

Needs Assessment of University Teachers for Professional Enhancement

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Abstract

The purpose of the Study was to explore the training needs for university teaching staff. The sample comprised of randomly selected twenty percent teaching staff of ten selected universities, degree-awarding institutions from public sector and forty percent teaching staff of ten selected universities from the private sector. A self developed Questionnaire consisting of forty-one items to be responded on five-point Likert scale and two open-ended questions were used to collect data. The analysis of the data revealed that university teachers need the training in the following areas: Philosophy of Education, Islamic Philosophy of Education, Educational psychology, Research techniques, Professional trends Professional competencies, Professional attitude, Professional Ethics, Global innovations in teaching strategies, Classroom Management, Counselling and Guidance, Student discipline, Communication skills, Learning Theories and Supervision. So it is recommended that the areas mentioned above may be included in the training curriculum of university teachers.

Keywords: Higher education, Need for training, Pakistan, Staff development, University teachers

1. Introduction

Since the establishment of the country in 1947, little attention has ever been paid to develop the capability of the people in Pakistan (Ahmad, 2010). The neglect of human resources development has lead to the non-utilization or under-utilization of material resources of the country. Only an educated and a skilled population will be able to solve the multitude of economic problems being faced by the country at present. Education is a process to give intellectual, moral, and social instruction especially as a formal prolonged process, which includes training, or instruction for a particular purpose (Anjum, 1998). Teachers represent the ideals and aspirations of the nation and owe to it the moral and mental accountability of equipping the youth for active participation in the high enterprise of creating a social order, which shall dispense equal justice to all and sundry (Kakkar, 1996). Higher Education enhances social, cultural and economic development, active citizenship and ethical values. Institutions of higher education have the main responsibility for equipping individuals with advanced knowledge and skills required for positions of responsibility in government, business, and the professions (Isani and Virk, 2004). The training of high level scientific manpower is a matter of vital national concern in every country. The development of higher education is thus connected to economic development (Sheikh, 1998). A country's social and economic development depends on the nature and level of higher education. The claim of McGill (1992) that "in the developed countries the role of higher education in production of high quality human capital is quite evident" is valid and reliable. The role of the university in a developing country must be to educate its people and produce scholars who in return should be able to contribute to the overall human development (Wickrama, 1996).

The teacher must have not only a mastery of the content and curriculum, an appreciation of the various forms of standards, an awareness of assessment, and the ability to organize the lessons, but also be able to engage students-- to know them well enough to make appropriate instructional decisions. It is through *pedagogy*, the science of teaching, that the skilful teacher ties these elements together. The ways in which a teacher interacts with students and organizes instruction are critically important aspects of helping each child learn (Tharp, 1999; Tharp et al, 2003).

The success of reforms in an educational institution depends upon the quality of teacher, which in turn depends to a great extent on the quality of teacher education. Staff development aims at building and promoting an effective personality through learning and trait strengthening programmes. It includes development of skill oriented vision, mental poise, unbiased perception, vigilance, drive, communication skills, team building, competence in decision making and problem solving capabilities, honesty etc, and the art of encouraging as well as tolerating different viewpoints, including dissent in the staff (Sisodia, 2000).

The quality of higher education largely depends upon the quality of staff in higher educational institutions. The role of staff is pivotal for the achievement of goals of an institution or an organization. A high quality and well-motivated teaching staff is essential in building the excellence in education. Staff development is the sum of activities that enhance the knowledge, skills, performance, vision and understanding of the staff. In educational institutions staff development programme improves the communication skills, classroom behaviour, teaching methods and thinking of the teacher. The purpose of staff development is to promote the quality of pupil's learning by different teaching strategies.

The success of many innovations depends heavily upon the skills of teachers. As far as Pakistan is concerned, there was no systematic effort, in the past to gear up the training of university teaching staff. Certain programmes at Federal and provincial level were started but very soon were shut down due to different constraints. So it was the need of time to conduct an analytical survey in this regard. The main objectives of this study were:

- i. To explore the training needs for university teaching staff.
- ii. To identify the areas in which development is needed by the teaching staff of the universities in Pakistan.
- iii. Formulation of recommendations for staff development in Pakistan to improve education at higher level.

2. Research Methodology

The main focus of this study was on "training needs assessment for university teachers". The study was descriptive/survey type. The following procedure was adopted for study.

2.1 Population

Population of the study comprised of University teachers, who were readily involved in teaching process in public and private universities.

2.2 Sample

The sample consisted of 830 university teachers. There are more than hundred universities in public and private sector in Pakistan. It was very difficult for the researcher to visit each university of Pakistan. Hence twenty universities i-e ten from public sector and ten from private sector were randomly selected and included in the sample. Twenty percent of the teaching staff of public universities and forty percent staff of the private universities were taken for study

2.3 Research Instrument

A self developed Questionnaire consisting of forty-one items to be responded on five-point Likert scale and two open-ended questions were used to collect data. After going through the related literature, consisting of books, official documents, reports, plans and conference proceedings the researcher prepared questionnaire for data collection. Before the collection of data at large scale the questionnaire was pilot tested. For the pilot testing four universities were taken. The researcher personally visited and administered relevant questionnaires among 60 teachers. They were requested to give their suggestions freely for the improvement of the questionnaire. They were requested to amend the questions, in format and language to make the questions simple and understandable. Accordingly questionnaire was revised by incorporating their suggestions. Then the final version of questionnaire was developed.

2.4 Data Collection

The data collection stage was very difficult for the researcher. He had to visit most of the sample universities again and again. The researcher distributed questionnaire to 830 respondents but the researcher was able to get response from 800 respondents.

3. Results

This table 1 indicates that the trend of respondents is towards 'strongly agree'. So it indicates that the training is essential for university teachers and they need pre-job training also. The results of table support Noureen (2003)

who has found that staff development programmes are necessary for teachers. The results also support Sultana (2004) who found that training is necessary for teachers during job.

This table 2 depicts that the trend of respondents is towards 'strongly agree'. So it indicates that the training of the university staff is desired in the field of Philosophy of Education, Islamic Philosophy of Education, Educational psychology, Research techniques, Professional trend Professional competencies, Professional attitude, Professional Ethics ,Global innovations in teaching strategies, Classroom Management, Counselling and Guidance, Student discipline, Communication skills, Learning Theories and Supervision

This table 3 indicates that the trend of respondents is towards 'strongly agree'. So it indicates that the teachers are anxious to get training in preparation of instructional material, lesson planning, use of A.V. aids and the development of time table.

This table 4 indicates that the trend of respondents is towards 'strongly agree'. So it indicates that the teachers want to get training in test formation, preparation of question papers, marking of tests, interpretation of results, feedback based on evaluation. The training is also desired in the field of use of library.

This table 5 shows that the trend of respondents is towards 'strongly agree'. So it indicates that the teachers are anxious to learn about computer, its hardware, software, and how to use the internet.

This table 6 indicates that the trend of respondents is towards 'strongly agree'. So it indicates that the teachers are anxious to learn about how the funds are generated, how the budget is prepared, what the proper way of utilization of the budget is, what are the audit requirements are.

4. Conclusion

Majority of the respondents admitted that professional training is essential for staff of higher education institutions. Training typically provide to employees the knowledge and skills needed to do a particular task, and also change their attitude in favour of their performance. The Academic staff of Higher Education Institutions need training in the fields of Philosophy of Education, Islamic Philosophy of Education, Educational psychology, Research techniques, Professional trend Professional competencies, Professional attitude, Professional Ethics, Global innovations in teaching strategies, Classroom Management, Counselling and Guidance, Student discipline, Communication skills, Learning Theories and Supervision

It is concluded that the teachers are anxious to get training in preparation of instructional material, lesson planning, use of A.V. aids and time table development, test formation, preparation of question papers, marking of tests, interpretation of results and feedback based on evaluation. The training is also desired in the field of use of library, computer, about how the funds are generated, how the budget prepared, what the proper way of utilization of the budget is, and what the audit requirements are.

5. Recommendations

1. Staff development is primarily concerned with the identification, formation and enhancement of skills. Professional training is essential for staff of higher education institutions. Training provides knowledge and skills needed to do a particular task, and also change the attitude in favour of their performance. So it is recommended that training program must be declared compulsory for the teaching staff of higher education institutions.
2. It has been proved in the study that the teachers of higher education were deficient in the fields of Philosophy of Education, Islamic Philosophy of Education, Educational psychology, Research techniques, Professional trend, Professional competencies, Professional attitude, Professional Ethics, Global innovations in teaching strategies, Classroom Management, Counselling and Guidance, Student discipline, Communication skills, Learning Theories and Supervision. So it is recommended that all of the above mentioned areas must be covered.
3. Institutions play vital role in the grooming of individuals, and the practical things are very essential for the performance of the daily institutional work. The study showed that preparation of instructional material, lesson planning, use of audio visual aids and the development of time table are the desired areas, where the university teachers need effective training.
4. Test formation, preparation of question papers, marking of tests, interpretation of results and feedback based on evaluation are the areas which are not given importance at university level. But it is very important to develop expertise in these areas. Training workshops should be arranged in this regard.
5. Computer is a great need of time, without computer knowledge one cannot survive in the field of higher education but most of teaching staff at higher education level do not know even basics of computer. So it is

recommended that there should be a compulsory training in M.S word, Excel, power point and internet usage to make the staff compatible with the modern word.

6. The funds are like blood to run the institution. How to use them legally and properly, how to make budgets These are the areas which demand training, so it is recommended that a comprehensive training should be arranged to familiarize the higher education teaching staff with financial matters.

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Table 1. Need of Training (percentage frequencies to the nearest whole number)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Professional training is essential for staff of Higher Education Institutions (universities)	81	14	1	1	3
Pre-job training is necessary after selection.	38	35	15	11	1
Need assessment is necessary before launching the training programme.	59	34	6	0	1

Table 2. Identified Fields of Training (percentage frequencies to the nearest whole number)

Academic staff of Higher Education Institutions need training in the fields of	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Philosophy of Education.	44	47	6	3	0
Islamic Philosophy of Education	49	41	7	2	1
Educational psychology	47	45	7	1	0
Research techniques	63	35	2	0	0
Professional trends	43	47	9	1	0
Professional competencies	55	38	7	0	0
Professional attitude	47	40	9	4	0
Professional Ethics	34	54	11	1	0
Global innovations in teaching strategies	62	32	6	0	0
Classroom Management	33	44	12	6	5
Counseling and Guidance	37	44	11	5	3
Student discipline	40	54	4	2	0
Communication skills	57	38	5	0	0
Learning Theories	38	43	11	6	2
Supervision	35	48	15	2	0

Table 3. Training in Instructional Development (percentage frequencies to the nearest whole number)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Preparation of Instructional Material	36	48	14	2	0
Preparation of Lesson Plan	38	43	11	6	2
Use of A.V. Aids	37	53	9	1	0
Time Table planning	39	50	7.5	2.5	1

Table 4. Training in Test Construction (percentage frequencies to the nearest whole number)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Preparation of question papers	32	60	6	2	0
Marking of tests	32	54	10	4	0
Interpretation of results	44	44	9	3	0
Feedback based on evaluation	44	45	8	3	0
Use of Library	53	40	5	2	0

Table 5. Training in Computer usage (percentage frequencies to the nearest whole number)

Computer usage	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
b. Software	44	41	6	9	0
c. Internet usage	55	35	7	3	0

Table 6. Financial Matters (percentage frequencies to the nearest whole number)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Training is needed in Generating funds	22	45	20	10	3
Training is needed in Budget preparation	33	44	14	8	1
Training is needed in Budget utilization	41	40	12	5	2
Training is needed in Audit of funds	37	39	15	8	1