



REASONS OF EMPLOYEES' PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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Abstract:

The aim of this study was to highlight the reasons that motivate employees to participate in Continuing Professional Education (CPE) programs and, also, aims to identify the factors that contribute to their reasons for participation. The research tool was the questionnaire which contains a list of 28 reasons for participation. The results of the present study showed that the most important reasons that motivate employees to participate in CPE programs were, "to cultivate my skills and abilities", "to be informed about new technologies and developments in my field", and "to be a more accomplished as a professional". Additionally, six categories of reasons for participation reasons have emerged from the statistical analysis: *Efficiency at work*, *Professional advancement*, *Enhancement/acquisition of qualifications*, *Network/environment*, *Instrumental use of education*, and *Escape*.

Keywords: reasons for participation, employees, factors, reasons

1. Introduction

Lifelong Learning can contribute to personal and social development by offering multiple benefits. The programs offered to adult learners are vital in order to meet the challenges of fighting unemployment and improving working conditions. In addition, it can contribute to the integration of adults entering the labor market, but also the reduction of social exclusion (Kitiashvili & Branton Tasker, 2016; OECD, 2011).

A large part of the workforce considers it necessary to upgrade its skills in order to be able to respond effectively to the ever-changing technological and scientific requirements of recent decades. The need to acquire new specialized skills increases with the technological changes taking place in the labor market, and consequently, participation in education and training becomes imperative. Therefore, creating a well-

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trained workforce will contribute more effectively to increasing productivity but also to improving employee well-being. Continuing education contributes in the long run to sustainable economic and industrial development as well as to the development of competitiveness (Khairunnisa, Asyikin, & Mansor, 2016; Massing & Gauly, 2017; OECD, 2011; Tam, 2014). Therefore, knowing the reasons that the adult participates in educational programs is meaningful. However, in Greece, our knowledge of the reasons for participation is limited, mainly, to European reports, to the findings of Karalis's research (2013, 2018, 2021), and to a handful of small-scale studies.

2. Theoretical framework

A milestone in the study of the reasons for adult participation in continuing education programs was the study of Cyril O. Houle in 1961, which was published in his book entitled: *The Inquiring Mind*. Houle, collecting data from 22 adult learners, through the in-depth interview technique, aimed to examine the basic structure that governs the various reasons that people give for their participation in adult education (Darkenwald, 1977, p. 2). Based on the results of his study, he identified three types of learners, which may overlap: a) learning oriented b) goal oriented c) activity oriented. Houle's study is particularly important in the field of adult education as it signals both the emergence of psychological approaches to the examination of behavior related to adult participation, and a critical shift from the examination of participation to the examination of the participant (Babchuk, 1996). Burgess (1971) examined the reasons for participating in group educational activities, aiming to further examine the framework of educational orientations developed by Houle (1961). He developed the research instrument "Reasons for Educational Participation Scale-REP", which contained seventy reasons and the results of the research revealed seven factors.

Based on the belief that the motivation structure is multidimensional and Houle's typology for the three types of learners is too simplistic to explain the reasons for participation, Boshier (1971) constructed the Education Participation Scale (EPS). A research measurement tool, through which, one could extract data on the reasons for participation more accurately. The construction of EPS is based on Boshier's (1976) belief that the reasons for participation are complex structures, which are difficult to capture in a written or oral statement of the adult. In addition, the volume of research data resulting from these statements is not easily manageable by researchers.

Boshier (1977) modified the EPS, reducing both participation rates and scale scores. The EPS (F-form), had 40 reasons and a four-point Likert scale. Later, Mergener (1979) and O'Connor (1979, 1982, as cited in Garst & Ried, 1999) also modified the EPS for their research needs using a five-point and ten-point Likert scale, respectively (Boshier & Collins, 1983; Boshier, Huang, Song & Song, 2006). In particular, the amended version of O'Connor (1979), EPS-M, was addressed to health professionals and contained 56 reasons for participation. Six factors emerged from the factor analysis. The final revised version, the EPS (A-form), contained 42 reasons for participation and a four-point Likert

scale. Seven factors emerged from the factor analysis, with each factor included six reasons for participation (Boshier, 1991).

After 1971, many important research efforts followed, many of which aimed primarily at evaluating EPS as a valid research tool, while also adding research data, which contributes to our further understanding of the reasons for adult participation in educational programs (Boshier & Collins, 1983; Boshier, et al., 2006; Bova, 1976; Fujita-Stark, 1996; Fujita-Stark & Thompson, 1994; Gordon, Olson & Hamsher, 1990; Khairunnisa, et al., 2016; Miller, 1992).

Many of the aforementioned studies use EPS (or some of its forms e.g., (EPS-A form, EPS-M) in CPE (Joned & Hong, 2006; Hamilton-West, 2013; Noda & Kim, 2013). In addition, they use the modified version of O'Connor (Care, 1993; Dia et al., 2005; Sansivero, 1982) or the also modified version of Mergener (1979) in order to investigate the reasons for the participation of health professionals (Garst & Ried, 1999). However, according to Grotelueschen (1985), CEⁱⁱ differs from CPE in three key areas. The first area concerns the population participating in continuing and continuing professional education, the second relates to the nature of participation, and the third to the educational benefits and beneficiaries. Therefore, in order to examine the participation in CPE, a different approach is necessary as well as a specially designed research tool, which will be able to investigate the reasons for the participation of employees from different occupational groups (Grotelueschen, 1985).

Grotelueschen, Harnisch, and Kenny (1979, as cited in Kenny & Harnisch, 1982, p. 39) constructed the Professional Reason Scale (PRS) aimed at examining specifically the reasons for the participation of professionals in CPE programs. In addition to the PRS, they developed the Participants Benefits Scale (PBS) and the Participants Information Form (PIF). The PRS in its initial form included 19 reasons to participate (PRS-19), in the second form 36 reasons (PRS-36), and in its last form 30 reasons (PRS-30). PRS has been applied to various professional groups, such as doctors (of different specialties), social workers, nurses, business professionals, judges, pharmacists, cytotechnologists, etc. (Balachandran & Branch, 1997; Bennett, 2005; Goetz, 1989; Grzyb, Graham, & Donaldson, 1997). Participants are asked to choose the importance of each reason for participation through a seven-point Likert scale. The reasons for participation in the PRS are grouped into five factors: a) professional improvement and development, b) professional service, c) collegial learning and interaction, d) professional commitment and reflection, and e) personal benefits and job security.

3. Methodology

The aim of this study was to highlight the employees' reasons for participation in CPE programs in Greece. To achieve the above goal, we used the questionnaire "Attitudes, Reasons, and Barriers of Employees' Participation" (Liodaki, 2020) which examines different aspects of participation (reasons, barriers, attitude, etc.). In this paper, we

present only the part of the questionnaire that concerns the reasons for participation and consists of a list of 28 reasons that emerged from the bibliography and two focus groups of 20 employees. Initially, we investigated which reasons motivate participants and whether there was a difference in participants' preferences when choosing between many as well as the most important reason. In a secondary statistical analysis we grouped the reasons via factor analysis and identified which of the factors appear to a greater extent.

The participants were 1,162 employees who, during the survey, attended educational programs provided by two Greek Confederations: The Hellenic Small Enterprises Institute of the Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen and Merchants (IME GSEVEE) and the Labor Institute of General Confederation of Greek Workers (INE GSEE) throughout Greece. The participants were aged from 18 to 65+ and the majority were women (52.3%). Additionally, the largest percentage worked as skilled craftsmen (22.5%) and were employed in the private sector as full-time employees (47.9%). Participation in the educational programs was voluntary.

4. Results

4.1 Individuals' reasons for participation

The participants were asked to rate (on a seven-point Likert scale) their degree of agreement or disagreement on each of the 28 reasons for participation and then to choose the most important one for them. In order to capture the data clearly, the data were presented on a three-point scale (see Table 1). As shown in the below table, out of the 28 reasons for participation, 21 of them obtained agreement rates greater than 50%. It is worth noting that the two lowest percentages of the agreement were gathered by the reasons: "to get a promotion" and "to escape from the problems of my personal/ family life". For the reason: "to get a promotion" the agreement rate was 32% (n = 372), while a "Nor agree nor disagree" preference obtained the highest percentage for this reason (38.1%). For the reason: "to escape from the problems of my personal/family life" the agreement rate was 14.8% (n = 172) and therefore, it was obtained the highest disagreement rate of 62.1% (n = 722). Of the two reasons, the latter seems that is not one of the reasons that will motivate them to participate in an educational program.

Table 1: Reason for participation (multiple choice)

Reasons	Disagree (%)	Nor disagree, nor agree (%)	Agree (%)
To cultivate my skills and competencies	2.8	5.6	91.6
To be informed about new technologies and developments in my field.	3.9	7.6	88.6
To extend my knowledge in my field	4.1	9.1	86.7
To be a more accomplished as a professional	3.1	12.5	84.4
To exchange my opinions/thoughts with my colleagues regarding my profession	3.8	12.2	84
To feel more satisfied with the work I produce in my work	4	12.3	83.6

To use my free time creatively by learning something useful for my work	5.5	12	82.5
To enrich my CV	6.1	13.7	80.2
To specialized in something more specific	4.5	15.4	80.1
To improve my professional network	6.7	14.9	78.4
To be informed about new products and services on the labor market	7.7	14.5	77.8
To discuss and solve problems I encounter in my work.	7.2	15.9	76.9
To be more efficient at my work.	8.6	15.4	76
To be able to serve the people who reconcile with me in the most efficient way.	9.3	16.4	74.3
To obtain a certificate of attendance	9.1	16.9	74.0
To increase my income	15.1	23.8	61.1
To improve my social network	15.2	23.8	60.9
To find a better job	13	28.2	58.8
To use the knowledge of other colleagues.	15.8	26.1	58.1
To give my children a good example.	17.3	27.5	55.2
To be more competitive with my colleagues.	21.8	25.4	52.8
To enhance my relationship with my colleagues	24.6	27.1	48.3
To maintain my job position	24.2	29.3	46.6
To gain the respect and acceptance of my colleagues	26.2	31.9	41.9
To escape from my work routine.	31.7	28.7	39.6
To gain the appreciation of my employer	33	31.9	35.1
To get a promotion	29.9	38.1	32
To escape from the problems of personal/family life	62.1	23.1	14.8
Total: 1162			

As shown in the above table which presents the most important reasons for participation (single choice), the reasons: "to cultivate my skills and abilities" and "to be informed about new technologies and developments in my field" remain the top choices of the participants. Below fourth place the ordering of reasons changes between multiple and single choices. The reason: "to escape from the problems of my personal/family life" (0.2%), in both cases (multiple and single choices), has the lowest percentage. In addition, in the single choice case, "to enhance my relationship with my colleagues" and "to gain the respect and acceptance of my colleagues" also ranked last.

Table 2: Reason for participation (one choice)

Reasons	Percentage (%)
To cultivate my skills and competencies	20.1
To be informed about new technologies and developments in my field	10.6
To be a more accomplished as a professional	7.6
To use my free time creatively by learning something useful for my work	7.1
To extend my knowledge in my field	7.1
To increase my income	7.1
To be more efficient at my work	4.8
To enrich my CV	4.0
To exchange my opinions/thoughts with my colleagues regarding my profession	3.4

To specialized in something more specific	3.6
To feel more satisfied with the work I produce in my work	3.1
To obtain a certificate of attendance	3.0
To maintain my job position	2.9
To discuss and solve problems I encounter in my work	2.5
To be able to serve the people who reconcile with me in the most efficient way.	2.5
To find a better job	2.0
To give my children a good example	1.6
To improve my professional network	1.4
To improve my social network	1.3
To be informed about new products and services on the labor market	0.9
To get a promotion	0.9
To be more competitive with my colleagues	0.8
To gain the appreciation of my employer	0.5
To escape from my work routine	0.4
To use the knowledge of other colleagues	0.3
To escape from the problems of personal/family life	0.2
To enhance my relationship with my colleagues	0.2
To gain the respect and acceptance of my colleagues	0.2
Total	100.0

4.2 Factors of reasons for participation in educational programs

In the second step of our analysis, we grouped the reasons for participation using the technique of factor analysis. The "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin" measure was used for the suitability of the data for the factor analysis. As shown in Table 3, the KMO for the reasons of participation was 0.931, and therefore, the data were deemed appropriate for this technique analysis.

Table 3: Suitability of data for factor analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	,931	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	16559,091
	Df	378
	Sig.	,000

The factor analysis for the variables that examined the reasons for participation gave six factors with Eigenvalues > 1 and a total explained variance of 63%. The factors that emerged from the analysis were the following:

- 1) *Efficiency at work,*
- 2) *Professional advancement,*
- 3) *Network/environment,*
- 4) *Instrumental use of education,*
- 5) *Enhancement/acquisition of qualifications, and*
- 6) *Escape.*

Three of the reasons for participation were loaded in more than one factor. Since the loadings are important for the interpretation of the results (Boshier, 1971), reasons were assigned to the factor on which they showed the highest loading.

The first factor, *Efficiency at work*, was loaded with seven variables (see Table 4). The variable "to cultivate my skills and competencies" was also loaded in the factor of *Professional advancement* (.458). For the factor *Efficiency at work*, the internal reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha) was 0.87.

Table 4: Loadings of reasons for participation: *Efficiency at work* factor

Reasons	Loadings
To cultivate my skills and competencies	.591
To exchange my opinions/thoughts with my colleagues regarding my profession	.684
To discuss and solve problems I encounter in my work	.702
To be more competitive with my colleagues.	.615
To specialized in something more specific	.731
To be a more accomplished as a professional	.761
To feel more satisfied with the work I produce in my work	.619

The second factor, *Professional advancement*, was loaded with eight variables (see Table 5). The variable "to be informed about new products and services on the labor market" loaded to the third factor (.418) and the variable "to extend my knowledge in my field" loaded to the first (.411). For the *Professional advancement* factor, the internal reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha) was 0.85.

Table 5: Loadings of reasons for participation: *Professional advancement* factor

Reasons	Loadings
To be informed about new technologies and developments in my field	.483
To use my free time creatively by learning something useful for my work	.546
To extend my knowledge in my field	.438
To be able to serve the people who reconcile with me in the most efficient way	.579
To give my children a good example	.427
To be more efficient at my work	.657
To extend my knowledge in my field	.725
To be informed about new technologies and developments in my field.	.731

The third factor *Network/environment* was loaded by four variables (see Table 6). The variable "to improve my professional network" also charged the factor of professional advancement (.482). For the network/environment factor, the internal reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha) was 0.77.

Table 6: Loadings of reasons for participation: *Network/environment* factor

Reasons	Loadings
To gain the respect and acceptance of my colleagues	.615
To improve my professional network	.524
To enhance my relationship with my colleagues	.679
To improve my social network	.524

The fourth factor, *Instrumental use of education*, was loaded with four variables (see Table 7) and the internal reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha) is 0.76.

Table 7: Loadings of reasons for participation: *Instrumental use of Education* factor

Reasons	Loadings
To gain the appreciation of my employer	.593
To find a better job	.617
To get a promotion	.756
To maintain my job position	.570

The fifth factor, *Enhancement/acquisition of qualifications*, was loaded with three variables (see Table 8). The variable "to increase my financial earnings" also charged to the second factor (.410). For this factor, the internal reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha) is 0.72.

Table 8: Loadings of reasons for participation: *Enhancement/acquisition of qualifications* factor

Reasons	Loadings
To increase my income	.434
To obtain a certificate of attendance	.788
To enrich my CV	.758

Only two variables were loaded in the sixth and last factor: *escape* (see Table 9). For the escape factor, the internal reliability index (Cronbach's Alpha) was 0.65.

Table 9: Loadings of reasons for participation: *Escape* factor

Reasons	Loadings
To escape from the problems of personal/family life	.807
To escape from my work routine.	.781

In order to compare averages, we convert all factors to a hundred-point scale. As shown in Table 10, "*Efficiency at work*" gathered the highest average followed by the factors: *Professional advancement*, *Qualification/enhancement*, *Network/environment*, and *Instrumental use of education*. The *escape* factor scored the lowest average compared to the others.

Table 10: Means and Standard Deviation of participation's factor (unified scale)

Factors	Means	S.D
Efficiency at work	76.40	13.34
Professional advancement	73.90	13.09
Enhancement acquisition of qualifications	72.96	15.38
Network/environment	66.00	15.27
Instrumental use of education	61.09	15.96
Escape	50.82	18.79

Note: min. 14,29/ max. 100,00.

5. Discussion

Employees in the present study participate in CPE programs primarily for reasons related to their work performance (the most important reason was "the cultivation of their skills and competencies"), and then for reasons related to their professional advancement. Due to the rapid technological and scientific developments, the information about the new data in the professional field, but also the acquisition of new knowledge is considered an urgent need in order for employees to remain in the labor market. Information on new technologies and developments, their desire to be more accomplished as professionals, and the extension of knowledge in their field, are some of the reasons that motivate them to apply for participation in an educational program. All the reasons, which were included in the first two factors were considered to be extremely important reasons for employees' participation.

On the other hand, the less important reasons for their participation were the "escape from the problems of their personal/family life", "the enhancement of the relationship with their colleagues as well as the "gaining of their respect and acceptance". It is noteworthy that 26 of the 28 reasons for participation had higher rates of agreement than disagreement or "nor agree nor disagree". However, "escape from the problems of their personal/family life" gathered the highest percentage of disagreement. Taking into account the fact that it ranked in the last place in the participants' preference, in both cases (multiple and single choice), we conclude that as a reason it has little influence on their decision to participate. Participants in this study chose voluntarily to attend a CPE program, so if they wanted to escape from the problems of their daily life or escape from their work routine, they would rather choose a program that was more related to general CE rather than to CPE (*Efficiency at work* as a factor of participation emerged as the most important compared to the others, gathering the highest average. In addition, *Professional advancement*, as a factor of participation, is presented in most studies, which examine the reasons for adult participation in continuing education (Gordon et al., 1990; Kopka, & Peng, 1993; Morstain, & Smart, 1974, 1977) as well as in continuing professional education (Balachandra & Branch, 1997; Bennett, 2005; Care, 1993; Childers, 1997; Grzyb, Graham & Donaldson, 1997; Jones, & Hong, 2006; McCamey, 2003; Karalis, 2013, 2016; Noda & Kim, 2013). In fact, in most of them, it was selected to a greater degree by the participants, either as an individual reason for participation or as a factor of participation. *Professional advancement* as an individual reason for participation was chosen as the most important for cytologists in the research of Balachandra and Branch (1997). In the present survey, it was ranked in the second place.

In previous research in Greece, *Efficiency at work* was associated with the factor of *Professional advancement* and emerged as the most important reason for adult participation (Gertzos, 2015; Karalis, 2011, 2013, 2016; Bertzeletos, 2016). Also, for the participants of the present study, *Efficiency at work* is more a means for professional advancement and less the fulfillment of a personal need, in order to be more effective. The maintenance of their job position and their professional advancement are directly related to their efficiency. However, in contrast to the above studies, as an individual

reason for participation, it is ranked in the fifth and sixteenth place (multiple and single choice). A significant difference was found in the reason "to give a better example to my children", which in Karalis's research (2011, 2013) was included in the factor of personal/family life while in the present study, it was included in the factor of *Professional advancement*.

In agreement with the research of Care (1993) and Sansivero (1982), the *Enhancement/acquisition of qualifications*, as a factor of participation, was ranked third. It included reasons related to obtaining credentials, such as "to obtain a certificate of attendance" or "to enrich my CV". Possibly, due to the precariousness of work during the period when the country was still going through the economic crisis, the acquisition of more qualifications would also ensure the retention of work. In fact, the increase in their financial earnings, as an individual reason for participation, was ranked in fourth place. The fact that it scored higher on the *Enhancement/qualification* factor is an indication that participants associate qualification acquisition with an increase in their financial earnings. A result that contradicts the findings of other studies (Care, 1993; Karalis, 2013) in which financial earnings are linked to the factor of *Professional advancement*.

The largest percentage of adults in Greece participate in education for professional reasons. This fact becomes apparent in the present study even in cases where they choose reasons that are not purely professional, such as reasons that are included in the factor *efficiency at work*. For example, the development of their professional network was chosen to a greater extent than the development of their social network. Given that the largest percentage of participants in this study were private sector employees, self-employed, and business owners, the development of their professional network will bring them multiple benefits such as partnerships and possibly finding a better job, etc.

The social network (in a more general context) as a factor of participation is included in this study either as an autonomous factor or as a reason for participation in the context of other factors (Burgess, 1971; Boshier, 1971; Morstain & Smart, 1974). The reasons that are usually included are social contact (meeting new people), social well-being, and social contribution. In the present study it includes reasons that are related either to the wider social relations or in particular, to the relations of colleagues. In investigating the reasons for participating in continuing vocational training (Bennett, 2005; Catlin, 1982; Cervero, 1981; Childers, 1997; Goetz, 1989; McCamey, 2003), relationships between employees and their colleagues are important reasons to participate in training programs, as well as through interaction, they can exchange views, discuss problems that concern them, and use the knowledge of other colleagues. In the above studies, they create an autonomous factor called as interaction with colleagues. In fact, this factor was chosen as the second most important factor of participation by the uniformed doctors and nurses (Panagiotopoulou, 2012), the judiciary (Catlin, 1982) as well as the employees in commercial nuclear power plants (McCamey, 2003).

However, in contrast to the above studies, in the present study, the specific reasons were grouped into different factors indicating the different interpretations that the participants give to them. The "exchange of opinions/thoughts with colleagues regarding their professional", "the discussion and solution of problems they face at work", as well

as the competition that develops between them, are related to their daily work practices, and consequently, to their efficiency at work. Only the utilization of the knowledge they gain from the interaction with the other colleagues is understood as a means will contribute to their professional advancement. In contrast, in the study of Sansivero (1982) and Care (1993), the above reasons were directly related to professional advancement. As individual reasons for participation, they were ranked low in the preferences of the employees. In particular, the reasons concerning their wider network/environment, such as the strengthening of interpersonal relationships with their colleagues as well as their respect and acceptance, are last in their preference. In addition, almost half of them stated that the participation of other colleagues does not affect the final decision of their participation.

The factor *Instrumental use of education* refers to the use of education as a tool or a means to achieve a specific goal, in this case finding a better job or maintaining the existing one. However, the reason "to gain the appreciation of my employer" is particularly interesting. The fact that this reason was loaded into this factor is an indication that employees give an instrumental dimension to this factor. They may expect job benefits, such as retaining a job, increasing their income, or changing their position in the organization or company they work for.

However, this factor also appears in several studies investigating the reasons for adult participation in voluntary educational programs (Sansivero, 1982). As an individual reason, it is not one of the most important, compared to others, as it occupies the 19th and 26th place in the preference of employees. Possibly, if we were investigating the reasons for participating in general education, the above reason would have been chosen to a greater degree. However, in the present study, participation was voluntary and there was no external enforcement by either the state or the employer. A finding that is completely in line with Yong's (1989) study. In addition, participants in focus groups reported that sometimes, although participation is voluntary, their employer pressures them in their own way to participate. However, for the majority of employees, as reflected in the percentage of disagreement in this statement, the pressure of the employer does not affect the final decision for their participation.

In the present study, as well as in the study of Care (1993), only two reasons for participation were loaded in the factor *Escape*. The reason: "to escape from the problems of my personal / family life" and "to escape from my work routine". Escape as a factor of participation (as well as the factor of professional advancement) occurs in almost all studies that investigate the reasons for participation in continuing education (Boshier et al., 2006; Bova, 1976; Burgess, 1971; Morstain & Smart, 1974, 1977) and continuing vocational training (Aiga, 2006; Garst & Ried, 1999; Karalis, 2013, 2018; Noda & Kim, 2013; Sansivero, 1982) but almost always occupy the last positions in the preference of the participants or have nothing to do with employee participation in the training program (Care, 1993; Gordon et al., 1990). However, even in Burgess' (1971) study, where the escape factor contained a wider range of reasons for participation related to social contacts, as a factor it received a low score. However, it should be noted that although the internal reliability index of the factor (Cronbach's Alpha) was 0.65 and is marginally

acceptable, the fact that it was loaded with only two reasons for participation raises the issue of reliability. However, we decided to present this result because we find it interesting the fact that in all the similar studies the reasons that loaded to this factor gathered the lowest percent compared to other factors.

6. Conclusion

In this article, we presented the reasons which motivate the employees to participate in CPE programs. The most important reasons for the employees concern their professional development and their efficiency of work. As mentioned in the introduction, human resource development is essential for any modern society. In particular, in Greece, lifelong learning is clearly oriented towards professional education. Thus, more emphasis is placed on programs related to continuing professional education and training (Karalis, 2017, 2021) and less on general education programs (such as personal development programs). On the other hand, there is an increased demand for the programs by the adults themselves, who aim to acquire more skills in order to be competitive in the labor market.

The reasons that motivate adults to participate are the key element and decisive factor to the decision to participate. Thus, our knowledge of these reasons in combination with the examination of barriers that prevent the employees from participating will help the stakeholders to design appropriate programs that meet their expectations and needs of the employees with the ultimate goal to increase participation.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

About the Authors

Dr. Niki Liodaki holds a BA and MA in Education from the Department of Educational Science and Early Childhood Education. Her doctoral dissertation focuses on motives and barriers to participation. Her research interests also include adult education and lifelong learning policies, transformative education planning, and evaluation of adult education programs.

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