performance represent the independent variables. The influences of TPDPs on the five variables are shown in Figure 1.

Figure no. 1. Analysis of artificial neural networks among variables TPDPs, knowledge, skills, confidence, morale, performance



Hidden layer activation function: Hyperbolic tangent

Output layer activation function: Hyperbolic tangent

Source: Developed by the authors using SPSS v.20

We used the hyperbolic tangent function to activate the hidden layer (efficiency of TPDPs) and the output layer. The values calculated in the analysis of artificial neural networks are given in Table 2.

Table no. 2. Parameters estimation for ANN among variables TPDPs, knowledge, skills, confidence, morale, performance

Predictor		Predicted					
		Hidden Layer 1	Output Layer				
		H(1:1)	Knowledge	Skills	Confidence	Morale	Performance
Input Layer	(Bias)	2.122					
	TPDPs	3.570					
Hidden Layer 1	(Bias)		-1.103	-1.007	-0.811	-0.633	-0.934
	H(1:1)		1.173	0.735	0.599	0.571	0.933

Source: Developed by the authors using SPSS v.20

From the analysis of correlations and artificial neural networks, the H1 hypothesis is validated. Within Romanian public organizations, employees believe that TPDPs have a more significant influence on employees' knowledge and performance.

Before analyzing the level at which the influences of TPDPs act more powerfully, we calculated the Pearson correlation coefficients, which characterize the relationships between TPDPs variables and the levels of influence - organizational level, job level, personal level, at all the levels (table no. 3).

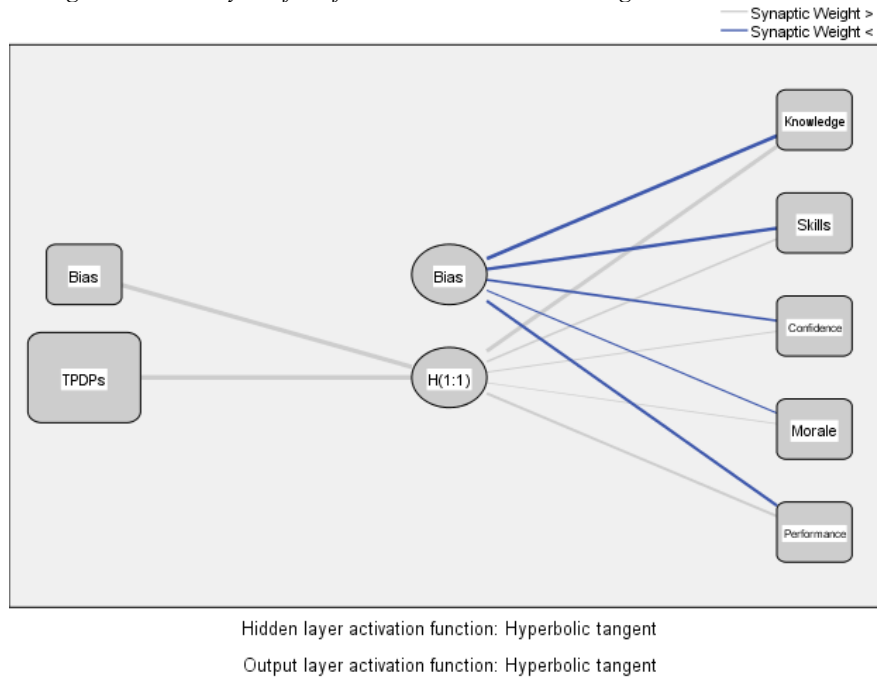
Table no. 3. Correlations among variables TPDPs and levels of influences

		TPDPs	Organizational	Workplace	Personal	All levels
TPDPs	Pearson Correlation	1	0.241*	0.218*	0.190	0.201*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.016	0.030	0.059	0.046
Organizational	Pearson Correlation	0.241*	1	0.911**	0.733**	0.624**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.016		0.000	0.000	0.000
Workplace	Pearson Correlation	0.218*	0.911**	1	0.705**	0.733**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.030	0.000		0.000	0.000
Personal	Pearson Correlation	0.190	0.733**	0.705**	1	0.874**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.059	0.000	0.000		0.000
All_levels	Pearson Correlation	0.201*	0.624**	0.733**	0.874**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.000	

Source: Developed by the authors using SPSS v.20

It can be seen from Table 3 that there is an average correlation between TPDPs and organizational levels related to the job and all levels simultaneously. To deepen the investigation, we performed an analysis of artificial neural networks (ANN) established between the investigated variables. TPDPs represents the independent variable, while influence levels represent the independent variables. The influences of TPDPs on the four variables are shown in Figure 2.

Figure no. 2. Analysis of artificial neural networks among variables TPDPs and levels of influences



Source: Developed by the authors using SPSS v.20

We used the hyperbolic tangent function to activate the hidden layer (efficiency of TPDPs) and the output layer. The values calculated in the analysis of artificial neural networks are given in Table 4.

Table no. 4. Parameters estimation for ANN among variables TPDPs and levels of influences

Predictor		Predicted				
		Hidden Layer 1	Output Layer			
		H(1:1)	Organizational	Workplace	Personal	All levels
Input Layer	(Bias)	1.756				
	TPDPs	3.018				
Hidden Layer 1	(Bias)		-0.937	-0.943	-0.614	-0.526
	H(1:1)		0.783	0.789	0.631	0.694

Source: Developed by the authors using SPSS v.20

From the analysis of correlations and artificial neural networks, the H2 hypothesis is partially validated. Furthermore, within Romanian public organizations, employees consider that TPDPs have a more significant influence at all levels of the organization, less on a personal level.

## 5. Conclusions

Bates (2008) states that TPDPs is a core component in many organizations' work due to the need for technical skills, management skills and customer expectations, level of education, and global competition. Therefore, companies must run investment programs in their human resources to ensure that they have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and capabilities.

Traditionally, TPDPs aimed to learn those skills needed to perform tasks effectively. Currently, the purpose of TPDPs has been extended from fulfilling tasks to achieving objectives and meeting customer needs by changing attitudes and improving the level of competence to improve overall organizational performance.

In addition to improving skills and increasing knowledge, TPDPs need to provide greater satisfaction and esteem resulting from performing tasks in good conditions and achieving goals by improving job performance and improving careers. For example, Velada et al. (2007) note that when employees perceive the organizational climate to be favorable, they are more likely to apply their new knowledge to the workplace. In addition, performance feedback, particularly feedback on acquired knowledge and skills, is vital to the effectiveness of training and personal development programs.

The activities of TPDPs face many challenges, including a lack of support from top management and an organizational culture that can effectively prevent any anticipated change. Support from top management can positively affect the effectiveness of TPDPs. However, some organizations implement TPDPs programs only to meet legal requirements. The literature analysis revealed that the characteristics of new employees and motivation, work environment, and organizational culture encourage the transfer of knowledge and skills in organizations.

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