

AN EVALUATION OF CURRENT TRAINING PROGRAMS AT A TERTIARY INSTITUTION

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ABSTRACT

Training is important in any organisation to improve the performance of employees. Training programmes are integral parts of development for employees to develop themselves and the organisation. Lack of training and inadequate training adversely affects productivity in any organisation. Training programs are given to university staff, especially academic staff, to perform well in their teaching and research. The aim of this study was to evaluate the current training program in place for academic staff at a tertiary institution in South Africa. The objectives were to determine the training programs currently in place; to investigate the adequacy of these training programs; to determine the gaps and make recommendations. This study is a quantitative study and the sample population was 120 academic staff members across the six faculties. The study found that some training programs were valuable for academic staff. However, involvement of some academic staff in research was hindered by inappropriate research training. The institution also needs to encourage training attendance. It was found that the institution's goals and objectives are linked to the training provided and therefore, academic staff members are ready to uphold the values of the institution because of training.

Keywords: Staff development, training programs.

INTRODUCTION

One of the major challenges facing universities is the inadequacy of appropriate training programmes for academic staff. This inevitably affects lecturers' performance, which indirectly influences the learning process of the students. In order for the emerging universities of technology in South Africa to be active in teaching and research activities, continuous training of academic staff is therefore necessary. On-the-job training is also important for academic staff of universities considering the rapid change in technological development. It is more pertinent because technology is used daily in carrying out their jobs as lecturers and researchers. This study presents a study on the evaluation of training programmes available to academic staff members of a tertiary institution in South Africa. Human resources are an important and most funded resource of any organisation. For the economic sustainability of any organisation and effective performance of human resources, training and development should be encouraged. This is to align workers with the aims and objectives of the organisation. Training is necessary for the regular supply of technically and socially oriented employees for different departmental and managerial roles. Employees should be given the right training at the right time and pace for optimal performance at work. The huge investment in training is justified in organisations resulting in increased productivity. Moreover, workers are more dedicated, loyal and knowledgeable about their various work descriptions. A university as an organisation should encourage training of its employees. More importantly, training of academic staff who are tasked with the training of the nations' emerging workforce, is very important. A properly trained lecturer can perform

excellently in research and teaching. Modern teaching and research activities involve the use of different software, which requires continuous training. Investment in training by universities will surely help in graduating quality students who are highly competitive in the labour market. Adequate training for faculty members will increase productivity for the university in the form of publications and patents. The impact of training on the improvement of employees' performance in any organisation cannot be overemphasized. Training should be a continuous exercise to enhance employees' performance on the job. There is a continuous change in the methods employees are required to use when performing the job tasks satisfactorily. This is evident by the rapid change of technology in this information and communication technology (ICT) age. Therefore, employees should be continuously trained to perform satisfactorily. This study explores the usefulness of training programmes for academic staff members only in performing excellently in teaching and research as expected of lecturers in a university. The adequacy of existing training programmes at the university will be evaluated. Related trainings will be suggested at the end of this study to help lecturers perform excellently thereby creating potential to improve the research throughput and pass rates of students.

Problem Statement

The institution is an emerging university taking up the challenges of teaching and research because it was recently upgraded to a university. The university is competing with other universities in attracting quality staff and students. The university is also battling with retention of staff especially academic staff members. One of the ways to achieve all these is by constantly training of staff members to produce quality students. In keeping up with the research output requirements set up by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in South Africa, the university needs to increase its research activities. This can only be achieved by giving appropriate training programmes and at appropriate time and frequency to academic staff members. Many of the academic staff members are new entrants with little or no experience in teaching and research at university (fresh university/college graduates). Retention and development of this category of staff members can be done with appropriate training programmes to perform efficiently. Moreover, existing lecturers also need adequate training on the use of new technologies in teaching and better equipment for research. Therefore, continuous training, in the right frequency, at the institution is needed for the optimum performance of lecturers in teaching and research. It is important to evaluate to ascertain if the trainings available to these individuals, saddled with the future of our youths and indirectly our nation, are adequate and of high quality.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

- What training programs are currently in place for academic staff at the institution?
- What is the adequacy of the training programs for lecturers at the institution?
- What are the gaps with the training programs?
- What recommendations can be made to improve the training programs that are in place for academic staff at the institution?

Significance of the Study

This study will be useful to the institution as well as other institutions of higher learning concerning the need for adequate training for academic staff in particular. The study

evaluated the return on training investment. A significant amount of money is allocated to trainings. This study is useful to determine if the funds are appropriately allocated to the right trainings or if there is a need to redirect the training needs towards an area. The benefits of the training to the staff members was determined to see if the trainings have direct effects on their performance. The contribution to knowledge of this study is the fact that it is directed towards trainings that enhance teaching and research at higher education institutions where focus on research and development is paramount. Students enrolled in the universities will benefit from this study because the quality of teaching and research in the university will be improved. This indirectly helps the industries that will be the employers of these students after graduation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Training can be defined as the “planned effort by a company to facilitate employees’ learning of job-related competencies” (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, B. & Wright, 2012:208). “These competencies include knowledge, skills or behaviour that are critical for successful job performance” (Noe et al., 2012:175). The dynamism of teaching and learning process in higher institutions in the 21st century demands training of employees to be able to compete within the industry and increase productivity. Human resources management plays a significant role in the management of organisation because of increase in administrative management. Training and development is an integral part of human resources management. Skilled and competent people should be employed and continuously trained to get the best from them. Training and development can provide opportunities to the employees to enjoy their career life and excel. Employees can be upgraded in their career to better positions by attending appropriate trainings thereby improving their economic benefits and prestige. Furthermore, training and development is one of the basic functions of human resources in any organisation. The significance of training cannot be overemphasized. It is a way to ensure smooth running of any organisation. However, this exercise is very expensive and some organisations are reducing the number of on-the-job trainings available to their employees. Training has been established to improve the skills, knowledge and performance of employees (Curado and Teixeira, 2014, Eli, 2014, Markaki, Alegakis, Antonakis, Kalokerinou-Anagnostopoulou and Lionis 2009). Performance should be consistent; therefore, regular and continuous trainings are essential. It is the backbone of the profit generation in any organisation. Creativity and innovation of employees are the results of effective training which are necessary for organisation growth (Zoder-Martell, Dufrene, Tingstrom, Olmi, Jordan, Biskie and Sherman 2014). Training helps employees to be knowledgeable, possess required skills, have a great attitude towards work, and develop self-confidence in order to perform efficiently. These listed attributes will help staff improve their performance in the organisation. Elimination of risks in the workplace can be achieved through training. A trained employee will be efficient and use organisation property effectively resulting in avoidance/reduction of waste. For a successful training exercise, organisations need to identify the needs of the organisation in terms of training. This is the way to measure if training programmes are successful or if the employees being trained are learning what they need to learn. It can also be used to check if their performance is better after training. The organisation might invest a huge amount of money on a wrong candidate. Therefore, the employer should evaluate and check the training needs of individual employee before selecting them for training. It is important for any organisation to ensure training programs are carefully designed (Dahiya and Jha, 2011:14), which should be according to the employees’ needs (Markaki et al., 2009:141). Good results are associated with the development of good training programs and in tune with the employees’ needs (Fischer,

2011:771). The training should also be designed with organisation goals in mind (Fischer, 2011:772). Training design and programme play important roles in employees' performance resulting in organisational performance (Dahiya and Jha, 2011). Training delivery style is a crucial part of training (Driskell, 2011:17). Training delivery should be impressive to capture the attention of trainees during the session (Driskell, 2011:17). Learning has not taken place if employee's behaviour has not changed after training. Organisations can examine this by comparing employee's behaviour before and after training on specific jobs and tasks. Since more skills and knowledge are gained by employees through training, then behavioural changes should be evident after training. Training is beneficial for helping employees do their current job satisfactorily and preparing them for the future as well. Training also has the ability to help employees for future managerial responsibilities. An organisation should involve in a training process which includes the identification of training needs, planning of training, implementation of training, evaluation of training after completion. The training needs process involves identifying employees that require training. It also involves identifying what training should be presented. It is expedient for organisations to analyse training needs before spending on training especially from an employee perspective. This will help employers to measure the performances of employees after training. The measurement may involve analysing the efficiency of the individual employees through annual performance appraisals. Feedbacks from the customers and stakeholders can be used to formulate training needs in an organisation. Training needs arises because of the need for improvement or adjustment to various changes or to solve some nagging problems so as to improve the organisation and also the employees. The essence of identifying a training needs program is to identify the gap in between the required competence and the actual competence of employees and organisation so as to find out different training programs that can bridge the gap (Altarawneh, 2009:15). Mentoring and induction programmes for teachers at the beginning of their career provide combinations of "supportive activities and practices rather than a singular source of support has a positive impact on teacher retention" (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011). The research reviewed by Ingersoll and Strong (2011:230) strongly "supports bundles or packages of multiple induction components and the Induction Pack is effectively a package of multiple induction components".

Different Training Programmes

Driskell (2011:16) argues that "training delivery style is crucial part of the training". The method of presenting training to employees should be acceptable and should make training motivating and interesting. The duration of the training should also be acceptable to employees. Training delivery needs to be impressive to employees and make them ready to learn (Fischer, 2011:771). Markaki et al. (2009:140) concludes that "emerging training needs were in congruence with the most urgent broad categories of needs in information technology, professional practice and patient/client care issues". They further argued that there is always a necessary training for any position despite the educational background for the work by the employees to improve their performance. Training of employees at all levels within an organisation is a vital component in maintaining the competitiveness in an international arena (Adhikari, 2010:311). Dahiya and Jha (2011:14) give the steps involved in the training programme development which are "planning, programme implementation, and programme evaluation and follow-up". "A training programme is not complete until and unless methods and results have been evaluated" (Dahiya and Jha, 2011). A good training is evident and successful when the participants and trainer work together with open-mindedness as stated by Fischer (2011:771) that "open-mindedness is also a significant moderator of training effectiveness". In assessing the outcome of a training programme, "type of training

implemented, training content and trainee expertise also affect the training outcomes. Success of a training programme always depends on how the training was given, what was the content and who was the trainer” (Driskell, 2011:12). Another important type of training is emotional training. It was found that “emotional training have significant impact on service quality. It means there is a relationship between behaviour and learning, and service industry can be benefitted by emotional training because service industry is basically related to marketing and verbal communication” (Beigi and Shirmohammadi, 2011:561). In another study, it was concluded that “training and motivation can sustain or increase employees' current productivity” (Tabassi, Mahyuddin and Abu 2012).

Impact of Inadequate Training Programmes

In evaluating the impact of adequate training on productivity of Italian firms, Colombo and Stanca (2014:1140) affirms that adequate training has a positive and significant impact on productivity. It was stressed in the study that the firms examined highly underestimated the effects of adequate training on productivity. Blue-collar workers benefit a lot from training with high significance. However, low significance was recorded for the executives and clerks. It was also found that productivity of about ten percent was recorded as higher for adequately trained workers compared to untrained workers. Inadequate training of workers will seriously impact on productivity in any organisation. Inadequate training may cause low self-esteem of workers in any organisation as recorded in the study. Suleiman (2013:148) studied the causes of poor attitude to work in Nigeria amongst both public and private sectors. It was found that Nigerian workers believe that inadequate training and development programmes are the main causes of their poor attitude to work. Job insecurity is another possible cause identified. Suleiman (2013:149), therefore, suggested that training and development programmes should be incorporated as a matter of priority into the organisation policies in Nigeria. Furthermore, Truitt (2011:10) established that conflicts, employee dissatisfaction and negative attitudes are signs of inadequate job training. It has always been the employees' goals to record successes in their careers. This will encourage them to perform their job more efficiently and effectively. Employees denied of training tend to develop poor attitude and bad orientation towards the goals and objectives of the organisation. This can be corrected with organised training as affirmed by Kamal and Othman (2012:123) that training and development are “strategic tools for competitive positioning”. Haslinda and Mahyuddin (2009:41) state that “inadequate training assessment and analysis is due to lack of expertise and it is irrespective of the size of firms”. Training can help employees to acquire necessary communication skills. These skills will ensure that necessary information concerning processes, procedures and technology related to employee performance is acquired. An employee thereby acquires greater accountability and responsibility to improve the efficiency. An employee without proper training may find it difficult to compete internationally outside the organisation. Unfortunately, lack of adequate training to acquire necessary skills to perform a job correctly can cause an employee to fail and project the organisation image wrongly especially university academic staff. In India-based private insurance branches, a study was carried out to determine the current evaluation methods and also identify the barriers to the effective training and development programmes implementation (Kumar et al., 2012:419). Inadequate training and development objectives and evaluation mechanisms were found to be casual factors (Kumar et al., 2012:419). “Training provides employees with the knowledge, abilities and skills required for the job. training investment first generates a negative effect on results, which later becomes positive as far as the transfer of knowledge to the employee is concerned” (Valle, Castillo and Rodriguez-Duarte 2009:400). “There are 16 best practices, training is one of the few in

which a consistent and positive impact on performance can be found” (Valle et al., 2009:400). “Competitiveness cannot be achieved without managing performance and at the same time developing the skills and competence of employees” (Adhikari, 2010:310).

Training Programme Gaps

Leader behaviour relation to training was examined by Towler, Watson and Surface (2014:829). Leadership support for training by their actions can make trainees perceive training as important with high priority. It was also suggested that there would be high motivation among trainees during learning process when the learning environment is conducive. There exists a gap between what the employees ought to know and what they really know hence the need for training (Devi and Shaik, 2012:204). No matter how careful employers are during the recruitment, they may still employ people who should be trained. Training will help organisation to beat competition from other organisations. All organisations have accepted training as important to the development of their employees and invariably their organisations. The evolution of new technologies has demanded training in some skills. Many activities are replaced with machines and computers, therefore training of employees to adapt to the new work environment becomes imperative. Training and development can be extended to higher education especially to the librarians. In reporting the use of ICT in Indian academic libraries, Husain and Nazim (2015:135) found that traditional methods are still used for many functions in the library. It was reported that modern ICT methods are not used because of lack of training of library personnel. This will affect students’ learning processes in many ways. This presents a gap in the training of university staff members. The institution, as a university in South Africa, needs to train both academic and non-academic staff in the use of latest technology for their optimal performance especially in the area of using modern ICT methods in the library, classrooms and research. There should be maximum exposure of latest technology to both staff and students to enhance learning. This will make students to be highly competitive in the labour market when they graduate. Husain and Nazim (2015:135) suggested that low level of ICT knowledge amongst those using the library facilities also contribute significantly to low use of latest technology. However, other factors like unawareness and inadequate infrastructure are other barriers. Husain and Nazim (2015:150) concluded by suggesting adequate training for librarians and other users to get the optimum benefits from ICT in the library. This will ensure better performance for both lecturers and students in India. In another study by Guerrazzi (2014:815), a model was presented which uses age and gender compositions of the workforce together with other characteristics such as sector, geographical location, research and development investments, size and use of social safety valves. All these are linked to the firms’ willingness to provide on-the-job training. This was presented in the form of equation forming probit model. Probit model was used to assess how gender composition, age of workforce and other characteristics are linked to the on-the-job training (Guerrazzi, 2014:817). It was found that higher training propensity was with larger firms. Small firms tend to forget about training. Small firms do not like to invest in research and development projects like larger firms. Mentoring is seen as another form of training, especially, practical training in higher education. The benefits of mentoring as a practical training in higher education of entrepreneurship students was investigated (Gimmon, 2014:816). In the action research, mentors were offered to entrepreneurship students (Gimmon, 2014:817). The mentors are professional senior staff. It was reported by the students that participated in the study that they have substantial improvement. The improvement was in their entrepreneurial personal abilities and higher self-efficacy. The pass rates of the students in the study were far higher than their classmates who did not undertake mentorship. Gimmon (2014:823)

therefore, concludes that mentorship can be used a form of practical training for entrepreneur students. The importance of on-the-job training cannot be exaggerated and can take the form of mentorship. Selection of employees to different positions in an organisation demands equipping them with necessary training for the specific tasks (Karthikeyan, Karthi and Graf 2010:79). This is very important and helps in the smooth running of an organisation. It is essential that before an employee can perfectly fit in an organisation and working harmoniously with peers, he should be given adequate training (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011:223). It is evident that there are improvement in capability, performance and retention of new teachers. These are strongly correlated with the quality of training they received when newly employed (Osgood and Self, 2003:32). Lack of support is the key reason why many new teachers change their profession (Osgood and Self, 2003:36). Developing new skills does not necessarily makes others stay, rather, they learn to cope with the new roles (Osgood and Self, 2003:36). It was identified by Chan (2009:1) that several additional challenges exist for trades tutors which shows recent educational practices in New Zealand. These are given as “being unfamiliar with information, communication and technology (ICT) requirements, the need to embed literacy, numeracy and language training and the restrictive nature of curricula and assessment as opposed to the practical nature of on the job training” (Chan, 2009:1). This shows the importance of induction training at the beginning of new jobs. The solution to poor performance at work can be found through proper induction training. A review shows that mentoring programmes for new teachers can help new teachers to perform better in many aspects of a teaching role (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011:230). The induction can be in the form of support, guidance and orientation programmes. The main responsibilities are identified by (Chan, 2009:1) as challenges for new teachers coming from industry where extended support was necessary and can only be gained by induction.

Improvement of Training Programmes in Different Organisations

Training is the most important factor of performance of employees (Khan and Pakistan, 2009:7). Khan and Pakistan (2009:7) showed that performance of health sector organisation increased due to training and development. Tsai, Yen, Huang and Huang (2007:171) suggested that “commitment results from adequate training and development for successful job completion and an increase in job performance”. Training programmes should be improved to enhance organisation efficiency and effectiveness. Training remains the most important factor for employees’ capabilities. It was stated that “delivery style is an important aspect of training and development” (Altarawneh, 2009:17). The knowledge bases derived from training help the company’s employees to develop a different professional outlook. This helps in the long run in higher productivity. It creates positive mind-set for the employees (Barzegarnader, 2011:1944). This also makes the employees to feel more confident in performing at work (Appelbaum and Sharon, 2003:9). Employees learn most times “what data would be needed and how the data must be collected and interpreted” (Barzegarnader, 2011:1945). A high percentage of studies on training of human resources indicates that employees’ skills are upgraded thereby increasing productivity (Barzegarnader, 2011:1944). A study of 2400 population members was presented (Cones and Jenkins, 2002:52). It was indicated that 64% of cases showed that evaluation depends on training. Good training programme can be a solution to many problems in the organisation resulting from poor productivity. It plays a vital role in an organisation. “A bad training programme is a waste of time and money” (Giangreco, Sebastiano and Peccei 2009:223). Practical experience offers better learning compared with formal training. It may be better for organisation to have structured on-the-job training for their employees. It is also cost effective and time saving (Giangreco et al., 2009:223). Effectiveness of training programmes can be achieved “only to

the extent that the skills and behaviours learned and practised during instructions are actually transferred to the workplace” (Chiaburu and Lindsay, 2008:199). It was asserted that “an effective system of evaluation begins with a comprehensive training needs analysis (TNA) process so that the organisations, departments and individuals can identify their specific needs” (Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger and Smith-Jentsch 2012:86). This calls for comprehensive TNA for educational sector to ascertain the desired training programmes peculiar to lecturers. Attention should be focussed on linking the organisation strategies and goals for consistency with the objective of creating an impact (Anderson, 2009:102). Training will result in generating profits and provision of quality service for organisation customers (Irene, 2009:89). Employees gain attributes through training which they display in their daily tasks resulting in generation of more profits for the firm. Sustainable profitability can be generated with carefully planned trainings which exhibit better attributes in employees in virtually every task. The change in the behaviour of employees can improve the productivity within the organisation. Employees are more equipped to improve customer satisfaction and cope with many challenges at work (Karthikeyan et al., 2010:80). Training is recognized as a central role of management (Irene, 2009:69). “Training both physically, socially, intellectually and mentally are very essential in facilitating not only the level of productivity but also the development of personnel in any organization” (Olusanya, Awotungase and Ohadebere 2012:52). “Training holds the key to unlock the potential growth and development opportunities to achieve a competitive edge. In this context, organizations train and develop their employees to the fullest advantage in order to enhance their effectiveness” (Devi and Shaik, 2012:204).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, training and development is beneficial to both the organisation and employees. The organisation increases its efficiency by training. It also increases productivity and maximizes benefit employees can contribute to the organisation. The morale of the employees is higher to make them perform maximally with high efficiency and accuracy. Employees make better decisions when properly trained and are more effective in problem solving. More self-confidence and engagement in meaningful discussions aimed at organisation growth are developed. A well-trained employee can handle friction better at work and be less frustrated. Training increases job satisfaction as well for the employees. Therefore, timely and appropriate trainings are recommended in any organisation especially higher education institutions where future leaders are trained. There is however a research gap in finding suitable trainings that should be presented to the lecturers in higher institution especially, universities. It should be understood that lecturers in a university are both teachers and researchers. Lecturers need to be equipped with relevant training in tune with today’s challenges. Apart from administrative courses being taught, training should be given on how to cope with both teaching and research. It is important to examine if the trainings presently available to them are adequate or inadequate. This will ensure they perform as expected of them in both responsibilities as teachers and researchers. New software is available for research in higher education. Old lecturers are required to use the new software. There are new methods of teaching as well. Both new entrants into the job and old lecturers need to be familiar with the usage of new technologies available. Lecturers need to be re-trained to be in tune with the latest methods of teaching and learning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research involves the measuring of amount or quantity which can be numbered. It is usually applied to any research involving measurement expressed in quantity. It also

involves generation of data in numbers which can be analysed in a formal and rigid fashion (Kothari, 2004:4). Qualitative research involves qualitative phenomenon, that is, quality. Qualitative approach is subjective (Kothari, 2004:3). The quantitative approach was selected over qualitative in this study. This is because the former has interest in a systematic approach that can evolve data. The numerical data was collected and analysed through the questionnaire. The data collection method of quantitative approach is easy, fast and convenient for the researcher and participants as it is systematic and could produce comparable and generalizable data.

Research design

In this study, the descriptive and exploratory research designs were used. The descriptive approach makes the variables in each section of the questionnaire evident through the use of charts. Exploratory research was used to gain new insights about a phenomenon. Numerical data and a cursory analysis of quantitative data on the current training programmes in place for academic staff at the institution to enhance their performance at work was undertaken. The research design chosen was applied to this study to get a clear idea of the problems encountered in the field. The exploratory research design helped to gather preliminary information for the definition of problems and suggestions. The study was a survey type in the form of cross sectional study in which data were collected once across a population through a purposive sampling technique.

The Research Philosophy

Research philosophy relates to “the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009:107). In this study, the research philosophy adopted contains “important assumptions in which the world is viewed” (Saunders et al., 2009:108) however this was influenced by practical considerations. Positivist research is generally quantitative and this involves the use of numerical measurements and statistical analyses of the measurements to examine social phenomena (Saunders et al., 2009:108). The advantages of this approach are reliability of the findings and encouragement of replication. Also it places great premium on objectivity (Saunders et al., 2009:108). Hence, it was selected for this study.

Research Strategy

The research questions and objectives guided the choice of research strategy used in this study. Some other factors like time frame, resources available and existing knowledge also played important roles in the choice of research strategy. The strategies are categorised into positivist, phenomenological and combined research strategies. In this study, a survey research strategy which is an example of positivist research strategy was used. A sample of 120 academic staff was selected to make inferences from a population of academic staff of the institution.

Target Population

The population selected for this research is the academic staff of the institution which has about 577 academic staff (Cele and Lekhanya, 2014). The population excluded other administrative staff members of the university. Only the staff members involved in teaching and research in the university were included in the population for this study. The staff

members were full-time, part-time, contract or permanently employed. The population was mixed with senior and junior staff members. It was also well distributed between male and female but was not in equal proportion. It was a requirement that the staff members should be working at the institution for a minimum of one year. This would enable them to have experience on the training options available and their influence on their job. Lecturers must have at least master's degree as a requirement in any field across the six academic faculties of the university and also involved in teaching and research.

Sampling Strategy

“Sampling is the process of selecting a fractional part of the relevant group or population” (Saunders et al., 2009:150). There are two types of sampling methods. These are probability and non-probability sampling methods (Saunders et al., 2009:150). The sampling technique that was used in this study is called judgement or purposive sampling method. This is a non-probability sampling. In this sampling technique, every member of the population does not have equal chance of being selected from the sample frame (Saunders et al., 2009:150), however, this will not be a disadvantage in this study. The members were carefully selected in all the faculties of the university to have a general idea of training programmes. The respondents were also selected based on the participation willingness in the research and knowledge about teaching and research at the institution. The sample size of 120 respondents was drawn from about 577 academic staff across all the six faculties of the university. This was to ensure enough data for proper statistical analysis and for result validity.

The Research Instrument

A questionnaire consists of a set of questions presented to respondents for their answers (Kotler, 2000:110). It is flexible and the most common data collection instrument. In this study, close-ended questions were used to capture quantitative data and make the data collection process very simple. Questionnaire, which facilitate the data collection, was given to the academic staff members of the institution. Structured questions were asked to gain insight into existing training options available to academic staff members for their job performance.

Pilot Study

Saunders et al. (2009:394) recommend the use of pilot study prior to using questionnaire to gather data. Pilot study is a small-scale research study performed as a form of feasibility study of the main research. This is necessary to forestall any difficulty or constraint that may be experienced during the real experiment or research process. All the difficulties are guarded against during the main study. For the purpose of this research, 10 academic staff members were chosen across the university for the pilot study. They were selected to be evenly distributed in all the six faculties as much as possible. The questions were not amended after the pilot study due to the feedback from the participants.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves “getting a feel for the data, testing the goodness of data and testing the hypothesis developed for the research” (Sekaran, 2003:306). It was ensured that the questionnaire was properly checked for accuracy and completeness. The answers to the questions were captured on Microsoft Excel 2013 which allowed data entry for the numerical

values. Statistical analysis was done using Microsoft Excel 2013 only. This was used to measure different scale, range and frequency of the collected data. Microsoft Excel 2013 was used to present results statistically using tables, graphs and charts to understand the data collected. Microsoft Excel 2013 package was used to find frequency distribution and percentages used for quantitative data analysis. The data entry and analysis was done solely by the researcher to avoid errors. Frequency tables were generated for the questionnaire. Findings of this study were expressed as percentages. Thereafter, findings were presented graphically using tables, histograms and pie charts.

Validity and Reliability

Validity is the “extent to which data collection techniques or analysis procedures yield consistent findings” (Saunders et al., 2009:156). This explains that if the research was repeated with the same procedures and research techniques, the same results would be generated. In this study, the data collection instruments were found to be reliable. In ensuring this, the questionnaire was pre-tested and tested. The questionnaire was pre-tested by giving it to colleagues across different faculties and their responses were analysed using simple tables and charts. This was to determine the objectives of the study. The results obtained showed that the questionnaire was consistent with the aim and objectives of this study. The same questionnaire was now tested and given again to different respondents. It was further found that the same results were obtained. As reliability is about consistency therefore, the questionnaire was reliable. The test and pre-test results showed that they were in tune with what the research sought to achieve.

Limitations of the Study

Limitation is defined as “matters and occurrences that arise in a study which are out of the researcher’s control” (Simon and Goes, 2013). These can limit the extent to which a research can go and may affect the end results and conclusions drawn from the study. One of the limitations of the study was the time it took many respondents to respond to the questionnaire. Constant reminders were sent to the respondents. Holidays also affected this study as staff members could not be reached during this time. This resulted in seeking for extension of this study and also affected the data analysis as some responses came late. However, this did not affect the overall results of this investigation.

Elimination of Bias

Pannucci and Wilkins (2010:1) defined bias as “any tendency which prevents unprejudiced consideration of a question”. Bias was prevented by adhering to all rules and principles guiding the research strategy adopted in this study. Systematic errors were prevented from being re-introduced into sampling by encouraging or selecting one answer over other ones. The data from the respondents was captured accurately as was received with no alteration so as not to influence the results. The views expressed in this study were those of the respondents. Moreover, the questionnaire was carefully constructed to avoid the use of gender based words. Gender neutral words were used to hide the gender identity of the respondents. The race or ethnic groups of the respondents were not revealed or taken into account in this study and avoided in the questionnaire. There was avoidance of assumption about various age groups. There was also an avoidance of language that suggests evaluation or reinforces stereotypes.

Ethical Consideration

Research ethic refers to “the appropriateness of researcher’s behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of the study or are affected by it” (Saunders et al., 2009:183). Ethical principles are to be adhered to irrespective of data collection techniques used. It is stated that “the researcher has responsibilities not only to the research participants but also to the colleagues, and the people to whom the findings are presented” (Saunders et al., 2009:183). The privacy and anonymity of the respondents was respected in this study. There was a covering letter stating that no harm would come to them. The confidentiality of the information or questions answered was ensured by not requiring the respondents’ identities on the questionnaire. The staff members were required to just fill the forms (questionnaire) where the results are collated electronically and their identities are hidden and protected. Permission was obtained from the management of the institution before the questionnaire was distributed to the participants. A copy of this dissertation would be given to the institution which might be made available to their staff members. This would allow them to review and implement the recommendations in this study to address training needs for staff members.

RESULTS

For the study 120 academic staff members of the institution were selected out of approximately 577 academic staff members. Respondents were drawn from all the six faculties which were Faculties of Accounting and Informatics; Applied Sciences; Arts and Design; Engineering and the Built Environment; Health Sciences; Management Sciences and other relevant departments including the Institute of Water and Wastewater Technology; writing centre; and the library. Out of 120 questionnaire distributed, 108 were properly filled and returned representing a 90% response rate. The response rate was favourable and enough to allay the fear of non-response bias (Saunders et al., 2009:67). The questionnaire was explicitly explained in section 3.4 of this dissertation as having 6 sections with a total of 29 questions. Questions 10 to 29 were presented in 5-point likert scale of “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neutral”, “agree” and “strongly agree”. The scale is easy to understand as the most universal method of survey. As a measure of internal consistency, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for the total number of questionnaires collected which is 0.86. This shows that the response is strongly reliable and consistent for the total questionnaire. The Faculty of Management Sciences had the highest number of respondents of 25%, 19% of the respondents did not indicate their departments/faculties while 5% of the respondents are attached to non-academic faculties like writing centre, library and institutes. However, these respondents are also academic staff members involved in teaching and research. The faculty with the lowest number of respondents was health sciences with 5%. Faculty of Arts and design has 6% of respondents, Accounting and informatics has 12%, Applied sciences has 13%, and Engineering and built environment has 15%. It was found that the respondents cut across all the faculties in the university which shows that their responses to other questions will be a true representation of the training situation at the institution. 20% of the respondents has doctorate degree and 80% has masters. 80% of respondents has master’s degree while 20% of the respondents has doctorate. This shows that academic staff members with doctorate are few at the institution. The lowest percentage of respondents which is 2% was professor/director. This is understandable because they represent the highest rank and lowest percentage of lecturer cadre in any South African university. The lecturer cadre, which is the lowest cadre of the respondents represent 69%. Based on the results, 18% of the respondents indicated their rank as Senior Lecturer while 11% indicated their rank as

Associate Professor/Associate Director. The lecturer and senior lecturer cadre will be 69% + 18% representing 87% of the respondents. These are the categories of people who really need training as middle career in lecturing profession. It was a good idea to have greater percentage of lecturers and senior lecturers among the respondents to have a better opinion of training programs at the institution. 43% of the respondents are permanent staff, 32% are contract staff and 25% are part-time staff. In the study, 58% of the respondents are new to the institution having started working within the range of 1 to 4 years. From the results, 26% of the respondents are within 5 to 9 years, 10% of the respondents have spent from 10 to 14 years. The results also indicate 2% of the respondents have spent 15 to 19 years and only 4% of the respondents spent more than 19 years on the job. The results indicated 58% of the respondents with 1 to 4 years' experience needs training and are the majority of the respondents. It can be observed that the institution has a problem with staff retention because few academic staff members have spent more than 10 years there. The highest percentage of respondents have spent 1 to 4 years at the institution. Therefore, most of the staff members are new on the job and in order for the institution's academic staff to be competitive among other universities, training should be given to these newly recruited academic staff members.

Training to improve research output

77% of the respondents are actively involved in research. 23% are currently not involved. A subset of 5.26% respondents out of the 23% of the respondents not involved in research, are not interested in research while the remaining 17.54% of the respondents are ready to be involved if properly trained. This shows that training may be an impediment for these lecturers to be involved in research. Training will help lecturers who are not yet involved in research to develop innovative ideas to be actively involved. 71% of the respondents are aware of training programmes at the institution. This shows that the majority of respondents are aware and the information is well spread amongst the faculty members. However, 29% of the respondents are not aware of the training programmes. It would be a good idea if the institution can use different media like email, poster, internal mail, staff portals and website to communicate training programmes to their staff members. Inability to attend training programs starts with unawareness of staff members. While 68% of the respondents have attended one or more trainings since joining the institution, 32% have not attended. The importance of training should not be underestimated and the institution should reach to 32% of their staff members who do not attend trainings. Some of the respondents listed some trainings they can remember that they attended.

Training opportunities at the institution

Some of the trainings listed are telephone etiquette, E-learning (blackboard) training, research training, leadership program, basic microscopy, supervision workshop, teaching and learning workshop, induction, academic literacies, journal article, writing workshop, postgraduate research training, statistical training, endnote training, skills development, leadership/management training and project management. Close scrutiny of these trainings shows that they are related to the work of teaching and research in a university. It also shows that the institution has good training programs for their staff members which can help them excel in their work. In 30% of the respondents claimed that they attended, on average, no training at the institution in a year. 30% may be considered high as all academic staff members should be trained at least once a year to improve their performance at work. This figure is high. This shows that the institution is not consistent in the training of its staff members. 35% attended an average of two trainings per year and 19% attended average of

one per year. Only 3% of the respondents attended more than five trainings per year with 1% attending five trainings per year. It was further found that 7% and 6% of the respondents attend 3 and 4 trainings per year on average respectively. 35% of the respondents agreed that they receive training necessary to do their job satisfactorily. 12% strongly agreed to this. 26% are neutral, 18% disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed. The median is 19 which is neutral. The skewness is a positive value of 0.68 which indicates a skewness to the right of the mean. The kurtosis of negative 0.92 indicate a flatter distribution. This shows that majority of staff members agreed that they receive training necessary to their job satisfactorily. In the study, 36% and 12% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that short-term training programmes are more effective than long-term training programmes. Only 6% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this statement with 15% disagreed. However, 31% of the respondents are neutral and indifferent to this. This shows that staff members generally prefer short-term training. 35% and 16% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the duration of training is appropriate for effective training to take place. From the results, 31% of the respondents were neutral. In the study, 14% and 5% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Financial advantages and job security

The majority of the respondents disagreed that they have financial advantage because of training compared to their colleagues. In the study, 37% of the respondents disagreed. It shows that the institution does not place any financial incentive to training. From the results, 15% strongly disagreed. Only small percentage of 23%, 16% and 9% are neutral, agreed and strongly agreed. The majority of the academic staff members support that their performance at work is influenced positively by the trainings provided. From the study, 41% of the respondents agreed to this. From the results, 12% of the respondents strongly agreed. 24% of the respondents were neutral. In the study, only 19% and 5% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The priority that management gives to training of its academic staff may not be enough. In the study, 31% of the respondents were neutral. 26% of the respondents and 10% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. This shows that the institution needs to prioritise the training of its academic staff members because this is always necessary for any job position. The majority of academic staff do not believe that the training received is enough for their job security. In the study, 12% of the respondents strongly disagreed. From the results, 25% of the respondents disagreed while 31% of the respondents was neutral. Only 25% and 6% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. An organisation should ensure that it gives its staff relevant training to ensure their job security. The majority of academic staff members feel that they have adequate training to reduce anxiety and frustration they might have at work. From the study, 38% and 6% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that they have adequate training to reduce their anxiety and frustrations. From the results, 24% of the respondents was neutral while 27% and 6% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This shows that the institution takes the emotional stability of its academic staff very serious.

Emotional stability

Emotional stability is one of the requirements of a good lecturer and researcher. The majority of the academic staff believe that training helps them to understand their work better. In the study, 54% of the respondents agreed to this and 21% of the respondents strongly agreed. Only 4% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 6% of the respondents disagreed.

However, only 16% of the respondents were neutral. This simply shows that the institution gives training that helps academic staff understand what they need to do.

Communication on training programs

Availability of training should always be communicated to academic staff members anytime there is an opportunity for training - 23% and 6% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that they were informed about the availability of training to enhance their job performance. From the study, 29% of respondents representing 29% were neutral. Also, the study found that 31% and 11% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed. It shows that a section of academic staff members was not always informed about relevant training to help them. The institution needs to change this approach to training. Only words of mouth may not be enough. From the study, only 19% of the respondents and 4% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that training programs objectives and the institution's goals are linked. It was found that 32% of the respondents was neutral. 33% and 11% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. The majority of the respondents agreed that they were promptly trained when new responsibility is given to them. In the study, 7% of the respondents strongly agreed to this. Also, 40% of the respondents agreed. From the results, 22% of the respondents was neutral. It was found from the results, 28% and 3% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. It may be true that the institution has training for a section of staff when accepting new responsibility like head of department (HOD), deans and directors who are in management but may neglect other staff members. The majority of the respondents agreed that their line manager gives them enough support to attend training sessions. The institution's policy about training may oblige managers from preventing staff members from attending trainings. From the results, 31% of the respondents agreed with this. Also, 15% of the respondents strongly agreed. In the study, 28% of the respondents were neutral. Also, 18% and 8% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The institution needs to encourage line managers to release staff members to attend training. Some of the respondents indicated some areas they feel that they need to be trained to titivate their performance at work. These areas are vocal skills, building confidence, preparedness training, statistics, information technology and other computer application packages like Pastel accounting.

Academic staff believe that employees are more productive after training

No respondent strongly disagreed. Only 3% of the respondents disagreed. In the results, 22% of the respondents was neutral. From the study, 46% of the respondents agreed while 39% of the respondents strongly agreed. This shows that academic staff recognise the importance of training in increasing their productivity. It was observed that a high number of employees at the institution agreed that employees are more committed to their jobs after training. None of the academic staff strongly disagreed with the statement. Only 6% of the respondents disagreed with 22% of the respondents being neutral. In the study, 54% and 18% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. In the study, 19% of the respondents strongly agreed that employees are motivated to work because of training. Also, 49% of the respondents agreed with 25% of the respondents being neutral. From the results, 5% of the respondents disagreed and 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed. Even though few respondents do not feel motivated due to training, it can have an enormous effect on the productivity of academic staff since the attitude and zeal towards work of every employee contributes to the overall growth of the university. It is suggested that the institution should use training as a tool for their staff retention. It would be a good management strategy to have

good training programs to develop staff members and retain them. With this, productivity will increase. They will be encouraged to have good values and more benefit for the institution. The values of the institution are supported by academic staff after being trained. From the results, 20% of the respondents strongly agreed and 47% of the respondents agreed that employees want to support the institution's values after being trained. From the results, 27% of the respondents were neutral. In the study, of the respondents disagreed with 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was established from this study that most of the institution's academic employees are not involved in research and some of them indicated that they are ready to be involved if properly trained. It would be a good option for the institution to train academic staff members so they can be acceptable as academic staff. They should be involved in research, not only in teaching, as expected of them. Research can be made simplified with adequate training programs. In the study, 29% of employees claim they are not aware of any training program to help them perform better at work. It would be expedient for the institution to organise different training programs that can help academic staff members to better perform at work. It can be concluded that the first study objectives of determining the training programs that are currently in place for academic staff at the institution was achieved. In this study, the involvement of academic staff in research was investigated to be limited by training as some of them noted. It was established that academic staff attended at least one training program since joining the institution. Many of them are also aware of training programs at the institution. The second study objective was also achieved. The adequacy of training program for lecturers at the institution was investigated. The academic staff agreed that they receive training necessary to do their job satisfactorily. It was pointed out that majority of the academic staff members prefer short-term training to long-term training programs. They also indicated their preference for adequate training durations. This study also discusses the financial advantages associated with training for academic staff members. Available training programs for the academic staff members were evaluated. The performance of staff members after training was also investigated. Their job security in relation to training received was assessed and they claimed to have adequate training to reduce anxiety and frustration they may have at work. Training gaps that exist at the institution within academic staff members were evaluated as the third study objective. It was found that most academic staff members feel that training help them to understand their work better. Some of them claim that they were not informed about the availability of training to enhance their job performance. The objectives and institutional goals are investigated if they are linked with training programmes for academic staff. It was found that majority of academic staff members agreed to this. It was discovered that some academic staff were not promptly trained when new responsibility is given to them. The majority of academic staff agreed that they are supported by their line manager to attend training. The third objective of this study was achieved. The last study objective was achieved with the investigation of training improvement for academic staff members. It was established that employees are more productive after training. They also believe they are more committed to their jobs after training. Motivation to their work after training was assessed and it was found to have high positive correlation with training. Most of them agreed that they are encouraged to be in continuous employment with the institution because of training and they are ready to support its values after being trained. In this study, all the four study objectives were achieved satisfactorily thereby achieving the aim of this study to evaluate the current training program in place for academic staff at the South African tertiary institution.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is recommended that relationships between different factors contributing to staff development and appropriate staff training at the institution should be investigated. This study was limited to academic staff members. It would be important to extend this study to all members of staff at the institution – academic and non-academic. The relationship between staff throughput and students pass rates in the academic staff members' classes can be investigated. Also, effect of delay in training of staff members when new responsibilities are given should be investigated. Finally, quantification of economic gains of training of staff members should be done by looking at costs of training and net gain from training of staff members. Proper and timely training will assist the institution's academic staff members to sustain their values and integrity as lecturers. It will also help to develop staff members and invariably the university. The lecturers will be proud to be associated with the institution and be comfortable working for a long time there resulting in staff retention. Many more academic staff should be involved in the research enterprise because of training.

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