

**Željko Požega**

Josip Juraj Strossmayer  
University of Osijek  
Faculty of Economics in Osijek  
Trg Ljudevita Gaja 7,  
31000 Osijek, Croatia  
zpozega@efos.hr  
Phone: +385912244099

**Korina Kovačić Madarić**

Balokovičeva 73,  
10020 Novi Zagreb, Croatia  
korinakm@gmail.com  
Phone: +385959096401

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**Boris Crnković**

Josip Juraj Strossmayer  
University of Osijek  
Faculty of Economics in Osijek  
Trg Ljudevita Gaja 7,  
31000 Osijek, Croatia  
boris.crnkovic@efos.hr  
Phone: +385912244103

# INFLUENCE OF TRAINING PROGRAMME DESIGN ON EMPLOYEE EDUCATION

## ABSTRACT

The design of training programmes involves the process of planning the content and methods of training and assessing the learners' prior knowledge. Andragogy principles play an important role in the design of employee training. They refer to adult learning strategies that involve using adequate content, relevant examples and technical terms in the design and delivery of training, as well as incorporating learners' previous knowledge and experience. They can be used as the basis for the selection of the appropriate content and training methods. This paper seeks to investigate whether the inclusion of andragogy principles in the design of employee training affects the training outcomes, in particular their motivation for training and the transfer of training as one of the main goals of employee training.

Quantitative research was conducted using the statistical methods of correlation coefficient and regression. A correlation coefficient of 0.485 was found between andragogy principles and motivation for training, which indicates a small but statistically significant correlation ( $p < 0.01$ ). The results of regression analysis show that andragogy principles explain 25.7% of the variance. For each unit of change in andragogy principles, motivation increases by 0.424 ( $B = 0.424$ ) of the unit ( $p < 0.01$ ).

A correlation coefficient of 0.5889 was found between andragogy principles and the transfer of training, which means that the increase of andragogy principles also increases the transfer of knowledge to work tasks. The regression analysis results show that the application of andragogy principles explains 34% of the variance in training transfer. For each unit of change in the application of andragogy principles, motivation increases by 0.306 ( $B = 0.306$ ) of the unit ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Keywords:** Training programme design, employee education, andragogy principles

## 1. Introduction

Human resource development is a process that consists of planning and delivery of employee training. Thus, the development of an employee depends on the adequate design and implementation of training programmes. The first step in creating an effective training programme is identifying job roles and job tasks. The next step is analysing knowledge and skills employees possess for their current and future jobs. Finally, the third step involves creating an adequate training programme.

Training design involves the selection of the adequate content and training methods and assessing prior knowledge of participants. All of these elements are important for creating an effective training programme. In addition to basic concepts, andragogy and pedagogy principles play an important role in training design; however, organizations do not use them sufficiently in developing their training programmes.

This research focuses on the influence of andragogy elements on two main objectives of an organization embarking on training design, i.e. motivation and transfer of training to job tasks. We believe that the application of andragogy elements in employee training has an effect on both of these areas and that the importance of andragogy in this particular context should not be disregarded.

## 2. Training design

Training design involves identifying the training goals, choosing the appropriate activities and combining them to develop an efficient training programme. Training design includes an assessment of learner prior knowledge, identification of training methods and content (Mathis, Jackson, 2008). Designing starts with two fundamental questions: how to motivate trainees to learn and which specific methods to use (Palmer, 2001). In other words, it is very important to increase the motivation of trainees and consider it in the design of the training programme. The second question refers to training methods – they too need to be identified during the training design process. Training methods need to be adapted to trainees, their abilities and interests, as well as the training content.

As shown by Noe (2010), human resources training programme design contains the scope, goal, target audience and timeframe for the delivery of training.

The next phase consists of choosing the implementation modes, i.e. the content, methods, delivery time, challenges and opportunities, and the equipment. A training plan designed in this way can be compared to a curriculum where content is selected first.

The selected content is structured through training design, whereby the scope, depth and intensity of the programme are determined (Cindrić et al., 2016). Poljak (1991) notes that the content can be arranged successively, where we first focus on one area of study, and then move onto another, or simultaneously, where several study areas are taught at the same time. The content is categorized according to the staggered approach, moving from the familiar towards the new, and from the simple to the complex. It can be organised in concentric circles or in an upward spiral. Previous experience is taken into account and new knowledge draws upon prior knowledge. The concentric plan allows for frequent repetition of the content (Cindrić et al., 2016), which should not be neglected. According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), learning is often stepped because the learners cannot continually acquire new knowledge and need a pause to consolidate what they have already learnt. The learning process slows down as the topics become more abstract. It is therefore essential to introduce reinforcement periods. "The curricula must be open to include new content and psychological-pedagogical as well as didactic-methodical developments" (Cindrić et al., 2016: 139).

Based on the well-organized training content, appropriate methods are selected. The methods must be tailored to the content and purpose of training. No single method is appropriate for all situations. Methods must be modified and adapted to the target group, content and training goal. Most methods used in human resource development are adopted from the field of adult education. Other methods used for employee training include, among others, mentoring and team building.

Noe (2010) categorises methods into presentation, hands-on training and group building methods. Presentation methods include lectures and audio-visual techniques. Lectures include standard lectures, team teaching, guest lecturers, panels and trainee presentations. Hands-on methods are on-the-job training, self-directed learning, mentoring, simulations, case studies, business games, role-play and behavioural modelling. Methods of group

building are adventure learning, team training and action learning. In addition, there are methods that use technology, such as computer-based training (CBT) or computer-based learning (CBL), online learning, blended learning, simulations, intelligent tutoring systems and distance learning.

Methods are selected based on the desired training goal. Bourner (1997) outlines 10 most common methods for attaining each of the six major learning aims. For the dissemination of new knowledge there are lectures, textbooks, exercises that require students to find new knowledge, developing skills in using library and other resources, open learning materials, and directed private study. The capability to use ideas and information can be developed through case studies, projects, demonstrations, group working, simulations, problem solving, discussion, etc. Methods for developing the student's ability to test ideas and evidence are seminars, supervision, presentations, feedback, critical assessment, self-assessment, etc. For developing the student's ability to generate ideas he suggests research projects, workshops on techniques of creative problem solving, group working, action learning, mind mapping, etc. To facilitate students' personal development teachers can use action learning, experiential learning, learning logs, role-playing, structured experiences in groups, etc. Finally, the capacity of students to plan and manage own learning can be developed through projects, reflective logs and diaries, independent study, action learning, portfolio development, etc.

It is also important to apply the principles of andragogy in designing the training programme for adult learners. Knowles outlines the andragogy in practice model that characterises adult learners and provides the principles that can help design a training programme.

According to this model, there are three dimensions of andragogy in practice: goals and purposes of learning, individual and situational differences, and adult learning principles. The goals for adult learning are individual, institutional and societal growth. These goals also influence the process of learning and teaching. For example, if the programme is aimed at achieving societal growth, emphasis may be placed on individual learner; if it is aimed at achieving institutional goals, such as work-related performance improvement, emphasis may be placed on the workplace, etc. Individual and situational differences are divided into three categories:

subject matter differences, situational differences and individual differences. Different subject matter may require different learning methods. Similarly, depending on the complexity of the subject matter, the learner may need more or less help and guidance. Situational differences can refer to adapting the learning strategies to the size of the group, the distance from the training site, etc. They can also refer to a wide range of social and cultural factors. Individual differences also include a number of differences, such as cognitive abilities, learning styles, personality, i.e. personality traits, and previous experience. It is necessary to carry out an analysis of all of these differences and make adaptations to the programmes according to the principles of andragogy (Knowles et al., 2005).

### 3. Andragogy principles

Two approaches to the principles of adult education are presented in the paper. The first is described from the perspective of Croatian authors on the use of pedagogical and didactic principles in adult education. The second is described from the perspective of Malcolm Knowles' concept of andragogy. In addition to these principles, there are a number of factors, principles and characteristics of adult learners, teaching, and learning that should be considered when planning adult education.

The principles of andragogy in adult education outlined by Andrižević et al. (1985) are as follows:

1. Voluntary versus mandatory participation - Motivation enhances learning. It is often challenging to motivate adult learners to participate in the learning process, as they may not understand the purpose of training, thinking that they have already completed their education. The HR department and training providers should bear in mind that some employees were required to participate in training, and devise strategies for increasing their motivation for participation.
2. Concrete versus abstract - This principle is based on learning through concrete examples rather than abstract concepts and generalisation. It is important to consider the learners' prior experience and knowledge. Adult education cannot be based on memorising abstract information. It should provide

concrete and relevant examples about the subject matter or the world around us and build upon the learners' prior knowledge.

3. Active participation and development - Knowledge cannot be handed over. To acquire knowledge and skills and develop, learners have to actively participate in the learning process. They have to be involved in all teaching activities: intellectual, expressive and sensory. Passive participation is unlikely to yield the desired outcomes; thus, it is recommended to use interactive training methods and active learner participation.
4. Systematic and sequential approach - Every task has to be done following a particular order or system, from the simple to the complex, from concrete to abstract. It is important to start with what trainees already know, what is familiar to them, what is easier for them, and build upon that so as to facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge by drawing on prior knowledge and experiences.
5. Appropriateness and learning effort - A learning experience has to be appropriate for the learners. The learning tasks they are asked to perform should require a certain amount of effort, but should not be so difficult as to cause them to start questioning their abilities or leave the programme.
6. Historicity and actuality - Teaching starts with the past because it is important for understanding the sequences, but it does not stay in the past.

Malcolm Knowles, who is considered the father of andragogy, identified six principles of adult learning and used them in his andragogy model.

1. Need to know - Adult learners need to know why they need to learn something before the learning process can start. The benefits they will gain from learning and the negative consequences of not learning something should be clearly stated and explained. Thus, the first task of the trainer is to help the learners understand "the need to know". This is related to the principle of voluntary participation and mandatory participation. Learning needs to be voluntary.

2. The learners' self-concept - Adult learners have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions and their own lives. They also have a need to be seen and treated by others as being capable of self-direction. They resist situations in which something is imposed on them. This principle is linked to the "need to know" principle - when they understand why they need to learn something, they will be motivated to do it. They want to learn rather than be taught. According to this principle, passive learning is not an adequate learning method for adult learners.

3. Learners' prior experiences - Prior experience can be positive or negative. Negative experience can come from previous education. It is up to the trainer to change that perception. Prior experience can be tapped into using different training methods, such as debates, simulations or problem solving. Respecting and building on the learners' prior experiences can boost their motivation.

4. Readiness to learn - As already mentioned, adult learners learn better if they know why they need to learn something. The trainer has to keep this in mind when designing a training programme. The training needs to include real-life examples that are relevant to the learners so that they can associate them with their own situations and needs.

5. Orientation to learning - Adult learning has to be task-centred and interdisciplinary. It has to focus on knowledge and skills that they need to perform their tasks. Learning tasks have to be related to real-life situations they can find themselves in, or work-related situations they are familiar with.

6. Motivation to learn - Some adult learners are motivated by external motivators such as better jobs, higher salaries or promotions in the company; however, internal motivation is a much more powerful motivator. Adults are motivated for personal development, but negative self-concept as a student and other negative experiences can prevent them from pursuing this goal.

The present paper looks at several andragogy elements from these two sets of principles. The first el-

ement is clearly explaining the purpose of learning the content to facilitate learning and transfer. This includes the application of the above principles of 'concrete versus abstract', 'systematic and sequential' and 'appropriateness'.

The second important element of andragogy is motivation. In the context of employee training, the participants need to know why they need to learn something and the benefits they will gain from learning. The trainer should explain the relevance of the content to their tasks. This element is linked to the principles 'motivation to learn', 'learning orientation', and 'readiness to learn'. It is also related to the principles 'need to know' and the principle of 'voluntary and mandatory participation'. In the context of employee training, the trainer should use familiar examples and experiences the participants can relate to. This is connected to the principle 'concrete versus abstract'. The trainer should apply the principle of 'active participation and development' by drawing on learners' knowledge, and rely on the principle of 'systematic and sequential' learning by explaining content using familiar situations. This relates to the principles 'appropriateness', 'orientation to learning', and 'willingness to learn'. In addition to giving relevant and familiar examples, it is also necessary to use familiar technical terms.

'Motivation to learn' and 'willingness to learn' are particularly useful principles in the context of employee training. It is therefore essential that trainers allow the participants to share their prior knowledge and experiences and build on that through training. Motivation is one of the main contributing factors in the success of adult training and learning.

#### 4. Motivation

Motivation is a major factor in the process of adult learning and training. Knowles et al. (2005) emphasize that motivation is as one of the principles of adult education and state that while some adults are motivated by external motivators such as awards, higher salaries or better jobs, the most potent motivators are internal.

Beier and Kanfer (2009) propose a three-stage model of training which comprises motivation to participate in training, motivation during learning and training, and motivation for knowledge and skills transfer. Motivation for training begins before the first training session takes place. In this stage, motivation is influenced by learner characteristics

and environmental influences or organizational characteristics. Motivation is influenced by the perception of the value of training, i.e. how it will contribute to the attainment of the learner's personal goals. These are the questions that need to be answered by the trainer.

The second stage of motivation refers to motivation during the training process. In this stage, motivation is influenced by the design of training as much as by the trainer. In this stage, motivation is influenced the most by the application of andragogy principles in the design and delivery of training. The ARCS model outlines four requirements that have to be met to maintain learner motivation. According to Keller (1987), the first requirement is to obtain and sustain learner attention and direct it to the content of training. This is achieved by creating an interactive training design and selecting appropriate content and training methods. The second requirement is relevance. If trainees consider the training relevant and understand its purpose, their motivation to engage in training will increase. Explaining to the trainees why they need training and how it will benefit them should be part of the training design. This is where andragogy principles can be used to increase learner motivation. The third requirement is confidence. This relates to the principle of andragogy according to which the participant's previous knowledge and experience should be taken into account and positively valued. The fourth requirement is satisfaction. It is achieved by rewarding the participants.

The third stage of motivation in the training process is motivation for the transfer of knowledge to the job. Motivation is one of the main factors in training transfer. Without it, the transfer will either not occur or will not be effective. The transfer can be horizontal, from one context to another at the same level, or vertical, i.e. from lower to higher organisational levels. As with motivation to participate in training, motivation for transfer is also influenced by confidence and organizational climate (Beier, Kanfer, 2009).

#### 5. Transfer

Training transfer refers to the application of knowledge outside the training context. Training design accounts for 46% of reported best practices for influencing knowledge transfer (Saks, Burke, 2014). Considering the possibility of transfer increases the likeli-

hood of transfer. Transfer is increased when training involves multiple examples and encourages trainees to think about the potential for transfer, i.e. how they would use the gained knowledge in their work environment and apply it to their job. Transfer is improved when examples are used in the training to show the relevance of a skill. The amount of practice is directly related to the amount of transfer. Training should combine abstract instruction and concrete examples, i.e. abstract content should be explained using examples. Training should focus on both the whole task and its components (Tennant, 1999).

The factors that influence the transfer of training include the content validity, self-efficacy, transfer design, the employee's reaction to training, training transfer motivation, (Bhatti, Kaur, 2010), learner characteristics, training design and delivery activities, the work environment, trainers, supervisors and time periods (Burke, Hutchins, 2008). These factors are categorized into individual, contextual, situational, and design factors. The design of the training programme is important for its success as it contains the goals, training methods, training venue and equipment (Bhatti, Kaur, 2010). Interventions for increasing training transfer are best carried out in the work context, in the design and delivery phases (Burke, Hutchins, 2008).

Various individual and organisational factors that influence training transfer have been investigated. Many activities have been identified that influence training transfer at the organizational level. They can be undertaken before, during or after the training. Before the training, the trainee has to have the supervisor's support for participating in the training. The trainees have to be involved in the design and delivery of the training process. During training adult learning principles should be used and the training design needs to be adapted to the needs of trainees in terms of possible changes to the content or the entire training programme so as to facilitate the transfer of training. Post-training activities include organizational transfer climate, organizational support, and supervisory support (Saks, Belcourt, 2006). The trainee is the main inflow of the training system. Thus, to understand the transfer of training, it is necessary to understand the factors influencing the trainee. They include the content of training, trainer characteristics, trainee characteristics, training methods and programme design. The methods used in the training and the interaction of the participants with the trainer cre-

ate a learning environment that contributes to the successful training transfer (Nikandrou et al., 2009).

## 6. Research methodology

The organization of training begins with developing a training programme, i.e. training design. Training design has a significant impact on training. This paper posits that andragogy principles are as important as adequate content and training methods and should be used in the training design as they increase trainee motivation and training transfer.

The main goal of the research is to investigate the impact of training design that includes andragogy principles on the training goals. In the training design phase, the principles of both andragogy and didactics should be considered. One of the most important andragogy principles is that training should be adapted to adult learners and that their previous knowledge and experience should be recognised. This andragogy principle was chosen as the first variable. The research measures the influence of andragogy principles on motivation, which is recognized as one of the major contributors to training effectiveness and achievement of training goals, in particular in the context of adult learning. Therefore, the first hypothesis proposes the following:

H1: Employee motivation increases significantly when the principles of andragogy are applied to training design.

The transfer of training to the workplace is the main goal of training. This is why it was chosen as the second variable in this research. Thus, the second hypothesis proposes the following:

H2: The transfer of training is facilitated when the principles of andragogy are applied to training design.

A survey was carried out among 300 participants of employee training using an e-questionnaire. Three domains that relate to three variables were examined in this study. The independent variable 'application of the main andragogy principles to training design' is used in both hypotheses and is measured on a scale of 1-5 using 6 statements. The statements are based on andragogy principles. They are as follows:

1. I understand the content presented by the trainer.
2. The trainer relates the content to my job responsibilities.

3. The trainer uses familiar examples.
4. The trainer uses technical terms I am already familiar with.
5. The trainer gives us the opportunity to share our experiences and the problems we face at the workplace.
6. The trainer uses familiar situations first and then moves onto new situations.

The second variable, used as a dependent variable in the first hypothesis, is motivation. The items used to measure it are adopted from research into employee motivation done by Huang and Yao (2015). They are as follows:

1. The content covered in training is important to me.
2. I have talked about what I've learned in training outside the training context.
3. I like what I've learned in training.
4. If I encounter an obstacle in learning, I won't give up.
5. Even when the materials are boring, I still try to learn from them.
6. I think I'm motivated for learning.

The third part of the questionnaire and the third variable, used as the dependent variable in the second hypothesis, refers to the transfer of training. It is measured using three statements about the transfer of knowledge to the workplace.

1. I believe that things I've learned during this training will be applicable in future training.
2. I believe that I can put what I've learned in this training into practice.
3. I am trying to relate what I've learned in this training to my work tasks.

## 7. Research results

Hypothesis H1 was tested using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, a nonparametric statistical method, to establish the association between the application of andragogy principles and motivation for learning. The correlation coefficient measures the relationship between two variables, while Spearman's Rho is used in situations where the

exact difference between two ranks is unknown, as is the case when Likert scale is used. The correlation coefficient will indicate whether there is an association between the use of andragogy principles in training design and motivation for training and learning. The correlation coefficient can range from -1 to 1, where 1 indicates perfect positive relationship. The coefficient of correlation in this case is 0.485, which indicates a small but statistically significant correlation ( $p=0$ ). This indicates that there is a positive correlation between andragogy principles and motivation, i.e. increased use of andragogy principles increases motivation for training.

Regression analysis tells us more about the extent to which an independent variable, in this case the use of andragogy principles, influences motivation. This analysis is often used in combination with correlation analysis because it can explain the correlation coefficient with more precision. The regression analysis suggests that andragogy principles explain 25.7% of the variance in motivation. For each unit of change in the use of andragogy principles, motivation increases by 0.424 ( $B=0.424$ ,  $p=0$ ). If we interpret the results in general, this means that for each unit of change in the use of andragogy principles, motivation will increase by almost a half of the unit value. Consideration of the participants' prior knowledge and experience in the design of training explains only one quarter of motivation, as can be seen from the calculation for the variable.

A large number of factors influence motivation. Some of them have already been discussed in the theoretical section of the paper. If the trainees have no interest in training or if the training is mandatory, their motivation for participation will decrease. In contrast, if the trainees are made aware of training goals and understand that training has been tailored to their needs, their motivation increases. Andragogy is aimed at helping adults learn and thereby can help increase their motivation. The results of analyses indicate that motivation significantly increases when the principles of andragogy are used in training design. Thus, Hypothesis H1 proposing that employee motivation increases significantly when the principles of andragogy are applied to training design has been confirmed.

Hypothesis H2 was tested using the same statistical method, i.e. Spearman's Rho. Here, the correlation coefficient was used to identify the association between andragogy principles and transfer of knowledge acquired through training to their job.

The correlation coefficient was found to be 0.5589, which means that as the use of andragogy principles increases, the transfer of knowledge to work tasks also increases. According to regression analysis, the use of andragogy elements explains 34% of the variance in training transfer. For each unit of increase in andragogy elements, training transfer increases by 0.306 ( $B=0.306$ ,  $p=0$ ). If we interpret the results in general, for each unit of change in the use of andragogy principles, the motivation will increase by one third of the unit value. This also means that, in general, 34% of the transfer of knowledge to work tasks can be explained by the application of andragogy principles to training design. Taking into account all the other factors mentioned above that may have an impact on training transfer, this result can be considered very high. The calculations indicate that hypothesis H2 proposing that the transfer of training is facilitated when the principles of andragogy are applied to training design has been confirmed.

Andragogy principles, which involve appropriate content, use of examples from practice, and focus on the content relevant to the job, should be used as the guidelines for the design of training as they facilitate the transfer of training. These principles contribute to training transfer because the participants are aware of the applications of learning to work tasks. A large number of factors can influence the transfer of training and trainee motivation. Explaining how and to which work tasks knowledge gained can be transferred before the training begins will increase both transfer and motivation. In conclusion, the two proposed hypotheses and the results of analyses show that andragogy principles should not be neglected as they can have a positive influence on the attainment of training objectives.

## 8. Conclusion

Adult education is a specific segment of educational sciences. Andragogy is premised on assumptions about adult learners that underlie the main andragogy principles. In the Anglophone literature, the principles of andragogy were outlined by Malcolm Knowles. According to these principles, the trainers should attract and sustain the attention of participants, motivate them, provide clearly structured and systemised learning experience, encourage participant engagement, and take into account their prior experience.

These principles should be considered in the very planning phase, i.e. the design of training. Thus, in addition to being involved in deciding on the appropriate content and training methods, the satisfaction of the participants with the training should be assessed so as to make sure that their needs have been met and to maintain their motivation in order not to hinder the transfer of training.

This paper explores the influence of andragogy principles on motivation, as one of the main contributors to the success of training activities, and on training transfer, as perhaps the most important objective of employee training.

The Spearman's correlation coefficient indicates a positive correlation between the use of andragogy principles in training design and motivation (0.485), as well as between the use of these principles and training transfer (0.558). The regression analysis shows that andragogy principles explain 25% of the variance in motivation and 34% of the variance in training transfer. The data suggest that andragogy principles should be considered in the planning and implementation of employee training programmes as this contributes to their effectiveness.



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*Željko Požega*

*Boris Crnković*

*Korina Kovačić Mađarić*

## **UTJECAJ DIZAJNA TRENINGA NA EDUKACIJU ZAPOSLENIKA**

### **SAŽETAK**

Dizajn treninga se sastoji od planiranja sadržaja i metoda treninga te određivanja predznanja polaznika. Andragoške postavke označene kao aktivnosti za primjenu adekvatnih i jasnih primjera i stručnih izraza kod organizacije i izvođenja treninga te uklapanja prijašnjih znanja i iskustava polaznika poseban su segment u dizajniranju treninga. Na njima se može bazirati pravilan odabir i sadržaja i metoda poučavanja. Ovim se radom želi istražiti utječe li dizajn treninga kroz primjenu i postavljanje andragoških postavki na edukaciju zaposlenika posebno na motivaciju za trening i prijenos znanja u radne zadatke kao jedan od glavnih ciljeva edukacije zaposlenika.

Kvantitativno istraživanje je provedeno uz pomoć statističkih metoda koeficijenta korelacije i regresije. Koeficijent korelacije za usporedbu andragoških postavki i motivacije za trening iznosi 0,485 što označava manju ali statistički značajnu korelaciju ( $p < 0,01$ ). Rezultati regresije pokazuju kako andragoške postavke objašnjavaju 25,7% varijance. Na svaku jedinicu promjene andragoških postavki motivacija se povećava za 0,424 ( $B=0,424$ ) jedinice ( $p < 0,01$ ).

Koeficijent korelacije andragoških postavki i transfera treninga iznosi 0,5589, što znači da se povećanjem andragoških postavki povećava i prijenos znanja u radne zadatke. Prema izračunu regresije poštivanjem andragoških postavki objašnjava se 34% varijance transfera treninga. Na svaku jedinicu promjene andragoških postavki motivacija se povećava za 0,306 ( $B=0,306$ ) jedinice ( $p < 0,01$ ).

**Ključne riječi:** dizajn treninga, edukacija zaposlenika, andragoške postavke