

Professionals in Adult Education: The Omnipotent Profile of Adult Educators in Educational Corporations

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Introduction

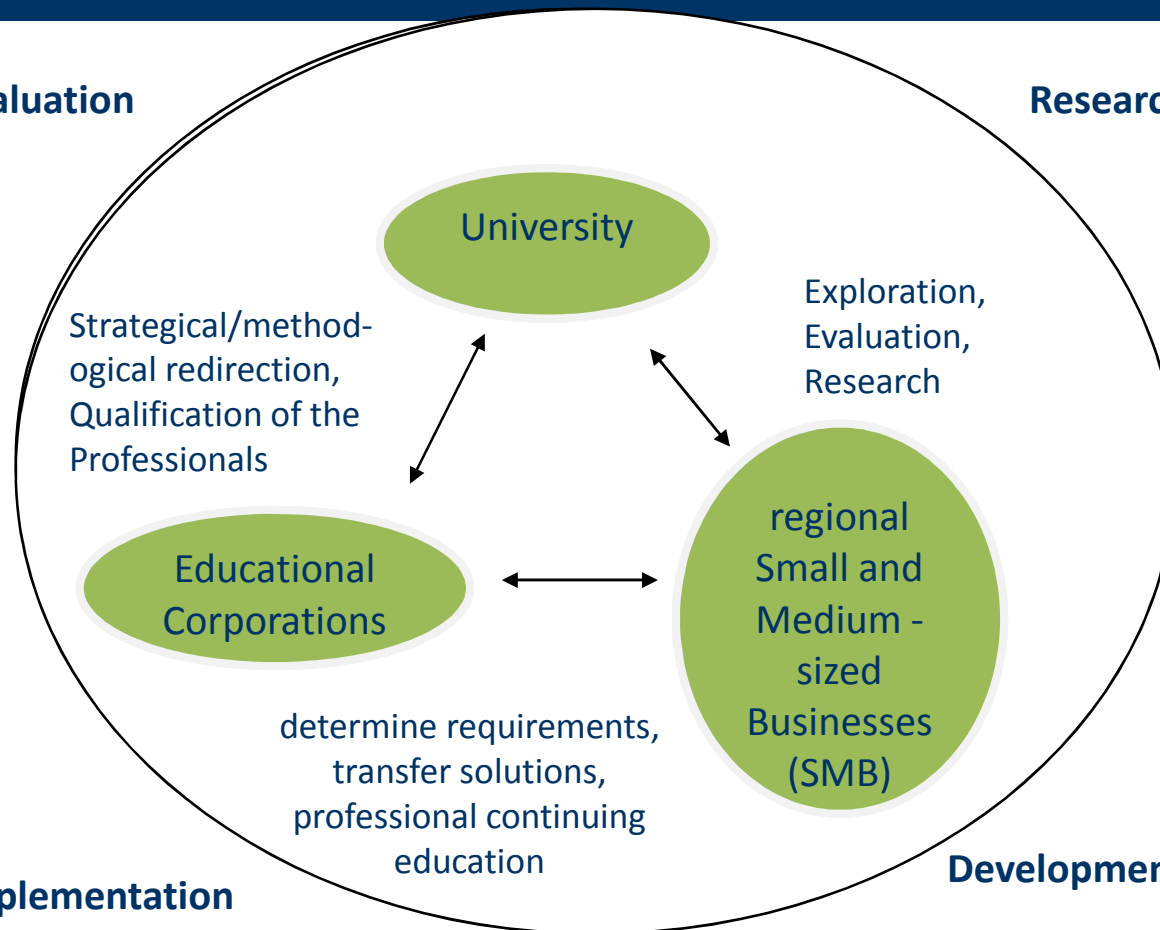
summary of the results and recommendations of an analysis based on

- a survey of the strategic situation of educational corporations and their staff in Saxony-Anhalt (Germany) and
- a discussion about various theories of professionalism in adult education

Background - Triad

Evaluation

Research



Implementation

Development

Survey

- triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research
- representative sample, database held 140 educational corporations in different branches in Saxony-Anhalt
- rate of return was very high > representative data
- structured questionnaire and a manually supported interview
- hybrid form of types of questioning, combination of 1. postal questioning, 2. oral standardised interview, 3. previous letter of advice and 4. telephone request
- manual and questions were generated on the principles of social research processes
> strongly structured research

Fields of activities

five fields of activities of educational corporations:

- Vocational Education and Training,
- Knowledge Management,
- Organisational Development and Consultancy,
- Human Resource Development and
- Management and Economics of Education

> these fields of activities had been defined as a result of several strategic workshops in collaboration with our consortia

SWOT analysis

- for all the fields of activities a SWOT-Analysis was carried out
- **SWOT** means the identification of **S**trength, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats
- this analysis is an instrument of strategic management and can be used in processes for improving the quality of an organisation (see also STEINIGER 2003) and combines the internal organisational circumstances with the external situation at the educational market

Questionnaire

...was subdivided into four categories:

- staff and qualification (information about the employees)
- statement of financial condition,
- strategy and competence (the position in fields of activities),
- cooperation and network

Main findings

- 41% of the employees have a classic vocational training and 59% hold university degrees
- only one third has completed training in adult or continuing education
- activities concerning the continuing education are oriented on technical skills
- expertise and teaching skills = most important qualifications
- possibilities and offers to further educate the professionals are inadequate

Main findings

- dynamic development of sales, but occasionally significant differences between the branches
- expenditures for research are marginal and expenditures for continuing education to further educate the own staff are not stringent
- Work contracts and labour conditions are very flexible
 - > diverse relationships, identifications and loyalties
 - > optimal working atmosphere can not guaranteed
 - > precarious working conditions
 - > negative effects concerning the motivation

Main findings

- Educational corporations are dependent on public funds > unsecured financial situation > limited scopes of action and extensive savings
- VET = field of activity in the future
- HRD = highest profile in the next 10 years
- demographic change > lack of specialised workforce
- now = lack of instruments/methods to identify demands and requirements
- in all defined fields of activities there is a need to act

Main findings

- cooperation and networking is of great importance
- selective, strategical and personal collaborations with competing companies
- cooperation with institutions of higher education is essential (90% are working together with universities, mostly in common projects or regarding continuing education programmes)
- the results of the mentioned theoretical elaborations could corroborate in most instances (for more details see KONDRATJUK 2008).

Summary

- adult educators perform a diversified range of activities and tasks > variety of competency profiles
- qualifications and competencies are acquired at work, by means of experience and by informal learning
- professionalisation is not only achieved through the acquisition of knowledge and skills + biographical development determined by individual forms of socialisation (see also REICHERT 2008)
- several basic skills should be the pre-condition for practicing adult and continuing education

Summary

- the concept of competencies could be geared to KOUWENHOVEN (2003), he argues that a competent professional adult educator realises key occupational tasks through key competencies which are subdivided into domain-specific and generic competencies combined with personal attributes like knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Institutions of higher education are able to give support through different programmes, methods and continuing education programmes (which are manifold and have to improved)

Concrete implementations

- new strategies have been designed in order to meet future challenges (together with our consortia)
- several concepts for small projects have been developed as well as methods and instruments
- a matrix to approach issues was created
- combination of these fields of activities is possible and sometimes indispensable
- results enable further educational programmes to develop adult educational professionals and further research projects

Example

dual study programme:

- vocational education combined with university programme
- 2 degrees
- theoretical inputs + practical work-related learning
- technical skills combined with pedagogical skills

Thank you for your attention!

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