ESRALE Summer Academy

International Conference

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN ADULT LEARNING AND EDUCATION - Conceptual and Methodological Problems -

Book of Abstracts

15th September 2015 Belgrade

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RESEARCH TRENDS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

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Recently published literature in human resource development revealed similarities, disparities, blending and overlapping fields of human resource development and adult education in the history, practice, philosophical foundation and professionalization of practitioners. While analyzing relevant literature, we found the rationale for our research in absence of analysis of research problems and research methodology used in the field of human resource development.

The purpose of systematic analysis of articles published in the field of human resource development is to describe contemporary trends in this field from the two focuses: (1) research problem and (2) characteristics of methodology applied in research. In this systematic analysis we included papers published in three international journals, fully peer-reviewed, that publishes original research and review articles: Management Learning and Advances in Developing Human Resources, both published by Sage Publications Ltd. and Human Resource Development Quarterly, published by Wiley Periodicals Inc., Publishers. Our decision to choose these journals have been based on combination of theoretical and empirical research orientation of published articles, as well as on numerical value of impact factor for 2013. These three journals have highest rank at Thomson Reuters list in the field of human resource development (which is included in the subject category management): Management Learning – Impact Factor: 1.245, Human Resource Development Quarterly – Impact Factor: 0.854, and Advances in Developing Human Resources – Impact Factor: 0.491. In systematic analysis we included all research and review articles published in the last three years – 2012, 2013, 2014. We analyzed 218 articles (by journals: Management Learning – 86, Human Resource Development
In this research we used content analysis technique, and respectively, for gathering data we used content analysis protocol instrument which we developed. Instrument consisted of two parts: first, related to theoretical researches, and second, related to empirical researches. Part of instrument related to empirical researches included three sub-categories: quantitative researches, qualitative researches, and mixed methods researches. For all articles we determined research problem and research category. Besides, for empirical researches we recorded data about research sample, techniques and instruments for gathering data, used statistical procedures, etc. For the organizing gathered data, we used descriptive statistics (frequencies and percents), which have been calculated for all analyzed articles as a whole, and for some groups of articles formed by year of publishing.

Based on performed analysis we found that the researches in the field of human resource development grow in different directions based on purpose and used methodology. Clusters of problems (relations with adult education/andragogy, learning in organization, organizational learning, learning organization, professional ethics, organizational change, human resource planning, mentoring, etc.) and categories of researches (theoretical, historical, comparative, quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods researches, etc.) variate by journals; they differ if these two elements are analyzed by year of publishing, too.

Results of analysis have been interpreted in the context of consideration of research trends in the field of human resource development, and to indicate possibility of further development of researches in this domain. Moreover, based on the findings of this study, future research can assess relationships between research problems and research methodology used in the fields of human resource development and andragogy.

Key words: human resource development, research trends in the field of human resource development, quantitative researches, qualitative researches, mixed methods researches.