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The Effect of Adaptive Communication Training on Team Interaction and Startup Project Performance: Training in an Entrepreneurship Practicum

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Abstract

Contemporary entrepreneurship education emphasises the development of students' innovation competence, which encompasses not only professional knowledge but also the ability to interact effectively within teams in the context of project-based learning. Nevertheless, empirical research on the effects of specialised communication training on project team performance remains limited. The aim of this study is to evaluate the effect of adaptive communication training on the quality of team interaction as an important component of innovation competence, and to identify associations between individual communication profiles and team performance indicators. The hypotheses are as follows: adaptive communication training improves team interaction indicators, reduces the incidence of conflicts, and enhances project quality; moreover, the effects of training are independent of participants' individual communication profiles, despite significant associations between personality types and team interaction indicators. The study was conducted within the course "Entrepreneurship Practicum" for master's and continuing professional education students at two universities, in which teams developed their own startup projects. In a longitudinal randomised controlled experiment (5 months), the experimental group (9 teams, n=39) received adaptive communication training based on the Process Communication Model and had regular consultations with certified trainers. The control group (10 teams, n=31) carried out startup projects without additional intervention. Results demonstrated significant improvement in the experimental group on several indicators: mutual understanding and support ($d=0.74$; $p=0.004$), satisfaction with the team collaboration process ($d=0.60$; $p=0.019$), and team cohesion ($d=1.34$; $p<0.001$). The proportion of serious conflicts decreased (29.0% vs. 15.4%), and team member departures ceased. No significant differences were found in objective project quality indicators. The effect of training was independent of participants' individual communication profiles. Thus, the incorporation of

short-term communication training into entrepreneurship education programmes contributes to the development of the socio-behavioural components of innovation competence and to strengthening the social fabric of the team.

Keywords: Team Interaction; Process Communication Model (PCM); Entrepreneurship Education; Project-Based Learning; Innovation Competence