

Arkadiusz Stefański and Dorota Godlewska-Werner Manager Readiness to Change and Tackle Developmental Activities

Giving managers a chance to develop competences is exceptionally important from the point of view of an organization's efficiency. Choice of development form is dependent on a readiness to change. Change-readiness and training-readiness surveys as well as a proprietary questionnaire were used to check the impact of readiness to change on the selection of defined development activities. Statistical analysis demonstrated that variables with influence on activities planned for 2015 included self-confidence and tolerance for ambiguity. Moreover, adventurousness has an effect on the intention to undertake further educational activities, while drive affects the planning of such activities.

Key words: readiness to change, readiness to undertake training, manager development.

These are times in which organizations must be capable of coping with complex requirements and adapt to approaching change quickly. It is the managers who bear responsibility for the success of these actions. The defining of goals, lowering costs, minding the high quality of work, issuing orders, and monitoring subordinates seem to be an old-fashioned model of organizational management. Today's efforts strive to inspire, share information, and spread the ideas of the leadership (Kozusznik, 2014).

With the goal of supporting workers in facing up to expectations, it is becoming increasingly common to care for their professional development. This development is understood as the acquiring of new skills, competencies, and knowledge in order to function efficiently in the organizational environment as well as to adapt more quickly to changes taking place in the given company (Thorpe, Clifford, 2006). Probst (2002) states that the knowledge acquired by a worker consists of the sum

total of information and skills that are used by him or her in solving problems. It consists of theoretical and practical elements as well as general principles and detailed tips on how to proceed. Development in the organization, being a process oriented towards the long-term, facilitates the expanding of horizons by the worker, developing personality qualities such as innovativeness and entrepreneurship, and satisfying his or her own needs of self-fulfillment (Kostera, 2006). It should also be continuous in character, as regular participation in development efforts fosters the transfer of training outcomes (Andrzejczak and Pisarska, 2011). Currently, worker development is considered an investment by the organization, bringing benefits to both employees and the organization itself. Research shows that there is a direct link between the development of human resources and worker efficiency, where commitment fills the role of mediator (Szabowska-Walaszczyk, et al., 2013). The organization investing in employees should define the degree to which development is to be targeted—tied with knowledge and skills useful only in the given organization—and to which it should be general development of worker knowledge, which will increase their output and efficiency regardless of their place of employment (Evans, 2005). The most frequently met development actions offered by organizations include coaching, e-learning, mentoring, and training. Each of them offers different possibilities and benefits. Choice is dependent on organizational needs and worker readiness to undertake specific actions.

Managers note benefits stemming from participation in development project with increasing frequency. This is confirmed by results received from the “Managerial Motivations 2015” Study as performed by the ARC Rynek i Opinie Research Institute—Bigram, Legg Mason, and Wolters Kluwers. Among non-financial benefits taken into account in assessing job satisfaction, healthcare, company car, and access to training stood out. According to the studied managers, training is considered important by 67%, while according to HR department managers training is important for candidates for managerial positions by 71%. Self-development is important for managers by 53%, while as assessed by HR department staff by 55%.

Organization of Development Activities

Among propagated development action is coaching—worker support in reinforcing and improving competencies through reflection (Thorpe and Clifford, 2006) as well as actions aimed at bringing out the worker’s potential (Scoular, 2014). Among individual benefits are learning how to solve one’s own problems, improving interpersonal skills and relations, improving efficiency, improving trust and developing confidence, increasing self-awareness, and acquiring new competencies (Jarvis et al.,

2006). Organizational benefits primarily involve improved productivity and quality, better customer service, increase worker commitment and halting fluctuation, and support for initiatives linked with learning. An effective coach is characterized by competencies in the area of establishing principles of collaboration, effective communication, motivating, and assisting, and support for independent actions (Łaguna et al., 2013). In addition to these, he or she benefits from knowledge in the field of business and the functioning of the organization (Chmielecki, 2014).

Another form of development action is mentoring. Megginson and Clutterbuck (2008) stress that it requires long-term thinking, a broad look at the situation of the customer and areas that might initially seem unimportant, all in order to support change. Mentoring fosters the maximizing of human potential and also provides support for planning positions in the organization. The mentor also improves his or her interpersonal skills, gains better insight into the functioning of the organization and teams and feels satisfaction seeing the development of his or her charges. The employee experiencing the care of the mentor gains a sense of being appreciated, an objective and reliable source of support in acquiring new qualifications, and discovering new directions of action. The employee also gains access to a network of contacts (Landsberg, 2007).

The present rate of change means that organization employees should be trained continuously, including by way of traditional forms. Professional training is intended to improve the skills and competencies of people who have concluded their formal education (Łaguna and Fortuna, 2011). In spite of the growing popularity of training methods at the job position such as coaching and mentoring as well as e-learning, the volume of training conducted under the tutelage of trainers continues to increase (Kozak and Łaguna, 2012). They use many methods to effectively teach the trainee and provoke changes in the area of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. However, what is important is for the developed competencies to be applied in the work environment. This is possible thanks to agreement between learned skills and tasks performed at the job position, support for changes implemented after the training by subordinates, openness on the part of the organization to change, and awards applied for the transfer of knowledge (Andrzejczak and Pisarska, 2011).

E-learning as a form of training concentrates on the use of modern technology in the process of developing competencies, where the aim is learning over distances and remote education. It emerged as a result of the dynamic development of technology in the 21st century, which changed the way of thinking about traditional education and the conducting of training. E-learning platforms are used in business to create, distribute, and deliver data, information, training, and knowledge in order to improve the efficiency of work and organizational operations.

Readiness for Change and Undertaking Development Action

Change is an inseparable part of the life of human beings and organizations. Without a readiness for change there can only be resistance against any form of activity. Both these processes are strictly linked with each other.

According to the transtheoretical model, change consists of six stages (Prochaska and Velicer, 1997). The process starts with precontemplation, when people do not have any intention of undertaking action in the nearest future. The successive stage is contemplation thanks to which people become more aware of the benefits and drawbacks stemming from the change. In the context of readiness for development, this is the stage in which the intention to undertake further education appears. Next is preparation, during which people have the intention of acting and have already made significant steps on that road. With respect to training, the person plans just when this will occur, what has to be done in order to take part in the given training, and also what institution shall be conducting the training (Kawecka et al., 2010). This is what is termed the intention of implementation. Action is the stage in which people actually modify their style in a specific way. Maintenance is the prevention of relapse to prior habits. Concussion is the stage when people have a sense of their own effectiveness because they have conducted the change.

Kriegel and Brandt (1996) developed a concept of readiness for change and defined the profile of a person ready for change. Such a person avoids extreme behavior that leads to both passivity and hyperactivity. This model identifies seven indicators of readiness for change—resourcefulness, determination understood as passion, confidence, optimism, risk-taking (adventurousness), adaptability, and tolerance for ambiguity. A person ready to change is characterized by average, optimal values for the qualities specified above. Such a person can generate ideas and apply them effectively. Such a person sees his or her surroundings in a positive light and tends to perceive opportunities rather than threats. Moreover, such a person is not afraid of challenges, novelty, and uncertainty. He or she has the reserves of energy necessary to act, knows his or her skills and talents, and has significant capacity to adapt to a changing environment.

Three variables make up motivation to act—attitude to training, motivation to learn, and motivation to transfer knowledge (Rowold, 2007). The attitude to training does not modify motivation to undertake training, but it does influence extraversion. In its turn, motivation to learn is explained through amicability, while motivation to transfer knowledge is explained through emotional stability. This confirms that the worker's personality also has an impact on undertaking development actions.

Łaguna (2012) demonstrated that there is a dependency between personality traits and phases of the process of undertaking development action. A statistical analysis of the research showed that the intention to undertake training is defined by amicability and openness to experience as well as emotional balance. In their turn, extraversion and openness to experience influence the assessment of the probability of the person undertaking and completing training, which, in its turn, is tied with deliberate intention. A low level of emotional balance decreases the chances of undertaking and completing training, while conscientiousness is defined by assessment of the role assigned to the undertaking of development actions. People who are characterized by a high level of openness to experience, have a positive mind-set with respect to change and are ready to develop competencies to a greater extent (Rogozińska-Pawelczyk, 2013).

Research Objective

This research was designed for the purpose of verifying whether or not there is a dependency among development action selected by managers, the readiness to undertake development action, and readiness for change. The following three hypotheses have been forwarded on the basis of analysis of topical literature:

Hypothesis 1: There is a dependency between development activities selected in 2014 and the dimensions of readiness for change.

Hypothesis 2: There is a dependency between planned development activities and the dimensions of readiness for change.

Hypothesis 3: There is a dependency between the intention to undertake further education and plans for further education, and the dimensions of readiness for change.

Study Group

The research encompassed a group of sixty-seven managers (thirty men and thirty-seven women). These were managers of various level in the organization aged from 21 to 59 years ($M=34.54$). They represented retail trade and services. Among those studied, fifty-two managers had a college education, ten finished secondary school, and five had a post-secondary school education. The studied managers had teams ranging in size from one to 124 members ($M=12.2$). Their job seniority in a managerial position amounted to from three months to twenty years ($M=5.57$). Their total job seniority ranges from one and one-half years to thirty-five years ($M=12.7$).

Research Procedures and Methods

The research was conducted in the first half of 2015. It consisted of a questionnaire looking at readiness for change (Paszowska–Rogacz, 2004), questionnaire looking at readiness to undertake further training and further education (Kawecka et al., 2010), and a survey on development activities undertaken in 2014 and planned for 2015 (coaching, mentoring, training, e-learning, and postgraduate studies).

The questionnaire looking at readiness for change is a Polish translation of the American method developed by Kriegel and Brandt. It serves to evaluate the seven dimensions of readiness (Paszowska–Rogacz, 2004). It consists of thirty-five test items, where the subject provides answers using a six-point Likert scale. The items consist of statements relating to convictions, attitudes, and behavior spanning various life situations. The internal consistency coefficient Cronbach alpha = 0.54. However, work on the validation of the method has not yet been completed and for this reason it may be assumed that this is an experimental version used in the study of various worker group up until now.

The Kawecka, Laguna, and Tabor (2010) readiness to undertake development activities questionnaire serves to measure a readiness to undertake training and further education. It consists of thirteen test items and four scales. These are the intention to take up training, plans to take up training, the intention to take up further education, and plans for further education. The internal consistency coefficient Cronbach alpha ranges from 0.91 to 0.94.

Research Results

The first hypothesis assumes that there is a dependency between development activities selected in 2014 and the dimensions of readiness for change. It has found partial confirmation.

A positive correlation between ingenuity and confidence, and undertaking coaching in 2014 has been observed in the conducted study (Table No. 1). A positive correlation has also been found between adaptive capacity and use of mentoring in 2014.

Linear regression analysis has indicated that readiness for change does not explain development activities undertaken in 2014.

The second hypothesis assumed that there is a dependency between planned development activities and readiness for change. This has been partially confirmed.

Table No. 1. Correlation between Selected Development Activities Undertaken in 2014 and Readiness for Change Factors

Variable	Ingenuity	Drive	Confidence	Optimism	Risk-taking	Adaptive capacity	Uncertainty tolerance
Coaching in 2014	0.25*	0.19	0.31*	-0.02	-0.13	-0.04	-0.14
Mentoring in 2014	0.02	-0.04	0.12	-0.05	0.04	0.25*	0.13

It was assumed that the dependent variable is a continuous one and that its measurement on the six-point Likert scale is only its approximation. * Statistically significant result: $p < 0.05$
 Source: Own studies.

There is a positive correlation between tolerance of uncertainty and plans to undertake coaching as well as between drive and plans to take up postgraduate studies, and there is a negative correlation between tolerance of uncertainty and plans to take up postgraduate studies (Table No. 2). Also observed was a positive correlation between confidence and not planning the undertaking of development activities.

Table No. 2. Selected Correlation between Plans to Undertake Development Activities and Readiness for Change Factors

Variable	Ingenuity	Drive	Confidence	Optimism	Risk-taking	Adaptive capacity	Uncertainty tolerance
Coaching plans	-0.08	-0.11	0.03	-0.06	0.07	0.06	0.25^
Postgraduate study plans	0.09	0.31*	-0.04	0.09	-0.14	-0.08	-0.39*
No activities planned	0.12	0.06	0.29*	-0.10	-0.01	-0.07	-0.07

It was assumed that the dependent variable is a continuous one and that its measurement on the six-point Likert scale is only its approximation. * Statistically significant result: $p < 0.05$
 Source: Own studies.

Linear regression analysis has indicated that readiness for change does not explain plans for undertaking coaching. However, readiness for change is explained in 27% by planning for the undertaking of postgraduate studies (Multiple $R=0.52$; $R^2=0.27$; Adjusted $R^2=0.19$), where the only explanatory variables are drive and tolerance for uncertainty (Table No. 3).

Table No. 3. Assessment of Parameters Explaining Plans to Undertake Postgraduate Studies as a Development Activity

Effect	Ingenuity				
	Parameter	Standard deviation	T	p	Beta
Drive	0.03	0.01	2.17	0.03	0.31
Uncertainty tolerance	-0.06	0.02	-2.78	0.01	-0.34

It was assumed that the dependent variable is a continuous one and that its measurement on the six–point Likert scale is only its approximation. * Statistically significant result: $p<0.05$
Source: Own studies.

Confidence ($p=0.02$; $Beta=0.33$) explains declarations of lack of readiness for undertaking any activities whatsoever (Multiple $R=0.35$; $R^2=0.11$; Adjusted $R^2=0.02$).

The third hypothesis assumes that there is a dependency between the intention to undertake further education and plans for further education and variables defining readiness for change. This has been partially confirmed.

Table No. 4. Selected Correlation between Readiness to Undertake Development Activities and Readiness for Change Factors

Variable	Ingenuity	Drive	Confidence	Optimism	Risk-taking	Adaptive capacity	Uncertainty tolerance
Intention to undertake further education	-0.01	0.12	0.05	-0.08	0.28*	-0.08	-0.17
Plans for further education	0.03	0.25*	-0.02	0.06	0.07	-0.08	-0.01

* Statistically significant result: $p<0.05$

It was assumed that the dependent variable is a continuous one and that its measurement on the six–point Likert scale is only its approximation.

Source: Own studies.

Statistical analysis has shown a positive correlation between the undertaking of risk and intention to take up further education, and between drive and plans for further education (Table No. 4). No statically significant dependency was noted between readiness for change factors and an intention to implement the undertaking of training.

Linear regression analysis demonstrated that the readiness for change is explained in 21% by the intention to undertake further education (Multiple R=0.46; R²=0.21; Adjusted R²=0.12), where the only explanatory variable is risk taking (Table No. 5).

Table No. 5. Assessment of Parameters Explaining an Intention to Continue Education

Effect	Ingenuity				
	Parameter	Standard deviation	T	p	Beta
Risk-taking	0.49	0.13	3.56	0.00	0.48

It was assumed that the dependent variable is a continuous one and that its measurement on the six-point Likert scale is only its approximation.

Source: Own studies.

However, readiness for change is explained in 11% by plans of further education (Multiple R=0.33; R²=0.11; Adjusted R²=0.001), where the only explanatory variable is drive (Table No. 6).

Table No. 6. Assessment of Parameters Explaining Plans to Continue Education

Effect	Ingenuity				
	Parameter	Standard deviation	T	p	Beta
Drive	0.39	0.16	2.33	0.02	0.38

It was assumed that the dependent variable is a continuous one and that its measurement on the six-point Likert scale is only its approximation.

Source: Own studies.

Discussion of Results

The goal of this research was the identification of variables that have an impact on the undertaking of defined development activities in the future and planning for the nearest future by managers. Statistical analysis demonstrated that there is a dependency between ingenuity and confidence in managers and the selecting of coaching. However, these variables do not explain the selection in 2014 of this development activity. These two variables define the entrepreneurial personality type (Paszowska–Rogacz, 2004). Ingenuity is tied with skill in utilizing various situations to one's own ends. Confidence is a conviction regarding one's own ability to manage in a given situation (Brzezińska and Paszowska–Rogacz, 2000). It is linked to a high self-assessment, which may influence the better defining of goals and their more efficient achievement. However, the result received suggests that confidence and ingenuity may be the outcome of the undertaking of coaching and not its cause. The same may be true in the case of the dependency between using mentoring in 2014 and adapting capabilities, which may be strengthened by this development activity. Mentoring supports a person in making changes—i.e. the person's flexibility and resistance to failure (Megginson and Clutterbuck, 2008).

The research indicated that there is a dependency between tolerance of uncertainty and the planned undertaking of coaching in 2015. However, the impact of these variables is not confirmed by regression analysis. The result may signify that managers accepting ambiguous and incomplete information prefer actions requiring a creative approach to problems, which is characteristic of coaching.

Statistical analysis demonstrates that drive (passion) and tolerance of uncertainty have an impact on planning to undertake postgraduate studies in 2015. Low uncertainty tolerance is tied with expectations of clear and intelligible communiqués, where drive fosters a conviction that everything is possible (Brzezińska and Paszowska–Rogacz, 2000). This might direct managers to develop liked and useful competencies thanks to conveying knowledge in an accessible and concrete way through a formally developed program. Such possibilities are provided by specialized postgraduate studies.

The research also showed that confidence has a significant impact on an absence of plans with respect to development activities. Confidence is tied with a high self-assessment and the possibility of overrating professional competencies and skills held (Brzezińska and Paszowska–Rogacz, 2000). This may mean that managers do not feel any need for development in light of their convictions as to their own competencies and potential. This confirms the assumption behind the Kriegel and

Brandt questionnaire construct (1996) that the results of a person ready for change are average, where results that are too high in the area of confidence may block openness to the opinions of others.

The conducted research showed that taking risks, as a component of readiness for change, has an impact on intentions to undertake further education. Taking risks is tied with courage and a desire to explore less known paths. In the case of an intention to undertake further education, the risk incurred on the part of managers is small because its character is only declarative. It is a manifestation of a quest for challenges intended to break routine. It is only the making of plans that fosters the undertaking of development activities within two years (Brandstätter et al., 2003). The research demonstrated that it is drive that influences plans for further education. It combines physical energy with a psychological desire to create passion. Managers who believe that anything is possible do not fear the taking of concrete steps that will make further development possible for them.

Summary

Facilitating development for the managerial staff is extremely important from the point of view of organizational efficiency. However, just what development activity will be preferred by the managers is dependent on their readiness for change. Statistical analysis of the data received from the conducted study demonstrates that variables influencing planning development activities to be undertaken in 2015 are confidence and tolerance of uncertainty. However, risk taking influences intentions for further educational activity, while drive influences the planning of such activities. Such analyses provide input into the development or research on attitude towards change in the Polish cultural area. Diagnosis of readiness for change among managers may make possible the selection of the most effective development methods for the defined group of recipients, which, in its turn, translated into company success. The described study should be repeated among a larger group of managers. Additionally, the replicated research should concentrate on a defined group of managers, taking into account their managerial level and industry.

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Gotowość menedżerów do zmiany i podejmowania działań rozwojowych

Streszczenie

Stworzenie kadry kierowniczej możliwości rozwoju jest niezwykle istotne z punktu widzenia efektywności organizacji. Wybór formy rozwoju zależy od gotowości do zmiany. W celu zweryfikowania wpływu gotowości do zmiany na wybór określonych działań rozwojowych przeprowadzono badanie przy użyciu Kwestionariusza gotowości do zmiany, Kwestionariusza gotowości do podejmowania szkolenia i dalszego kształcenia oraz ankiety własnej. Analiza statystyczna wykazała, że zmiennymi wpływającymi na planowane w 2015 roku działania są: pewność siebie i tolerancja niepewności. Natomiast podejmowanie ryzyka wpływa na intencję przedsięwzięcia dalszych działań edukacyjnych, a napęd – na planowanie tych działań.

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