

A Need Analysis for Training Programmes to the Administrative Staff in the University System of Sri Lanka

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Introduction

Higher Education system in Sri Lanka can consider as an important area in the country in term of its contribution to the national development. Higher education sector human resource mainly consists with academics, non-academics and students in higher education institutions. Administrative officers play a significant role in the non- academic sector of the university system as specially defined in the University Act.

University administration provides the matrix which binds together various integral and important parts of the university. It also lubricates the machinery of governance to sustain a smooth and effective operation (Duze, 2012). Higher education would not function without committed, hardworking administrators who take a broad view of the institution's interests. At present university administration in all over the world is in a changing environment, with increasing challenges. When consider the Sri Lankan situation high competition for entering state universities, emerging private education institutions, employability of graduates and improved technology are the major changes of the education sector in Sri Lanka.

Research problem

University system of Sri Lanka is run over the main three pillars; that consists by academics, administrators and students in the universities. These three pillars should equally be developed through proper planning in order to achieve the long term progress and sustainability of the system. Administrative staff has to respond to many pressures with a heavy work load for a smooth management approach to running universities in efficient and effectiveness manner. Administrators have pivotal influence on university policies and general functioning of the system. Therefore, it is of important to ensure parallel growth and development on both the academic and administrative staff for the sustainable development of any Higher Educational Institution (HEI).

Objectives

To analyze the impact of present training programmes of the administrative staff of UGC/Universities

To identify the most suitable training programmes for administrative staff attached to UGC/Universities

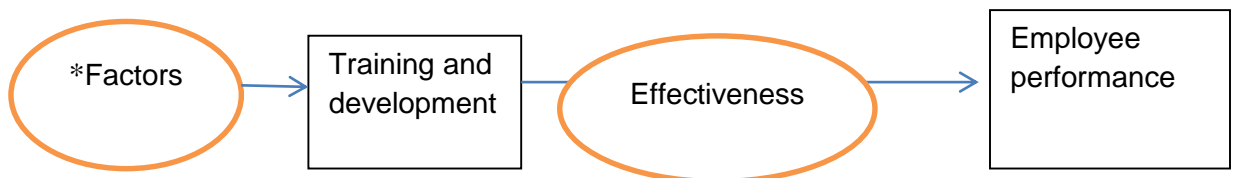
Significance of the study

This study has a great benefit to the all levels of university administrative staff. These benefits directly targeted to the administrative staff immediately as described earlier through different perspectives. These includes that administrative staff will improve their

positive attitudes towards quality training to improve the present work and enhance the future career as well. The recommendations of this research help universities and planners of higher education sector; the results of this study further help to each Higher Educational Institutions to incorporate into future plans.

Methodology

The study was a survey type in the form of cross sectional study in which data were collected once across a population through random sampling technique. The population for this research is the administrative staff of the universities. For this research sample size is 60 employees of fifteen (15) state universities. Researcher collected the data through a questionnaire. The study was done using the qualitative research method. The scope of the study was limited to the selected administrative officers in Higher Educational Institutes which come under the purview of the UGC. The questionnaire used to allow the response of the respondents in a standard way, unbiased approach and objective oriented. In questionnaire designing, slightly different questions and scaling questions included for each group of the sample considering the level of perception and contribution in context of training development. In addition, it was used the personal experience and observations of the researcher working for the regulatory body of the university system of Sri Lanka. Secondary data which is available in the Internet, Press releases, Articles, Journals, Books, and other published documentations were also used when and where necessary. The collected data was analyzed using excel worksheets, graphs and charts.



Independent variables

Dependent variable

*Factors – Organizational and personal

Results and Discussion

Employees of the UGC and Universities under purview of it are between the ages of 22 and 30 years and ages of 46-60 are in 6 percent and 8 percent of the respectively employed while ages of 31-45 are belong up to 86 percent of those recruited for the administrative positions. These young employees working in the universities are mostly in administrative positions but yet they have an opportunity to grow to higher positions within the system. Many junior officers said that they were not given orientation neither introduced to the system when they were appointed to the universities. They were asked to perform their jobs from the first day of appointment without proper induction or training. That is a big challenge for them as well as a prevailing problem in the system from long time. UGC and Universities employ a total of five hundred and fourteen employees with a fairly larger proportion being female employees. According to the data gathered 55 percent are female employees and 45 percent are males.

The study findings reveal that training improves employee performance. However, a few participants were not agreed and not satisfactory with present methods of selection of candidates for training. With present mode of training only a few participants agreed that employees gain new knowledge after training. Moreover, only a few participants agreed that lack of resources affects training, which essentially means that most participants believe that lack of resources does not affect training. In addition, the study findings reveal that training improves employee morale, and the majority of participants agreed that training motivates employees to enhance their performance. The majority of participants agreed that training increases organizational productivity through employee performance. Frequent of training, relevance of training and development programmes to improve the knowledge and skills, attitudes about training programmes, impact of training and development programmes, and productivity of the training programmes are organizational factors which have direct link with stimulating staff for obtaining training programmes. On the other hand types of training programmes, nature of the training programme, duration of the training and development programmes can consider as more personal factors which also have direct relationship with stimulating staff for obtaining training programme.

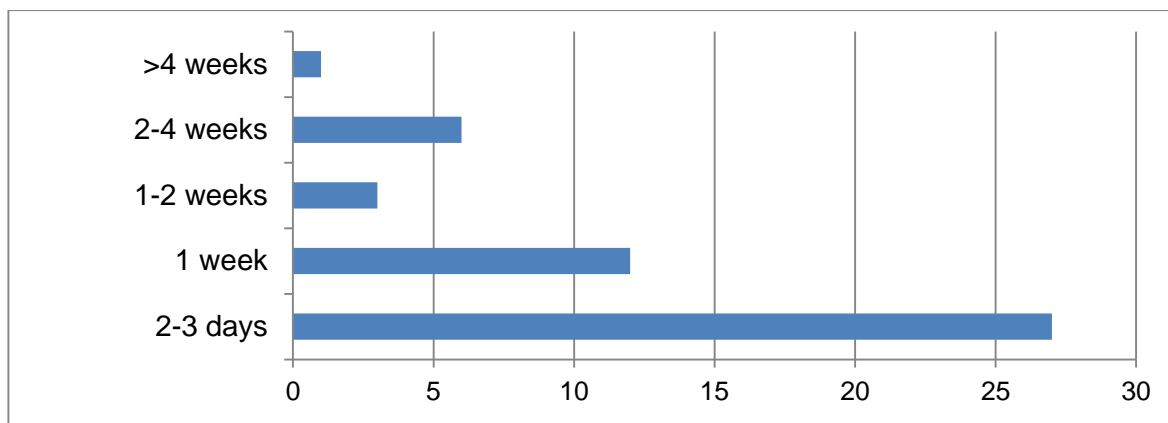
Figure 1: Types of Training Programmes



Source: Research Data 2016

As results, of the study it has revealed that staff in the UGC and Universities more likely to receive soft skills training, leadership training, problem solving training, hand on experience training and interpersonal skills training. Also, they more prefer to get customized training programmes than Taylor made training programmes so as they are more confidence while performing his/her task after training.

Figure 2: Preferable Time for Training



Source: Research data 2016

Duration of the programme has a significant influence on the attendance and willingness to participate; the staff more likely for having one week training programme and less than four weeks training programmes. It has discovered that personal matters and financial problems are not barriers for having training programmes for the staff of the UGC and universities. It has noted that most of the staff willing to get trainings on modernized higher education systems which are practiced in developed or developing countries like Japan, Singapore and Australia. However, lack of suitable training and development programmes for the university administrative staff has identified as the biggest issue in the present scenario.

Recommendation

In terms of the study findings, the recommendations are made such as training programmes should continuously be provided to the administrative staff to get more productive. Also, Universities should improve training programmes so that staff acquires new knowledge during training. Universities should have compulsory training programmes for all newly recruited staff in order to improve the knowledge and understanding of long term objectives of the higher education system. Universities should be provided more training programmes on soft skills training, leadership training, problem solving training, hand on experience training and interpersonal skills training.

Keywords: Higher Educational Institutions; Training and Development; Administrative Staff; Productivity

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