

## Improvement of quality and efficiency in public administration via training of the human resources

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**Abstract:** The training of employees in the public sector is recognized internationally as an integral part of their professional development. Furthermore, it is an important factor of improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of services. This research presents an evaluation of a training program organized by the Greek Institute of Training. Specifically, it attempts to evaluate the attitude of public officials about the impact of the programs in order to improve efficiency and quality of service. For this purpose we evaluated 24 employees who attended the program. The questionnaire and the structured interview were used as methodological tools. The analysis revealed a positive attitude regarding the role of training programs, as trainees believe that the Institute of Training meet the workers' educational needs (personal, professional, career). There is also positive evaluation for the structure, the professionalism of trainers and the educational material which is distributed. However, results show that trainees fail to transfer the knowledge in the working environment because of the bureaucratic and the impersonal nature of public administration as well as the various daily problems which they face. Moreover, some problems were noted, which included the schedule of the program and the lack of clear goal setting.

**Keywords:** public administration, training, public sector, evaluation of training programs.

### INTRODUCTION

The administration in the public sector has a very important and responsible role, especially in the Greek society. The prolonged economic recession shows that there is an imperative need for capable leadership which focuses on strategic and integrated planning. Furthermore, it should encourage the implementation of public policies and structural interventions, while allocating effectively the resources, in the existing institutional and regulatory framework.

Any changes in the organizational culture and management style of the public sector are based on the catalytic contribution of its human resources. Therefore, a flexible public sector which is oriented to results, innovations, open government and individual initiatives is required. In order to upgrade and improve the image of public administration and, especially, its human resources, education and development are essential parts. The evaluation and development of skills, abilities and merits of the staff are crucial factors, hence the need for education and training of staff throughout the course of their career and professional development.

This research evaluates the training program of the Greek Institute of Training entitled "Management by objectives and measurement of performance", which is exclusively addressed to public officials. More specifically, this is a case study which examines the opinion of trainees themselves on the need for training and on the effectiveness of such programs in improving their efficiency in the workplace. Furthermore, this case study, via the attitude of trainees themselves, is trying to highlight the strategic importance of human resources' training in the administration of the public sector, but to also present any shortcomings of existing and available training programs of the Greek Institute of Training.

### The human resources in the public sector

Dagtolou[1] states that the public administration is the process of the government to achieve its objectives in the context of law and order. In other words, it consists of all the services which are controlled by the government and are designed to serve and meet the needs of the citizen [2]. One of the major problems which is necessary to be addressed by the Greek public administration is the (generally) poor performance of its staff.

Shortcomings of the human resources in public administration can be summarized in reduced stimulation and reduced mobility. Additionally, the participation of women in senior positions in the hierarchy is limited. Moreover, the utilization of the personnel is not optimal (according to their skills) while there is lack of human resources in areas that specific qualifications are required (i.e. people with skills in computers). These shortcomings combined with the absence of modern management or the poor implementation of it from the executives who hold positions of responsibility (General Managers, Heads of Divisions and Departments) and the unquestionable attachment to the institutional framework, at the expense of content and quality of the provided service, make it more difficult for the public administration to be effective.

A key feature of human resources in Greek public administration, is the commitment to hierarchical relationships, the entrenchment of tasks and responsibilities and the difficulty in working as a team, lack of intra-agency or inter-agency cooperation, but also the difficulty of effective and creative collaboration with the private sector based on the model of partnership as opposed to the conventional model of employer-supplier.

In this context, Senge and Sterman [3] proposed a new model of organization and development for enterprises, in order for the management of information to be incorporated in strategic business planning, named the "learning organization". The implementation of new working methods and new concepts on human resources management introduces the concept of a learning organization that creates and acquires the necessary knowledge while it changes the attitude and behavior of its employees. The culture of "learning organization" which promotes a "thinking workforce" through participatory processes, contributes in the improvement of products' and services' quality. The goal of the learning organization is not only to reduce production costs, but at the same time to improve the quality, hence this has a competitive advantage compared with traditional management mechanisms.

The emphasis on a learning organization is to create a suitable "climate" within the organization that enhances learning. Additionally, the process of organizational learning is linked to the strategic objectives of the organization with a systemic approach in the development and management of the knowledge. In this case, learning is used as a means to improve personal and by extension the collective organizational performance. This implies that employees have access

to the educational process. More importantly, however, it is important that the latter are encouraged to take initiatives and participate actively in decision making[4].

Information systems, accounting and control systems, internal networks and organized databases, all contribute to creating a favorable climate for learning by employees of the institution. The development of these systems should be combined with creating opportunities for growth and development for the employees, contributing to the establishment of a favorable climate for learning. Such good practices are the rewards for outstanding performance, the motivation for developing initiatives and innovations, flexible working hours, transfer of staff between different departments of the company and, of course, education and training.

The need for training and development of human resources in Public Administration

The management of human resources includes and must include the training of the latter. For this reason, the government should ensure that its employees continue to train in order to improve the performance of the departments in which they work.

One of the most important tasks of the head of administration and human resources is that of the selection, training and development of the staff, with the purpose of contributing to achieving the objectives set by the department or agency. Moreover, the efficiency of an organization is closely associated with the management and the development of human resources[5].

Fanariotis [6] emphasizes that the efficient management of human resources requires the planning of projects and programs that will ensure the selection and recruitment of qualified personnel, and will contribute to the ongoing development of their abilities. In addition, these programs will ensure the instigation and the development of the staff and will increase the satisfaction of the employees. Therefore, these training programs contribute to the promotion of a productive workforce, while ensuring cost reduction and developing rapid response to possible changes in the environment. According to Stewart & Walsh[7], education and training provide the appropriate tools and practices for this change. As it is obvious, the public sector should utilize its employees in the best way possible, through the development of skills. In this way, the workforce will be able to meet the current, growing and continuously changing needs of the public sector.

Fanariotis [6] points out that in order to achieve its objectives, which are associated with the

development of human resources, public administration should release and properly direct the force, talent and knowledge of the human resources that has at its disposal. To achieve this, the education and training of administrators is a key prerequisite for ensuring the skills, the knowledge and the attitude that are necessary for the current role of the government. Furthermore, through the development of human resources, high levels of competence and involvement of staff can be ensured. The training of human resources in the public sector is a tool in order to solve many problems which are associated with the organization of the services. Consequently, training seems to improve the efficiency and profitability (both individual and collective), while increasing the productivity. Additionally, training improves the quality of work, reduces wastage, costs and delays, but most importantly, it intensified the zeal of workers across the institute and it makes them more responsible to their obligations. Overall, it appears that the training of staff helps the administration to meet the demands of the environment, but also to implement new procedures and policies[8].

The human potential of each company or public body in order to develop its efficiency and effectiveness, need not only education, but also motivation. Therefore, a system of incentives, rewards and recognition is expected to increase not only the interest in conquest of new knowledge, but also greater efficiency in transfer of new knowledge in the workplace. The motivation for learning is the pursuit of those individual learning activities, which stand out for their importance and the benefits they offer to the individual. According to Rogers [9], the various changes in the physical environment of the individual may stimulate the desire to learn and create motivation for learning. It seems, therefore, that motivation is one of the main reasons why adults participate in education[10], thus motivating helps and promotes learning and also ensures the transfer in the workplace[11].

Finally, it is important that the concepts of education and development are inextricably linked. This is because education is both an essential part of development and a prerequisite for this. Accordingly, development helps the individual and the administrative organization to develop their skills. Thus, it becomes clear that education can contribute to this process, since it affects the configuration of the knowledge and skills of people in the business.

### **Evaluation of training programs**

According to Rogers [9], programs aimed at adults should be assessed in order to improve the performance not only for learners, but also of trainers. Thus, evaluation plays a key role in the future planning

of new programs, which focuses on the implementation of new practices and the achievement of new goals. Additionally, the evaluation of training programs enables the people who are responsible to examine whether progress has been made due to the program and to make any necessary improvements. Moreover, special attention should be given to the subject of the evaluation. Firstly, the extent to which the targets set by the design of the training program were achieved should be examined. Secondly, there should be an evaluation of the educational process itself and the way in which it was implemented by the instructor. Finally, emphasis should be given to evaluating the achievements of the learners themselves, to see if the latter were able to learn through the program, but also the extent to which managed to transfer this knowledge to their workplace[9].

We should emphasize that despite its necessity, in many cases, every attempt to evaluate the impact of a training program faces obstacles. This is because of the lurking danger of subjectivity (since it involves the human factor) and the suspicion of respondents[12]. This suspicion is particularly exacerbated in the case of the public sector. Besides, there are many who talk about political and ideological criteria by which any evaluation is conducted and therefore any evaluation is accompanied by a negativism, which often prevents participation in this or even its completion. For this reason, the clear identification of the purpose of the evaluation and the a priori definition of the criteria to be taken into account in the assessment process are essential elements of any evaluation process[12].

In the research part that follows, we investigate the extent to which participation in the training program of the Greek Institute of Training entitled "Management by objectives and measurement of performance" can help to improve the efficiency and the quality of service of employees in the public sector.

### **Previous researches**

Adult education in the public sector is a special case. This is because people who organize training programs and the trainers of public officials have to deal not only with the unique characteristics of adult learners and their internal and external obstacles, but with many other obstacles, such as the bureaucracy, the discomfort, the inability to transfer the acquired knowledge in the workplace but also a feeling of distrust toward assessment procedures, which often makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of training programs.

Dimoulas[13] concluded that the training programs of the public sector allow employees to

update their knowledge and therefore they can be more efficient and they can advance in the hierarchy of their service. However, he emphasizes the lack of transfer of the knowledge in the workplace and the limited exploitation of the human resources in public administration, weaknesses that are primarily due to the structure and characteristics of the administration itself.

Krestas[14], in a survey conducted to executives of the public sector, showed a positive attitude of respondents regarding the flexibility of the educational program which they attended and received information about the program objectives. But it seems that most participants attended the program, not on their own initiative but as a demand of the service in which they work. The organization and the structure of the program and the quality of the trainers and training materials were considered satisfactory. Moreover, this research highlighted weaknesses associated with the administrative culture of the government itself.

Finally, we should mention the research of Matsikopoulou & Psihi [15], which explored the attitude of public officials on the effectiveness of training and evaluation systems. Thus, their research showed that employees who have remained in the same position from 5-9 years believe that the effectiveness of public officials may increase after attending training programs. In contrast, sex or education level did not appear to affect their attitude towards training, as all respondents (regardless of gender or education level) said that the efficiency of a worker can be increased after a training program.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Scope of Research

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the training program of the Greek Institute of Training named "Management by objectives and measurement of performance" which is addressed to the field of Public Administration. More specifically, through this study we wanted to evaluate the role of training programs as factors of quality and efficiency. For this reason, we investigated the views of civil servants who work in western Greece and who had participated in the previous year (2012) to this specific training program

Furthermore, this research aims to highlight the strategic importance of the training of human resources in Public Administration through presenting the attitudes of learners themselves, but also to highlight any shortcomings of existing and available training programs of the Greek Institute of Training. The research questions were:

1. Which are the opinions of participants about the reasons and the need to participate in the training programs of the Greek Institute of Training?

2. How they evaluate the quality of these programs and services?

3. To what extent they transfer the knowledge they acquire by these programs in their daily work?

4. Are there any weaknesses and shortcomings of these programs

### The sample

We investigated the views of learners who work in Western Greece and participated in the training program of the Greek Institute of Training named "Management by objectives and measurement of performance" within the thematic cycle "Administrative Reform and decentralization in the year 2012". The whole population is the 45 trainees who attended and completed the program during the periods from 25/6/2012 until 29/6/2012 and from 28/6/2012 to 30/6/2012. At this point, we should emphasize that this work is a case study. For this reason, our sample was quite limited. There has been a quantitative research (using a questionnaire) in 16 people. The sample was randomly chosen and with the consent of those concerned. In addition, we conducted qualitative research (through structured interview) in 8 individuals.

### Method of data collection

For the collection of the data, questionnaires and structured interviews were used. For the processing and analysis of these data we used a combination of research methods (qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis, content analysis) in order to ensure a high degree of validity and reliability. More specifically, the main tool of quantitative survey was anonymous questionnaire with open and closed questions. With the closed questions, there has been a better and easier categorization of the data, while with the open-ended questions, the respondent was given the option to express freely his/her opinion[16].

We also used the method of structured interview, because the interview gives the opportunity to collect more information in relation to the information collected by the questionnaire and clarify some difficult answers in the open-ended questions[16]. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approach is expected to ensure greater objectivity, because the combination of two or more research methods leads to safer and more precise conclusions.

### Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used as the main methodological tool because it helps in faster and extensive data collection, but also in faster processing. Furthermore, it is considered as a methodological tool which simplifies the collection of information and promotes the recording in a systematic way[17].

Therefore, proper composition and structure of the questionnaire are crucial for a successful research.

Participants were asked to choose mainly from closed-ended questions the answer that suits them. The questionnaire was anonymous and questions are formulated in order to be as clear as possible and ethical policies were respected. The subjects were informed about the purpose of the research, they participated voluntarily and they were assured about the confidentiality of their anonymity.

A key criterion for the use of closed-ended questions, were the characteristics of the participants. Despite the fact that these questions do not provide in-depth information and require more training and effort of the researcher to build them, they have the advantage to be answered faster and therefore more easily, which provides more responses to a given time and individuals are more willing to participate [18].

At the same time, the processing and the statistical analysis of the data are easier. As a result, the researcher focuses his/her attention on what needs to be examined. Additionally, according to Cohen et al. [16], the open-ended questions should be avoided in the questionnaires, because they are not a very satisfactory way of eliciting information and they also require a lot of time on behalf of the respondents. Finally, the Likert scale is used in an attempt to quantify some qualitative characteristics such as the attitude towards the topics of the research[18].

As already mentioned, this research is a case study. This means that our sample is limited, so the use of a rigorous statistical package and the exportation of universal conclusions were not crucial. For this reason, the data of the questionnaire was processed with the tools offered by Microsoft Office 2010 and specifically the Microsoft Excel 2010.

### **Structured interviews**

The second phase of the research is a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach collects data from the exact words of people or descriptions of events that have been observed. Qualitative research seeks to “discover the meanings that are given by the participants in the survey, their behavior, the way they interpret situations and what are their views on specific issues” [19]. For this reason we chose the qualitative method of structured interview. It is a data collection method, which has many similarities with the questionnaire, except that it collects more details. The interviewer asks a series of predefined questions and the requested answers are also on very specific topics. This means that all participants answered exactly the same questions.

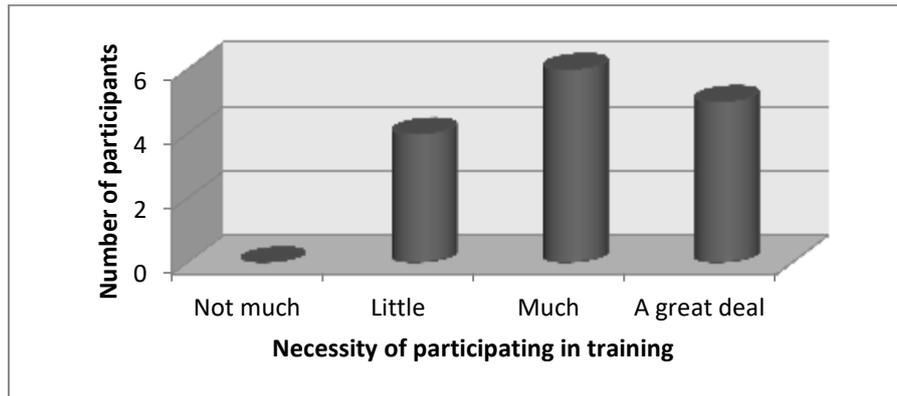
The interview data were transcribed from the recordings and analyzed with the method of content analysis. The goal of content analysis is to convert the raw information into categories that can enhance the scientific analysis and will allow generalizations and quantitative measurements, which are important for a systematic theory[20-21].

As a unit of the content analysis, the pairing of the responses to interview questions with the questions of the questionnaire was chosen. At this point, it should be noted that during this research the method of triangulation was chosen. Triangulation is the “implementation and combination of different research methodologies to explore the same phenomenon”[22]. In specific, triangulation was implemented not only during the data collection, but also during the data processing. Multiple methods of data collection and processing were mobilized in order to triangulate and confirm the findings. Consequently, data from different sources crossed to confirm or reinforce one another. Each data source was associated with a specific research question affording corroborative evidence in relation to this research question, which was enhanced from the triangulation with information derived from other data sources. In this way, the research methods and tools were associated with the purposes of the research. The interview data were triangulation with the data of the questionnaires, while interviews were triangulated with one another. Thus, each source of data updated the final findings in a way that every research finding is a result of a combination and confirmation of two data sources at least.

In other words, for the collection of research data multiple research tools (questionnaire, semi-structured interviews) were used, and respectively, for the processing and analysis of these data a combination of research methods (qualitative analysis, quantitative analysis, content analysis) was implemented to ensure a high degree of validity and reliability.

### **FINDINGS**

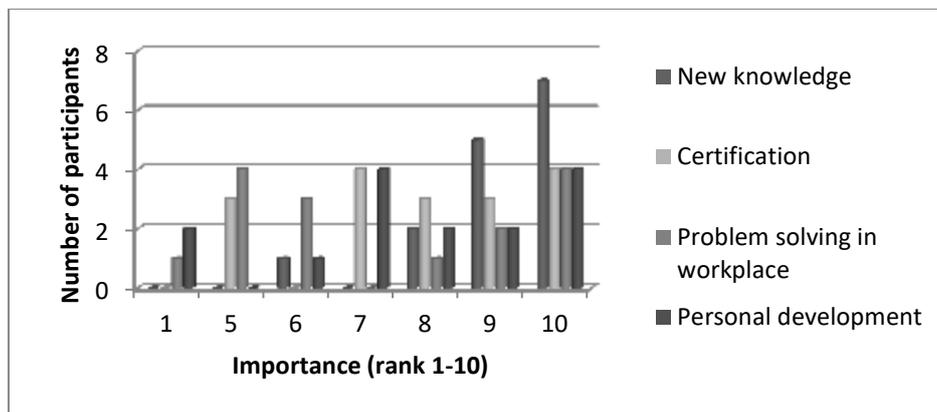
The majority of participants (56%) attended these programs by its own initiative, while only one participant replied that the initiative was by the Head of the Department and one that the initiative belongs to the department or agency. The processing of data of the questionnaire, showed that all participants felt that the participation in such programs is necessary, to varying degrees, though. Most of the respondents think it is a great deal to participate in training programs (7 of 16 responses), while five (5) participants assessed as very necessary this involvement and four (4) as less necessary (Figure 1)



**Fig- 1: Necessity in participating in training programs**

Participants were also asked to rank their criteria for choosing to participate in training programs on a scale of 10. 7 out of the 16 respondents noted as the most important reason is to obtain new pieces of knowledge and skills. Equally important was considered the acquisition of certifications for

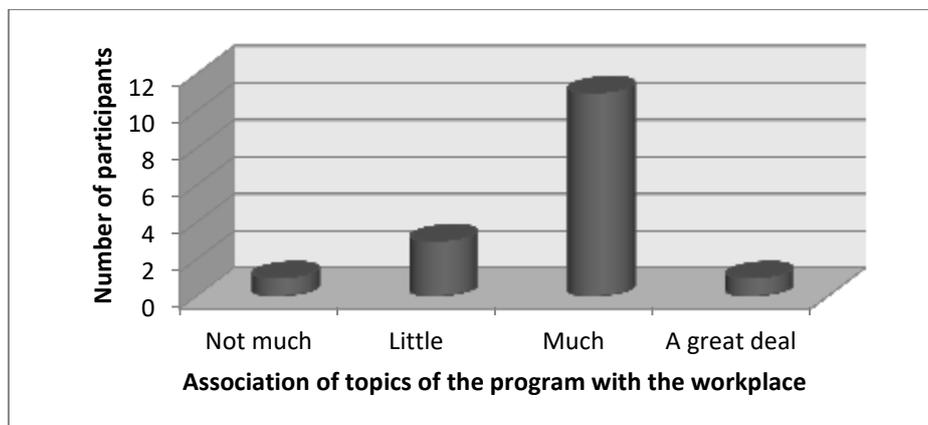
professional development. However, it appears that solving problems in the workplace and personal development are not important factors for the respondents in order to participate in these programs (Figure 2).



**Fig-2: Importance of criteria to participate in training programs**

For most of the participants the training seminar they attended had a great association with the object of their work (Figure 3), while it appears that

more than half of the respondents believe that it satisfied their needs to obtain new knowledge (Figure 4).



**Fig-3: Association of the program with the workplace**

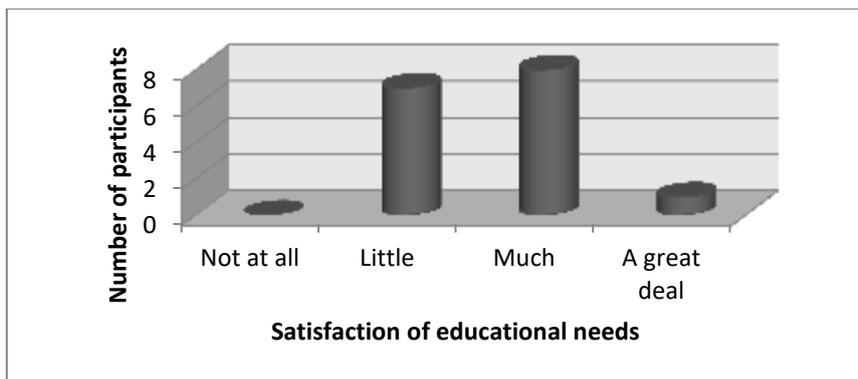


Fig-4: Satisfaction of educational needs

The processing of the questionnaires showed that the participants assessed positively the program as a whole. As seen from the figure below (Figure 5), participants were quite satisfied with the educational materials distributed to them during the program (the majority rated them 7-8 on a scale of 10), while they were also satisfied with the purposes of the program.

However, it appears that the participants were not satisfied with the educational methods which were used during the program and this factor was evaluated with moderate rating (5 and 6 on a scale of 10). Similarly, the additional knowledge acquired during the program ranked mostly 3-7 (on a scale of 10).

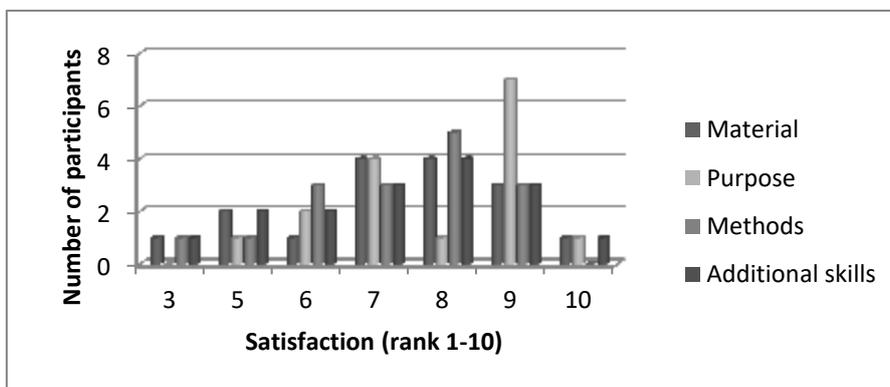


Fig-5: Satisfaction of factors of the training program

Two factors of the training program were assessed exclusively due to their importance: the duration and the structure of the program. Both received with moderate rating. It seems, in other words,

that the participants were not very pleased with the total duration of the training program and the general structure (Figure 6).

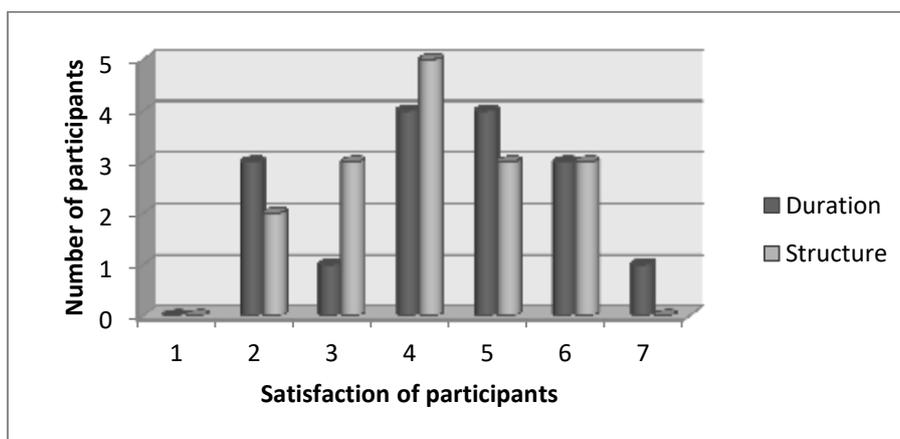
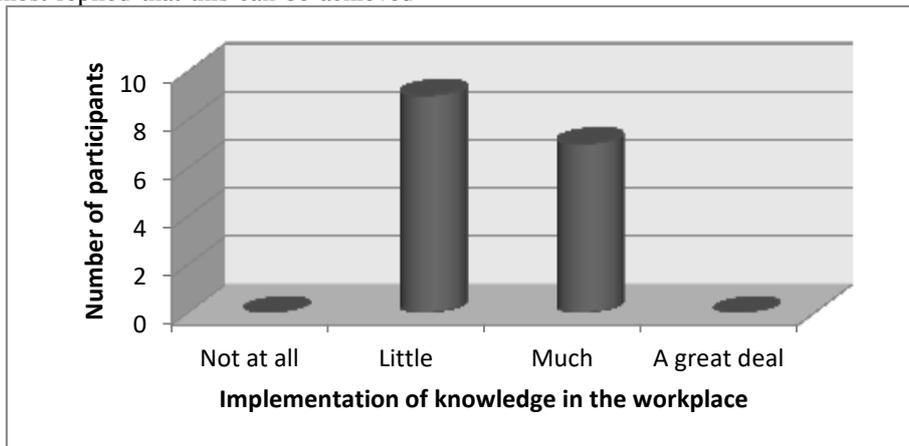


Fig-6: Satisfaction of participants about duration and structure of the program

Regarding the extent to which the participants can apply the knowledge gained from the seminar in their workplace, most replied that this can be achieved

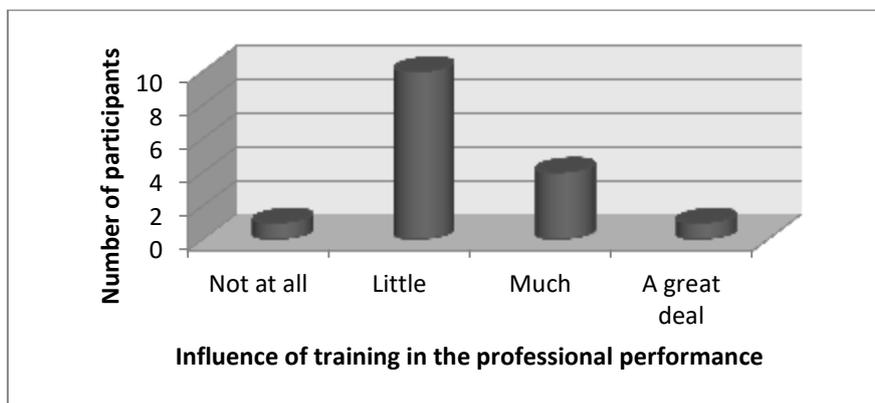
to a limited extent, while 7 of the 16 participants felt that the new knowledge is applicable (Figure 7).



**Fig-7: Possibility of implementing the knowledge in the workplace**

The majority of the sample (10 out of 16 participants) believes that the training program had a minor influence on their professional performance

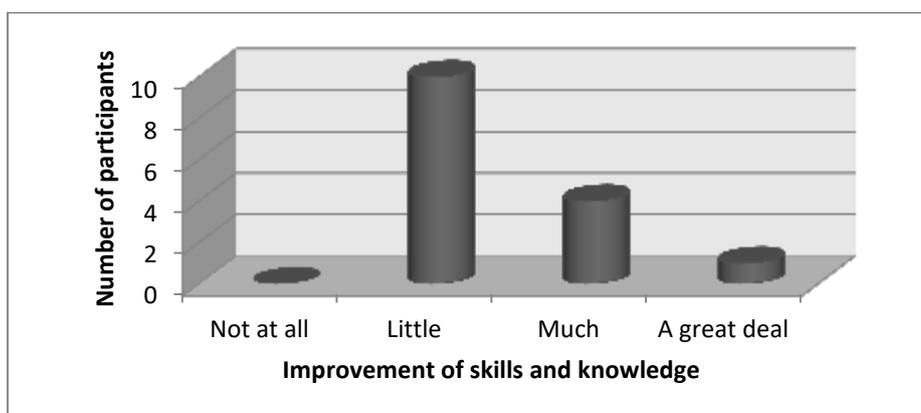
(Figure 8), while only 4 responded that the program's contribution was important to their performance.



**Fig-8: Influence of training program to the professional performance**

Regarding the improvement of the participants' knowledge and skills after the training program, 10 out of the 16 participants felt that the

training program improved in a small extent their knowledge and skills (Figure 9), while only 4 replied that this improvement was great.



**Figure 9: Improvement of skills and knowledge**

Regarding the transfer of the acquired knowledge to the other members of the service, 53% of the sample responded that they managed to transfer their knowledge to their co-workers, while 47% stated the opposite (Figure 10). Furthermore, those who answered positively to the question above said they

transferred their experiences through group discussions and presentations to other co-workers or by the distribution of educational material to their colleagues. However, they stated that the interest of the other employees was extremely limited.

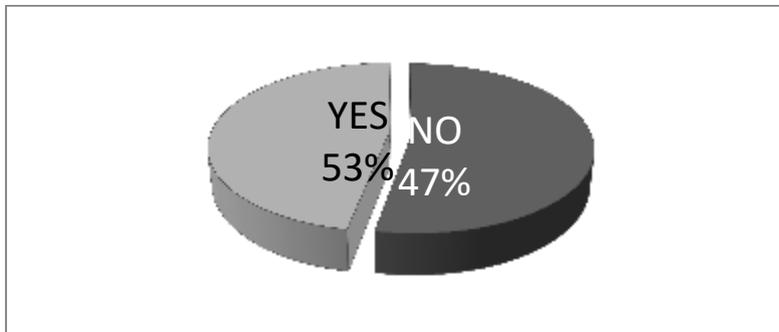


Figure 10: Transfer of knowledge to co-workers

The majority of participants (10 out of 16) do not often use any of the new knowledge and skills

developed, while 6 said they use them occasionally (Figure 11).

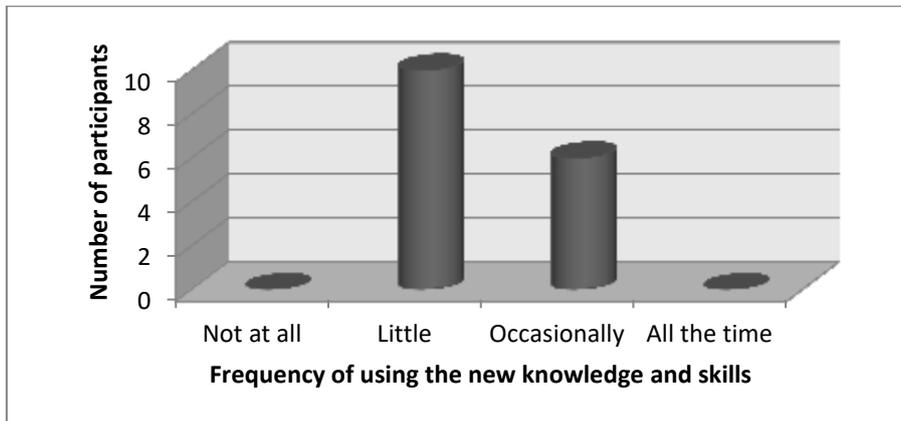


Fig-11: Frequency of using the new knowledge and skills

Half of the respondents have been able to implement some changes to their service after

completing the training program, while the other half gave a negative response (Figure 12).

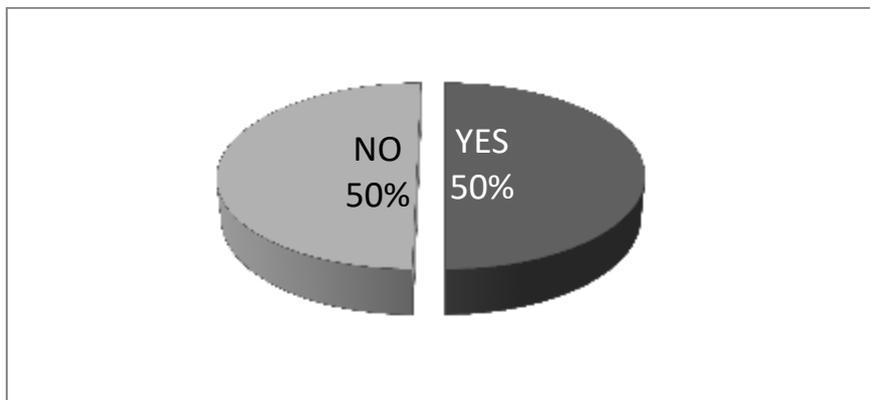
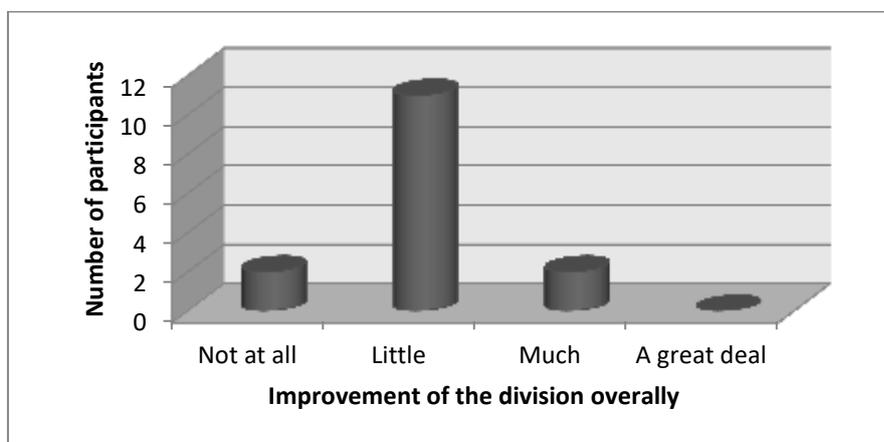


Fig-12: Implementation of new knowledge in the workplace

In the question whether their division in the public sector was improved after the attendance of the program, the majority (11 out of 16 participants) responded that their division has improved slightly,

while only two answered that their division was greatly improved (Figure 13). These improvements seem to relate mainly to the cooperation with their colleagues but also with other divisions.



**Fig- 13: Improvement of the division after the training program**

Finally, half of the participants reported that they face obstacles when trying to implement the knowledge and skills acquired from the program. These difficulties relate to the bureaucratic nature of public administration, the lack of qualified personnel, but also the distrust and the opposition of their colleagues. In contrast, the other half of the participants do not seem to have difficulties in applying the knowledge and skills gained from the training program. In total, participants in our study seem to evaluate moderately the training program of the Greek Institute of Training entitled "Management by objectives and measurement of performance"

Most of them highlighted that the program should be aimed more at the problems regarding their particular division and how to address them by appropriate examples. In other words, they noted that the program should be more targeted, more effective and more should include more examples and case studies in order to be complete.

## CONCLUSIONS

As already mentioned in the theoretical part of the research, the effectiveness of the public administration is directly related to the human resources. The latter, in order to yield the maximum should be properly trained and carefully selected. The continuous improvement of its capabilities and the acquisition of new knowledge and skills are also essential. This means that both the leadership of the public administration and the employees themselves should choose the suitable training programs and focus on proper evaluation of the selected programs. This evaluation should be done in such a way that it will help

in improving the efficiency of public officials and service.

Initially, it should be noted that none of the demographic characteristics of the participants seem to affect their attitude towards this training program. This data is consistent with the findings of previous studies and particularly those of Matsikopoulou and Psixi[15], which showed that gender, age, years of employment and education level do not affect the attitude of the respondents towards the training programs.

Regarding our first research question, the research results demonstrate the necessity to participate in such training programs. The analysis of the data from the questionnaires showed that the majority of participants felt that their participation in such training programs is necessary, especially now that the changes in all areas of daily life require from them to provide the best possible service. In fact, 43.75% of respondents believe it is necessary to participate in such training programs, while 15% evaluated this participation as very necessary. The main reason for participation of public sector's employees in training programs was the acquisition of new knowledge and skills (at a rate of 43.75%), while equally important reason was to gain certifications for professional development. Furthermore, 56.25% believed that the training program was in accordance with their educational needs. Additionally, the participants during their interviews said that their participation in this training program gave them the opportunity to improve themselves and the quality of their professional performance but also it facilitated their relationship with their co-workers in their division or other areas of the public sector.

As already mentioned, the success or failure of a training program and the development of human resources depend to a large extent on the ability of designers to analyze accurately the educational needs of the organization and the individual involved in the program. At this point, we should mention that, the educational needs of public officials include personal needs (which aim at achieving personal goals), professional needs (which are focus on developing qualifications and skills) and career needs (which aim at acquiring those skills, which will ensure professional advancement)[23]. This program seems to cover all three categories of training needs, according to the interviews of the participants.

In addition, it seems that the initiative for participation in such programs is undertaken by the employees themselves, not the heads or the department to which they belong. The analysis of the results showed that 62.5% of the respondents participated on their own initiative and responsibility. Accordingly, this was also verified by their interviews. In this case, however, setting specific goals from the department of the division urged many employees to participate in the training program. This was stated during the interviews and it was not identified as a critical factor after the analysis of the questionnaires.

These findings contradict the survey of Kresta[14], which showed that employees in the public sector are mainly ordered by the department to which they belong to participate in training programs. However, they are consistent with the conditions for effective adult learning, as according to Rogers[9], the adult education should be voluntary. Only the voluntary participation will give the desired results which, in general, are to increase the efficiency of public sector's workers. Employees need to become aware of the need of training and not to be forced to participate in such programs by their department and their supervisors.

With respect to our second research question, we would say that in general the participants were moderately satisfied by the provided training program. More specifically, the processing of the questionnaires showed the participants' satisfaction regarding the educational material which was distributed to them, the adequacy and education of their trainers and the prior presentation of the program's objectives. However, all the participants did not seem satisfied with the training methods. As it was mentioned, more examples and case studies should have been included in the process of learning.

With regards to our third research question about the transfer of the knowledge in the workplace, the results appear to be consistent with the findings of

previous researches. The processing of the questionnaires showed the willingness of the participants to transfer the new knowledge in their department and their colleagues. The degree, however, in which the knowledge is transferred, is not clear from the analysis of the responses to the questionnaires (which is probably due to the small number of participants). This is because half of the participants (53%) responded that they managed to transfer the knowledge to their division. The transfer was achieved through changes which were applied by them in the way they perform their duties, but also through discussions with other staff or through the distribution of educational material to co-workers. In contrast, 47% of the sample said that they were not able to transfer their newly acquired knowledge to their workplace. And this is primarily due to the very nature of the public administration. In other words, the bureaucratic and impersonal nature of the Greek government, and the lack of qualified staff prevent the implementation of new ideas and innovation. Important factor is also the indifference of many of their colleagues, and their distrust towards the trainees and their actions.

The same conclusions were drawn with the analysis of the interviews. The majority of interviewees stated that new knowledge and experiences acquired after participating in the program is applicable to a great degree. Most of them said that they are trying to apply that knowledge in order to make changes to their department. However, given the bureaucratic nature of public administration and the impersonal nature of it, they try to transfer their knowledge by making very small changes periodically.

The characteristics of bureaucracy such as hierarchy, division of labor, the impersonal orientation and the large number of rules and regulations hinder rather than promote the efficiency of public administration. As a result, the employees lose their motivation for competition, stiffness occurs in the relationships between co-workers and the impersonal nature of the public sector disorients the employees[24]. However, many note that it is necessary to implement these changes in order for the employees to perform to the fullest of their capabilities. Therefore, by setting small daily goals, officials are trying to transfer experience and knowledge acquired during their training to the workplace.

Finally, regarding the fourth and final research participants evaluated the program and the training which was offered to them positively. They point out, however, as a key weakness the lack of scorecard. In other words, the participants noted that the program should focus more on solving daily problems, while

there should have been more time to practice in how to handle them (by more examples or case studies).

#### Suggestions

The need for involvement of public officials in training programs is essential. These programs should satisfy their educational needs and they should help them overcome daily problems and obstacles they face while doing their jobs. Consequently it is crucial for the Greek Institute of Training and other relative institutions to organize training programs according to the needs of the employees. Furthermore, the employees' participation should be larger in order to ensure maximum efficiency and improved services. Besides, as it has already been presented in the theoretical part, training of human resources in public administration is a vital prerequisite for any attempt to modernize the public sector and increase its profitability.

Additionally, based on what emerged from the processing and analysis of our data, we believe that there should be changes in the structure and duration of the training programs offered by the Greek Institute of Training. This means that these programs should focus more on providing the means that will help public officials to deal with the problems they faced daily. The duration of the program should also change. This means that the theoretical training should be reduced to minimum and trainees should focus on practical skills relative to their job, the public administration and the problems they face. The experiential nature of knowledge, moreover, is a constant request of adult learners.

It goes without saying, that in order to exploit the knowledge provided by the training programs and to implement the necessary changes, the leadership of the public administration should fight the bureaucracy, the mistrust and the negative attitude of officials against such programs.

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