



Professional Growth And Staff Development (How To Encourage Employees To Pursue Professional Development)

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Abstract

Professional growth is seen as an overall developmental process that takes place during one's career and lifespan and understood as an umbrella term, and an overlapping term, to other related concepts. Furthermore, we argue that professional growth is dependent on the social and institutional contexts as well as personal attributes and circumstances. Following this, a model containing three dimensions related to learning in professional contexts (formal–informal, situated–unsituated and individual–social learning) is presented. The model is formed to illustrate that promotion of professional growth in workplaces is connected to formal and informal practices, versatility of working environments, as well as social relations. The chapter concludes with discussion and future research suggestions related to conceptual issues with regards of professional growth and contemporary challenges of in working life.

Key Words: Professional growth, professionalism, professional development

INTRODUCTION

To succeed in any industry, companies must constantly innovate and evolve to stay on the cutting edge — and that entails helping their employees continuously develop professionally. Making employee development a key part of company culture ensures workers stay up to date on industry best practices and learn new skills. This, in turn, boosts employee engagement and attracts top talent.

Performance is the result of work and one's work behavior in a period achieved in carrying out tasks in accordance with responsibilities (Marwansyah, 2014). The performance is





also a comparison of the results achieved with the participation of labor per unit time. In other words, performance is an expression of output, efficiency and effectiveness are often associated with productivity (Sulaksono, 2015).

Professional growth is a continuous learning process that enables individuals to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to cope with changing demands for vocational proficiency throughout their career (Ilgen & Pulakos, 1999). Collection of concrete developmental strategies and functions is needed to support professional growth, making such professional development actions important but not prerequisites for professional growth (Nokelainen & Ruohotie, 2009). Issues discussed above stress the role of continuous learning and professional growth in the knowledge society and challenge the existing workforce to make concrete actions to update their knowledge and skills in flexible and rapid manner to remain employed in the future. Over two decades ago, Nokelainen et al., (2007, p.422) noted that “We can no longer think in terms of ‘being’ educated or competent, only in terms of ‘becoming’ educated and ‘retaining’ or, better yet, ‘enhancing’ our competence.” leading us towards process-oriented approach to professional growth.

There are many opportunities available when looking at the areas of professional development. In a recent job seeker survey, 67% of respondents stated that they are satisfied with their work, though 50% mentioned that they are still open to other job opportunities. Thus, employee development needs aren’t only critical to meeting your company’s skills requirements but are essential for retention and efficiency. For example, 53% of employees believe that employers should be sharing their intentions to meet diverse hiring goals on their social media, blogs, career sites, etc.

Human resources are the most important part of every company (Trstenjak et al., 2022). Because of the human resources are a major part of the company, therefore a company must pay special attention to these resources. The type of attention needs to be given to human resources such as issuing regulations or policies that encourage employee performance improvement. For example education, training, career development, a conducive work environment and giving motivation. Based on this attention, employees are expected to maximize their work responsibilities. The importance of training employees to improve performance. Employee is a blood stream of any business (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). (Naqvi & Khan (2013) stated that training is the most important part of human resource management function on the effective use of human resources. Some benefits of the benefits of workforce training, including 1) Increase the quantity and quality productivity. 2) Reducing the study time needed employee order to reach acceptable performance standards. 3) Creating an attitude of loyalty





and cooperation the more profitable. 4) Meet the needs of human resource planning. 5) Reducing the number and cost of accidents work. 6) Helping employees improve and their personal development (Hutajulu & Supriyanto, 2013).

Career development is a self-development activities undertaken by a person to realize his personal career plan (Marwansyah, 2014). In other words, personal enhancements made to achieve a career plan. A company would want qualified employees whose qualities increase every time because the progress of a person's career is not determined by the length of work, but from his competence. The way to be done by the company to increase career development to produce employees more qualified through education and training. If the employee's career is not considered, the employee's commitment to the organization becomes weak and will affect the employee's performance worse. (Rulianti & Nurlilah, 2021).

THEORETICAL REVIEWS

Professional Growth

a. Professionalism

While professional growth as a concept has been used in research for many decades, it has been defined in various ways and applied multiple contexts. Furthermore, literature on professional growth has spread into many different disciplines such as education, psychology, philosophy, sociology, medicine, business economics and engineering. Many of the empirical research, however, are still focused on traditional academic professions that is traced to the earlier interpretations of professionalism. Historically, the fields of Professional and Vocational Learning have been conceived of as separate and different from one another based on epistemological basis and academic requirements of certain occupations (Guile, 2019). Furthermore, professionalism has a long history among sociologists which emphasised the roles (e.g., teachers and doctors) played by individuals and institutions in relation to the functioning of society and research orientation, and aimed to define the characteristics that made particular occupations 'true' professions (Martimianakis et al., 2009). Since then, approaches to professionalism have changed and developed over the time. According to Guile (2019), what this culturally and historically formed split between the professions and vocations has always tended to play down is that professional and vocational formations are both concerned with the theory-practice relation. Consequently, his reformulation of the concept of professional growth emphasises the process that facilitates the formation of professional or vocational expertise rather than the distinction between professions and vocations: "Both professional and vocational formation entails learning to commingle the forms of knowledge taught in





professional or vocational curricula along with the forms of knowledge available or developed in workplaces into an embodied professional or vocational form of knowing” (Guile, 2019, p. 9). Similarly Chan et al. (2012) have reminded that while most formal education systems are still designed to produce specialized vocationalists and professionals to supply the workforce needed to support a national economy, more than just choosing a job, vocation, or occupation, youth around the world is nowadays rather expect to unfold a career over a lifetime, shaped by environmental opportunities and constraints, personal aspirations, abilities, and experiences. Thus, it is useful to distinguish the act of making a vocational choice from shaping and developing a career over a lifetime, which should be a constant work in progress (Choi & Jacobs, 2011).

Furthermore, recent sociological approaches to the study of professionalism consider professionalism, not in terms of a stable construct that can be isolated, taught and assessed, but as something that is socially constructed in interaction (Martimianakis et al., 2009), educational sciences approach to professionalism are focused on processes of (socially constructed) knowledge creation and continuous learning. Nowadays we have learned that for example a traditional profession of teacher, is more than the sum of competences and that competency-based systems of professional development must provide opportunities for teachers themselves to engage in deeper learning (Day, 2017). (Hargreaves, 2000) has conceptualized the development of teacher professionalism as passing through four historical phases in many countries: the pre-professional age, the age of the autonomous professional, the age of the collegial professional, and age of post-professional or postmodern. Whereas collegial professional brought us Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2004, p. 166) “the increasing efforts to build strong professional cultures of collaboration to develop common purpose, to cope with uncertainty and complexity, to respond effectively to rapid change and reform, to create a climate which values risk-taking and continuous improvement, to develop stronger senses of teacher efficacy, and to create ongoing professional learning cultures for teachers that replace patterns of staff development, which are individualized, episodic and weakly connected to the priorities of the school”, in a postmodern professionalism era Nelson (2009, p. 175) “teachers deal with a diverse and complex clientele, in conditions of increasing moral uncertainty, where many methods of approach are possible, and where more and more social groups have an influence and a say”. All the conflicting pressures and tendencies are leading teachers and those who work with them to re-evaluate their professionalism and to make judgements about the kinds of professional learning they need to get better in their job (Hargreaves, 2000). Overall, professionalism as a role draws attention away from the traits and behaviours of individuals and



towards the roles played by professionals in general (Martimianakis et al., 2009).

b. Approaches to professional growth

We have above discussed the conceptual background of professional growth that leads us to the past and current approaches to professionalism. In this chapter, we provide a conceptual overview of the literature on professional growth. Through comprehensive literature searching (systematic searching excluded), the aim in the overview was to explore the literature over the past two decades, during the 20th century, describe its characteristics and to provide a narrative synthesis on the topic (Hager, 2010). The research included in this chapter were based on their accuracy in conceptual defining or application of “professional growth” or their compatibility with the scope of the chapter in other respects (e.g., conceptual discussion of professional growth or related concepts). First, we present some studies that have identified the components of professional growth. Thereafter, we discuss the conceptual use of professional growth in general. When exploring the research literature, it became evident that the concept of professional growth, has been applied, defined and theoretically identified in various ways and different degrees of accuracy. Yet, in several researches it was approached from a holistic perspective, laying emphasis on individual aspects of learning and development, even the significance of social environment and collaborative processes is also acknowledged. Furthermore, in many cases research on professional growth is still focused on traditional academic professions, teachers in particular (e.g., Aarto-Pesonen & Tynjälä, 2017a, 2017b; Naegele et al., 2011; Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004; Maskit, 2011). For instance, (N. Clarke, 2005) empirically grounded Interconnected Model of Teachers’ Professional Growth incorporates key features of contemporary learning theory and recognizes an individual nature of teacher professional growth. The authors suggest that professional growth is an inevitable and continuing process of learning, and that to facilitate the professional development of teachers, we must understand the process by which teachers grow professionally and the conditions that support and promote that growth. The Interconnected Model presents that (D. Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, p. 98): “Change occurs through the mediating processes of “reflection” and “enactment”, in four distinct domains which encompass the teacher’s world: the personal domain (teacher knowledge, beliefs and attitudes),

the domain of practice (professional experimentation), the domain of consequence (salient outcomes), and the external domain (sources of information, stimulus or support)”. Instead, (Kramarski & Michalsky, 2009) have observed preservice teachers’ professional growth along three dimensions, self-regulated learning in pedagogical context, pedagogical knowledge,

and perceptions of teaching and learning, in four learning environments. Based on their findings, the authors call for further research on teachers' professional growth in self-regulatory environments, with particular emphasis on defining and examining features of SRL support, that according to the authors, are linked to qualities of constructing professional growth. Similarly, Michalsky's study (2012) study has indicated that pre-service teacher training in a learner-centered, active-learning, peer-collaborative environment was effective in fostering learners' professional growth when SRL components (support for self-regulated cognition–metacognition, motivation, or both) were supported. (Aarto-Pesonen & Tynjälä, 2017) research recognizes the holistic process of professional growth based on their analyses of physical education pre-service teachers' professional growth. The authors suggest that in contrast to previous theories of adult learning, their substantive theory places the role of emotions in professional growth at the center. The theory identifies criticality (e.g., expanding self-critique/self-expression and critical thinking), ethicality (holistic way of thinking, e.g., an increased understanding of one's own personal or culturally-based values) and empowerment (an experienced increase in personal capacity) as the main properties of the emotional core, which define the intensity of the professional growth process (Aarto-Pesonen & Tynjälä, 2017b). On the other hand, Owen (2014) has come to the conclusion, based on her empirical research on teacher professional learning communities, that through moving beyond conviviality, 'navigating fault lines' of divergent views and 'negotiating the essential tensions', significant benefits for teacher professional growth will occur. In addition that engagement in challenging debates within professional learning communities supports staff professional growth, it also supports transformative educational practices, and ultimately, student learning (Owen, 2014). Nelson (2009) suggests that the creation and support of teachers' professional learning communities has been increasingly viewed as a promising environment and structure for professional growth and transformative change. The author argues that while it is recognized that each teacher participates in a professional learning community from an individual and unique starting point shaped by previous experiences and beliefs and significantly influenced by their school culture and context, the optimistic premise or postulation emphasizes that teachers working collaboratively to understand some selected aspect of their practice contributes to significant professional growth across the group and, possibly, beyond the group (Nelson, 2009).

c. Professional development

Professional development is gaining new skills through continuing education and career training after entering the workforce. It can include taking classes or workshops, attending



professional or industry conferences, or earning a certificate to expand your knowledge in your chosen field. Some companies offer in-house opportunities for professional development, such as training sessions or mentoring programs, but many professional development programs are done independently.

Professional development refers to continuing education and career training after a person has entered the workforce in order to help them develop new skills, stay up-to-date on current trends, and advance their career (Memon et al., 2016). There are many types of programs that help to improve and learn multiple skills, such as a range of project management certifications. Organizations such as Pathstream offer programs for both individuals and companies.

Many fields require professionals to participate in continuing education and ongoing learning, sometimes as a prerequisite for keeping their job or to maintain their license, designation, or certification. In these cases, the field likely has specific continuing education (CE) or continuing professional education (CPE) requirements which must be completed through an approved continuing education provider.

Beyond continuing education, professional development can refer to many different types of educational or training opportunities relevant to the professional's work. Even when not required, many professionals who want to excel in their career will voluntarily seek out professional development and learning opportunities.

d. Purpose of professional development

It is a way for people to assess their own skills and abilities, consider their aims in life, and set goals in order to realise and maximise their true potential. The purpose of professional development is to give professionals the opportunity to learn and apply new knowledge and skills that can help them in their job and further their career. Professional development is all about building your skill set and knowledge base for your field, and professional development isn't just helpful for you — it's helpful for your employer, too. By having opportunities to learn, increase your skill sets, and stay up-to-date on industry trends, professionals like yourself increase your own worthwhile also adding to your company's overall value.

Professional development and professional training opportunities provide many other specific benefits for both young and experienced professionals

e. Benefits of professional development for employers

Employers can benefit from professional development in several ways. First, it promotes





higher employee retention rates. Statistics show that the cost of employee turnover is up to 16% of the employee's annual income. This means an employee earning \$ 100 000 per year will cost the employer \$ 16 000 if he or she quits. But employers who offer professional development will encourage employees to stay with their business. Professional development also signals competency on behalf of the employer. Some industries actually require workers to hold certifications. And if a worker doesn't have the necessary certification, it looks bad for the employer – not to mention the legal challenges it poses (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). Professional development, however, can help workers obtain the necessary certification and learning for their industry.

Professional development and continual learning will provide multiple benefits to every professional who actively engages with these opportunities, but many of the benefits of professional development will depend on the professional's specific career goals.

Benefits of professional development include:

1. Professional development expands your knowledge base. Professional development and continuing education opportunities can expose both young and experienced professionals to new ideas, solidify their knowledge, and increase their expertise in their field. Those who actively seek out these learning opportunities are those who will benefit most from them.
2. Professional development boosts confidence and credibility. By increasing professionals' expertise through professional development, their confidence in their work will increase as well. No one likes to think they're missing important skills in their industry. Professional development courses, continuing education, and training opportunities allow professionals to build confidence and credibility as they acquire new skill sets and professional designations.
3. Professional development increases earning potential and hireability. Professional development and continuing education offer both young and experienced professionals' opportunities to boost their earning potential and future hireability by increasing their knowledge and updating their skill sets. Professional credentials, certifications, and designations — most of which can be accessed and obtained online — also provide easy ways to increase a professional's value. Professionals with the right skill sets who seek out and take advantage of upskilling opportunities are certainly more bankable than those who don't.
4. Professional development can provide networking opportunities. Many professional development opportunities such as workshops, conferences, and other networking





events allow professionals to branch out and meet other people within their industry who may be able to help them with career opportunities in the future. When you decide you want a change or are ready to move up in your career, your professional network and the professional relationships you have forged will come in handy.

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6. Professional development keeps professionals current on industry trends. Professional development, continuing education and learning opportunities are great ways to stay up-to-date on industry knowledge and trends. Every professional industry is constantly evolving, so employees should use professional development and training opportunities to expand their knowledge base, learn new practices and techniques, and embrace new technology.
7. Professional development can open the door to future career changes. For professionals who are looking to make a complete career change or to pivot within their industry, new skills acquired through professional development training could be critical to opening new doors within their field or to transition to a new industry.

f. Encouraging employees to pursue professional growth

Professional development opportunities are only impactful if your employees take advantage of the programs you have to offer. Use these tips to encourage your employees to get involved with their own professional development at your company:

1. Meet with them to identify goals

Start by talking to your employees about their professional goals. Understanding the values and needs of your employees will help you design a professional development program that is most relevant to their interests. Ask your employees what kinds of opportunities they would most like to participate in to ensure you are using your budget effectively. Getting employee buy-in before setting up professional development opportunities will help you generate excitement among your team.

2. Reward their participation





Offer incentives to your employees who participate in professional development. Employees can sometimes feel that their current workload is too overwhelming already, discouraging them from participating in professional development. You can offset this challenge by providing a reward to employees who take online classes or attend on-site events. Entering employees in a raffle, giving out small gifts or arranging for paid trainings are all great ways to get employees engaged.

3. Offer regular feedback

Employees will likely be more motivated to pursue professional development if they know what areas they need to focus on. Meet regularly with your employees to give them constructive feedback and advice on how they can improve their career skills. Praise successes and recognize employees who show a high aptitude for a certain area, then inform them of related professional development opportunities that your company offers.

4. Use a learning management system

A learning management system (LMS) is a type of software that tracks employee professional development. It is a simple interface that you can use to track employee progress and give your team access to new continued learning courses. Using an LMS simplifies the process of accessing professional development materials, making it easier for employees to do small professional development tasks in their free time.

5. Create a schedule

Look at your employees' individual schedules to determine when most people will be available for group trainings. Creating a schedule for professional development activities will help your employees make professional development part of their workflow. For high-cost events like conferences, develop a rotating plan of who gets to attend each year and make employees aware of when their turn is coming up.

6. Share your experiences

Encourage your team to value their professional development by talking about your own experience as a manager and leader. Sharing personal insights can help people get more excited about the opportunities they have for achieving their career goals.

CONCLUSION

Professionally growing individuals in the future are not only cognitively committed to workplace learning process; they are also monitoring, and modifying their learning in a metacognitive manner, and their actions are driven by motives, goals, beliefs and emotions. Consequently, future research should be, to a greater extent, related to holistic competence



models that enable to analyze modern professional growth processes in workplace learning context. Training has a positive effect on employee performance. Career development has a positive effect on employee performance. To obtain useful results on an ongoing basis, some suggestions made for company development are employee performance variables that have the lowest average value on the effectiveness indicator, which means that cost-effectiveness has not been carried out by some employees in completing work.

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