

Professional Training in Organizations: A Case Study of a Company in the Interior of Portugal

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How to cite this paper: Silva, D., Dinis, A., Rodrigues, C., & Lebres, V. F. (2024). Professional Training in Organizations: A Case Study of a Company in the Interior of Portugal. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 12, 426-433.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2024.1210029>

Received: January 19, 2024

Accepted: October 25, 2024

Published: October 28, 2024

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Abstract

Professional training is an essential tool for the continuous development of individuals' competencies and skills in their specific roles, bringing significant benefits to both employees and the companies they work for. This article presents an in-depth analysis of this topic, starting with a theoretical contextualization and then detailing a case study. The data for the case study was collected through exploratory qualitative research, which included an interview with the head of the company's Human Resources department. The article highlights the importance of professional training for the organization and its employees, addressing the definition of competencies and the most relevant types for contemporary companies. It also describes the diverse types of training available, and the evaluation methods used. The paper also identifies the challenges associated with the effective implementation of professional training. Through the research carried out in the company, it was possible to validate and deepen the information presented in the first part of the article. This has resulted in a deeper understanding of the role of training in organizations and the diversity of approaches available for improving workers' competencies and skills. This study contributes to understanding the value of vocational training as a strategic investment in modern companies and highlights the importance of adapting training programs to the specific needs of each organization. It also highlights the need to overcome the challenges associated with the effective implementation of training in order to ensure growth and competitiveness in today's business environment.

Keywords

Training, Skills, Management, Human Resources, Portugal

1. Introduction

Nowadays, it is widely recognized that retaining talent and building a reputation as a lasting employer requires companies to offer their employees opportunities for personal and professional growth and development (Oliveira, 2020). In this context, investment in Human Resources (HR) is becoming increasingly important, since such investment results in improvements in organizational performance (Oliveira, 2020).

It is clear that professional training plays a fundamental role in the search for positive changes in employees, with the aim of increasing their productivity, regardless of whether this training is of a personal or technical nature (Bernardes, 2008).

The main aim of this article is to explore Vocational Training, from the assessment of needs to the way training is delivered, including an analysis of the challenges associated with its implementation and its role as an investment in the organization's Human Capital.

In addition, this article seeks to explore the company's approach to Vocational Training, using an interview as the research method. Finally, a critical analysis of the methods employed by the company is carried out and suggestions for improvement are offered.

2. Theoretical Background

Professional training can be defined as the process through which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills, competencies and experience necessary to perform specific functions within the scope of a professional activity (Lacerda, 1997). This concept covers both formal education, such as undergraduate and post-graduate degrees, and informal education, such as workshops and practical experience, which can be obtained from various sources, including educational institutions, companies, training organizations and online resources (Mascarenhas et al., 2011). The fundamental aim of vocational training is to enable individuals to respond to the demands of the labor market by providing them with the skills they need to perform their jobs effectively. In addition, vocational training also plays an important role in personal development, promoting skills such as teamwork, leadership, communication and problem-solving (Almeida & Alves, 2011). It is important to note that professional training is a continuous process throughout life, given the constant evolution of the job market, requiring professionals to be prepared to adapt, update and improve their skills in response to technological changes, new market demands and industry trends (Almeida & Alves, 2011).

Investment in professional training is fundamental to the development of Human Capital in organizations. Becker (1964) points out that individuals acquire certain personal attributes throughout their lives through education and training, which increases their productivity and, consequently, their income. The Human Capital Theory proposed by Becker (1964) emphasizes that investments

in training improve the skills and abilities of individuals, making them more productive. This increase in productivity has a significant impact on the lives of employees, because they are able to become more qualified for professional contexts that are more demanding, such as “where innovation, competitiveness, creativity and the need for change are a constant” (VougaGeste, 2022: p. 1).

It can therefore be seen that the skills and characteristics of workers represent the human capital that adds value to companies. Therefore, investing in the development of this human capital is essential for organizations to improve these attributes in order to obtain significant economic benefits.

Professional Training in Portugal

The most developed countries clearly demonstrate high levels of access to professional training and a commitment by companies to continuous training policies, as exemplified by the Scandinavian countries (Almeida & Alves, 2011). This commitment has influenced social consensus in Portugal, highlighting the importance of training in the context of Portuguese society.

In Portugal, vocational training policies have been gaining prominence in recent years, as organizations adapt to a society that increasingly values knowledge and the importance of vocational training (Almeida & Alves, 2012). However, the data reveals a disparity between the Direct and Indirect State Administration (ADIE) and the private sector in terms of participation in training. In 2008, the participation rate in ADIE reached 41.9%, while in the private sector it was only 22%. However, there has been a modest increase over the years, with the participation rate in the private sector reaching 36.7% in 2019.

This indicates that although there is a growing awareness of the importance of continuing training in Portugal, there is still a long way to go when it comes to the perception and implementation of continuing training in the country.

3. Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives previously outlined, we adopted a qualitative, descriptive and exploratory approach to this research. This methodological choice aims to deepen our understanding of the concepts in question, provide a comprehensive view of the topic and, at the same time, lay the foundations for future research, in line with Coutinho (2014).

For data collection, we chose to conduct a semi-structured interview, in which we drew up an interview guide (Annex). The aim of this guide was to collect structured information on vocational training in the Forvia-Faurecia Bragança company, specifically with regard to: Initial training for new workers; Assessment of workers’ training needs; Continuous professional training; Number of hours of training provided to workers; Suitability of continuous training to the job; Incentives for professional training; Training method: in-house training, training provided by external companies, had HR Business Partner as interlocutor.

This methodological approach will allow us to deepen our understanding of vocational training, Human Resource Management practices and the organizational management of Human Resources within the company, providing valuable information for the analysis and discussion of the results.

4. Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Results

4.1. Company Presentation

The Faurecia company belonging to the Forvia Group is present in 33 countries, has 39 research and development centers and employs around 113,813 people (Forvia Faurecia, 2023). The Faurecia Group (now Forvia) was founded in 1997 and specializes in the production of automotive products, including seats, interior systems, exhaust systems and exterior systems (Pinto, 2019). In Portugal, the group owns seven facilities, located in Bragança, Nelas, Palmela, São João da Madeira and Vouzela, as well as two joint ventures (Pinto, 2019).

In Bragança, the company belongs to the Faurecia Clean Mobility sector and is dedicated to the manufacture of car exhaust components and employs around 1,000 workers (operators, engineers, technicians, human resources) (Pinto, 2019).

4.2. Results Analysis

To conduct this study, it was decided to contact the Forvia-Faurecia Bragança company in order to collect information through semi-structured interviews.

After the initial interview scheduling stage, data was collected from the company's HR Business Partner. The central theme addressed in this research is "Professional Training", with the aim of understanding how training is applied in the company and how it is made available to employees.

The interview provided valuable information on the company's approach to vocational training, covering several key aspects. The topics discussed in the interview included:

- **Initial Training and Onboarding:** The company provides both job-specific training and general training related to quality, health, safety and human resources. Onboarding is a continuous process of up to six months, and people development is a priority.
- **Training Needs Assessment:** Training needs are assessed throughout the year. This includes a formal evaluation at the end of the year, in which managers meet with employees to identify areas for improvement. These evaluations help build an annual training plan.
- **Flexibility in the Choice of Training:** Employees have the opportunity to suggest training that they consider relevant to their development. The company seeks to provide training in line with employees' needs and ambitions.
- **Training Format:** Training is provided both internally, by company managers and specialists, and through external trainers, depending on the specific content. There is an emphasis on developing technical and behavioral skills.

- Valuing Training in Performance: Training is valued in the context of performance evaluation and career development. However, there is no salary distinction based on the number of hours of training.
- Training Hours: The company offers a substantial amount of training, exceeding legal requirements, to boost employees' continuous development.

Through this interview, we gained a comprehensive understanding of how the Forvia-Faurecia Bragança company approaches professional training and how it is integrated into its working environment. The information collected will serve as the basis for the analysis and discussion of the results of this research.

In addition, this interview provided relevant information about the company's learning and development culture, including the "70-20-10" model, the commitment to continuous employee development and the focus on continuous improvement.

Faurecia has a method called IDP (individual development plan) which consists of a format where we explain how we work. At Faurecia they also work with 70-20-10, 70% is the time the employee spends actually doing their job, their normal day-to-day work. Normal day-to-day work, 20% is formal training and 10% is informal training.

4.3. Results Discussion

As can be seen from the interview, the subject is highly valued in the company, since there is evaluation, planning and implementation of professional training.

With regard to evaluation, there is indeed a survey of employee needs by managers, but it is not clear that employees have much decision-making power over the needs assessment. However, for there to be decision-making power on the part of employees, they must also want to have this power, i.e. there must be initiative on their part to suggest training that could bring professional and even personal benefits.

As far as planning is concerned, there is a lot of work going on to ensure that the training that has been deemed essential for employees is actually provided. As can be inferred from the interview, there is an effort to ensure that training takes place on a monthly basis.

However, these trainings don't always take place, either due to lack of time, other overlapping needs or lack of resources. This situation could be circumvented by changing the patterns in which training takes place, i.e. instead of only having training during working hours, it would be interesting to have after-work training in e-learning format, or to provide e-learning training that could be recorded and that employees could access depending on their availability after work. Once again, this would require the cooperation of employees.

Although the topic is applied in an exemplary way, there is always room for improvement, but for this to happen, employees and managers need to be aligned with the company's objectives so that there is a reciprocity of effort resulting in a transversal improvement throughout the organization.

5. Conclusion

Evaluating Faurecia's approach to the vocational training of its employees through a semi-structured interview with the company's HR Business Partner allowed us to take an in-depth look at the training strategies and practices implemented, as well as their integration into the organizational context.

One of the most striking aspects of this study is the way in which the company approaches professional training as an investment in the development of its employees. The emphasis on initial training and the onboarding process, which combines specific training with general training, reflects the company's commitment to equipping employees with the skills they need to reach their full potential.

The continuous assessment of training needs, incorporating employee feedback and aligning it with the organization's objectives, demonstrates a proactive, people-centred approach. The company recognizes that employee development is essential to its long-term success, and this vision is reflected in its human resources management practices.

In addition, flexibility in the choice of training courses allows employees to shape their own development paths. The openness to providing training not only to improve performance at work, but also to enrich employees' personal lives, contributes to a positive and healthy working environment.

The emphasis on exceeding the training hours required by law and the commitment to the "70-20-10" model reveal a culture of continuous learning in the company. Valuing training in performance appraisals demonstrates the company's commitment to recognizing and rewarding employees' commitment to their own growth.

In summary, this study highlights the importance of professional training as a critical factor in the development of employees and the success of the organization. The Forvia-Faurecia Bragança company serves as an inspiring example of how a structured and committed approach to training can boost organizational growth and employee well-being.

Funding

This work was supported by European Union for the DIFUCH project grant KA220-HED-8D90106F.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Annex

GULÃO DE ENTREVISTA

Formação Profissional

Guião de Entrevista de FP

Público-alvo

- HR Business Partner da Empresa Forvia-Faurecia Bragança

Objetivo Geral

- Analisar a importância da formação profissional para a empresa, conhecer os planos de formação da empresa e avaliação das necessidades de formação dos trabalhadores.

Objetivo específico

- Recolher informação estruturada sobre a formação profissional na empresa Forvia-Faurecia Bragança, nomeadamente o que diz respeito as:
 - Formação inicial para novos trabalhadores;
 - Avaliação das necessidades de formação dos trabalhadores;
 - Formação profissional contínua;
 - Número de horas de formação fornecida aos trabalhadores;
 - Adequação das formações contínuas ao posto de trabalho;
 - Incentivos à formação profissional;
 - Método de formação: formação interna, formação dada através de empresas externas.

Outras questões: é recomendável a colocação de situações de trabalho concretas.

Técnica de recolha de informação: Entrevista semi-estruturada