

Faculty Training and Development of Higher Education Institutions in Nagaland: Barriers Faced

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ABSTRACT: The 21st century is observed as a knowledge-based society with the necessity for knowledge-workers. The emerging trends and changes in Higher Education have upshot the advancement and development of teaching skills a priority. Faculty training and development hence, focus on the overall growth and improvement of professional competency of faculty members. The study aimed to identify the barriers faced by faculty members of Higher Education Institutions of Nagaland to attend Training and Development programs. The study employed a descriptive survey method and primary data was collected through structured questionnaires using five-point Likert scale. Purposive sampling method was used for sample selection. The data obtained were analysed using Friedman Test. The result indicated that there is a significant difference between the mean ranks among the barriers faced by the faculty of HEI's in Nagaland to attend training and development programs.

KEYWORDS: Faculty, Training, Development, Higher Education, Barriers.

I. INTRODUCTION

With the growing demand and major transformation of Higher Education, high quality teaching- learning environment is the need of the hour, as the outcome manifest a holistic development of an individual student. Education not only aims to impart the established facts and knowledge but also to inculcate independent and critical thinking on the part of the learners. What and how students understand and comprehend leaning is largely affected by the knowledge composition of the faculty members. The changing and emerging trends in Higher Education have also made the development of teaching skills a priority. There exists an emerging consensus by educational policy makers, researchers and practitioners that faculty professional development is of fundamental significance for any educational Institution. Also,

many researches emphasize on the central purpose of faculty training and development activities in enhancing the quality of teaching-learning. Faculty training and development hence, focus on the progress of professional competency of faculty members.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Highly motivated and supportive professional culture ensures high quality faculty members which are essential in building excellence in Higher Education Institutions (**World Bank, 1994**). It is widely recognized in business as well as in profession that the knowledge and skills of employees need to be continuously enhanced to be effectively productive. It has been established that continuous faculty training and development are essential if faculty members are to effectively execute their duties in an ever changing teaching-learning environment (**Atsenga, 2002**). However, in the process of continual training and development activities, especially in Higher Education Institutions, a majority of faculty members are unable to or, faculty members are able to participate only in few training and development programs, out of the numerable opportunities presented. Thus, it was found imperative to identify the barriers faced by the faculty members to attend training and development programs.

III. REVIEW OF LETERATURE

Researches advocate that faculty members must attend training and development initiatives to receive the benefits. However, there were several reasons owing to which faculty members were unable to attend. Studies conducted identified that the level of intensity of participation in faculty training and development activities are partially a function of the support that faculty members get to participate in the programs or the various type of barriers faculty members encounter (**Avalos, 2011; Jurasaitė-Harbison & Rex, 2010; Mahmoudia &**

Özkana, 2015). The major reasons like time and scheduling were identified to be the most challenging barriers (Ambergey, 2006; Dailey et al., 2014; Steinert et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2012). Several potential barriers like attitude and misconceptions of faculty members, lack of sufficient support from the Institutions, relative shortage of research on teaching-improvement methods was found to obstruct participation in training and development programs (Skeff et al., 1997). Lack of funds was identified as one factor that limited faculty member positive participation in training and development programs (Omoro, 2001). Another study observed that lack of transportation and poor road condition during rainy seasons restricted the participation of faculty member in training and development programs organized (Talam, 1989). Further studies cited barriers include time, age, unsupportive managers, staff attitude, availability of programs, work pressure, family commitments, unsafe environments, and participation on own time accessibility, staff motivation, marketing and advertising, and financial issues (Drage, 2010; Fernandez-Manzanal et al., 2015; Geldenhuys & Oosthuizen, 2015). Hence, the availability of cooperation, time, enduring commitment, and resources are important for the effective and successful implementation of professional development and participation (Maria & García, 2016). North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) proposed the need for the educational community to shift away from prior faculty professional development models that take place only on workdays, or on weekends. The reallocation of resources particularly time was stressed with regard to overcome the barrier faced. Furthermore, the reorganization of the faculty member's duties and assignments to create "mental

space" was highly recommended to overcome the barrier of non-participation in training and development programs (Drage, 2010).

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To identify the barriers faced by faculty members to attend training and development programs.

V. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H₀: There is no significant difference in the mean rank towards the barriers faced by faculty to attend training and development programs

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study focused on identifying the barriers faced by faculty members to attend training and development programs hence, a descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Questionnaires were administered to all HEI's in Nagaland: 50 Private Colleges, 16 Government College, 03 Private Universities, 01 Institute of National Importance and 01 Central University. Purposive sampling method was employed for sample selection. A total of 396 responses were found to be valid for analysis. The responses were recorded on a five point Likert scale (SA=> Strongly Agree (5): A=> Agree (4): NAD=> Neither Agree nor Disagree (3): D=> Disagree (2), SD=> Strongly Disagree (1)). Data obtained were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. The following statistical models were employed: descriptive statistics to find the characteristics of variables and Signed Rank Friedman Test to identify the difference between the mean ranks among the barriers faced by the faculty of HEI's in Nagaland to attend training and development programs.

VII. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Barriers faced by Faculty to attend Training and Development Programs

Item Scale	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max.
BO1	396	4.17	2.074	2	43
BO2	396	3.92	.736	2	5
BO3	396	4.10	.681	2	5
BO4	396	3.14	1.042	1	5
BO5	396	2.94	1.000	1	5

BO6	396	3.86	.688	1	5
BO7	396	3.61	.739	1	5
BO8	396	3.58	.579	2	5
BO9	396	3.66	.706	1	5
BO10	396	3.05	.885	2	5
BP11	396	3.63	.789	1	5
BO12	396	2.82	.951	1	5
BO13	396	3.66	.734	1	5
BO14	396	3.53	.754	2	5

The above Table 1 presents the descriptive statistic analysis of the barriers faced by the faculty members to attend various Training and Development Programs. The mean ranks of the

various barriers faced are represented below in Table 2 and Friedman Test Statistics^a result is presented below Table 3.

Table 2: Mean Rank Table for Barriers faced by Faculty to attend Training and Development Programs

Item Scale	Statements	Mean Rank
BO1	Training program schedule conflicted with work schedule	9.95
BO2	Classes missed to be rescheduled on return after attending training program	9.08
BO3	Non-availability of desired training program	9.92
BO4	Non- grant of leave to attend training program	6.03
BO5	Leave period for attending training program considered as loss of pay	5.34
BO6	Lack of desired in-house training and development programs	8.76
BO7	Location of training program was inconvenient	7.77
BO8	Training program fees were expensive	7.45
BO9	Location of desired training and development program was inconvenient	7.85
BO10	Non –acceptance to the applied desired training program	5.41
BP11	Training program expenses to be borne by the participant	7.75
BO12	Lack of encouragement /support from the Institution	4.70
BO13	Lack of incentives for attending training program	7.82
BO14	Lack of awareness of the availability of training programs	7.17

Table 3: Friedman Test Statistics^a for Barriers Faced by Faculty to attend Training and Development Programs

N	396
Chi- Square	1142.867
df	13
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Friedman Test

The above Table 3 provides the test statistics (χ^2) for barriers faced by faculty members with “chi-square” value of 1142.867. The degree of freedom is shown at a value of 13 and the significance level at .000. Since the p value is less

than .05, the result show that there is a significant difference between the mean ranks among the barriers faced by the faculty. Thus, the difference in the mean ranks among the barriers faced by the faculty members to attend training and development programs is shown below in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean Rank Order of Barriers face by Faculty to attend Training and Development Programs

Item Scale	Barriers	Rank
BO1	Training program schedule conflicted with work schedule	1 st
BO3	Non-availability of desired training program within the Institution	2 nd
B02	Classes missed to be rescheduled on return after attending training program	3 rd
BO6	Lack of desired in-house training and development programs	4 th
BO9	Location of desired training and development program was inconvenient	5 th
B013	Lack of incentives for attending training and development program	6 th
BO7	Need for permission to avail leave for attending training program	7 th
BO11	Training program expenses to be borne by the participant	8 th
BO8	Training program fees were expensive	9 th
BO14	Lack of awareness of the availability of training and development programs	10 th
BO4	Non- grant of leave to attend training and development program	11 th
BO10	Non –acceptance to the applied desired training program	12 th
BO5	Leave period for attending training program considered as loss of pay	13 th
BO12	Lack of encouragement /support from the Institution	14 th

From the study conducted it was found that the faculty respondents encountered barriers to participate in training and development programs. Out of the fourteen barriers, the five major barriers perceived by faculty member were:

1. Training program schedule conflicted with work schedule.

It was found that all of the faculty respondents generally agreed that the training program schedule conflicted with work schedule which prevented the faculty members to attend any training program. All educational institutions normally follow a class time table scheduled for five days a week and few Institutions scheduled for six days a week, which kept the faculty members engaged in their classroom activities and resulted in conflict with the scheduled training and development programs. Though majority of the Institutions do provide summer and winter breaks, during which the faculty members could attend but it was observed that the required or desired training and development program were not scheduled during those lean period. Thus, to avoid the mentioned obstacle the HEI's should focus on conducting in-house training and development programs so that the barrier is reduced or eliminated.

2. Non-availability of desired training program within the Institution.

It was found that the second perceived barrier faced by faculty respondents was non-availability of the desired training program, which prevented the faculty members to attend training and development programs. The various critical areas where faculty members require intense training and

development are: Instructional Development, Professional Development, Organizational Development, Career Development and Personal Development. These areas of development help a faculty member in Higher Education to develop their teaching skills, curriculum design and collaborative education research and hence, enhance the Institutions' environment for imparting quality education. However, in the context of Higher Education Institutions in Nagaland, since majority of the training and development programs conducted were workshops, seminars and conferences, it may not have been sufficient enough to fill the gap of training needs for a faculty member in the mentioned areas of development. Thus, a variety of training and development programs need to be organized encompassing all the essential areas of development within the Institution as training is said to be more effective if it is conducted where it is to be practiced.

3. Classes missed to be rescheduled on return after attending training program.

It was found that the third perceived barrier by faculty respondents was to take additional classes on return after attending training program. All Institutions ensures completion of syllabus as per the academic calendar scheduled, which is identified as the main responsibility of a faculty member. As a result of which faculty members were instructed to reschedule the classes missed during the training program attended and ensure completion of syllabus of the respective subjects taught. Thus, it increased the workload of the faculty members and affected their ability to perform effectively, leading to non-participation in training and development programs, even if desired to participate.

4. Lack of desired In-house desired Training and development programs

It was found that the perceived fourth barrier by the faculty respondents was the lack of in-house desired training and development programs. It was observed that all the HEI's in Nagaland organized mostly workshops, seminars, conferences, and workshops on ICT at the National level. Only a few of the HEI's had organized seminars, conferences and symposium at the International level. Training and development programs like Faculty Development Programs, Faculty Induction Program, Leadership Development Programs, Faculty Retreats, Administrative Training Programs, Skill Development Program and Quality Improvement Programs were conducted by very few where as a majority of the HEI's had never conducted any sort of such training and development programs. All these training and development programs are the major training programs focused at a particular area of improvement with specific objectives that provide hands on learning experiences for the faculty participants to enhance their Skill. However, seminars, conferences, symposiums are forms of academic instructions, where assigned readings are discussed, questions raised and debates conducted to get better insight into the subject or related subtopics, to increase knowledge. Thus, the HEI's should also focus more on organizing various training and development programs directed towards enhancement of skills of a faculty member.

5. Location of the desired training and development program was inconvenient

It was found that the perceived fifth barrier was related to the location of the desired training and development program which was found to be inconvenient by the faculty members. Desirable training and development programs like orientation program and refresher course are considered as mandatory programs to be attended by faculty members especially those in Government Institution and Central Universities for career advancement. In India, out of the sixty-six UGC-Human Resource Development Centres (previously known as Academic Staff College) established, there are only three UGC-Human Resource Development Centres (previously known as Academic Staff College) located in North-Eastern state of Manipur, Meghalaya and Mizoram. Due to the absence of UGC-HRDC in Nagaland, faculty members had to travel these neighbouring states or even further to other states to attend desired training and development program. However, it may not have been convenient for all those faculty members who

had desired to attend such programs, thus leading to non-participation as a result of the inconvenient location.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

- HEI's should organize more Faculty Development Programs, Skill Development programs, Quality Enhancement Programs, Leadership Development Programs, that specifically focus on the skills required by the faculty members so that customized training program can be developed and conducted.
- HEI's should conduct in-house training and development programs.
- HEI's should conduct in-house training and development programs for the faculty members during lien period (summer/winter vacations) in between the end of the current academic session and before the commencement of new academic session.

IX. CONCLUSION

Faculty training and development has become a well-established and recognized planned activity for ensuring academic excellence and innovation. Faculty training and development programs generate promising outcomes in the learning- teaching practices and in developing faculty skills and enhancing their knowledge. Thus, HEI's and the faculty members need to collaborate and devise effective strategies in response to overcome the barriers restricting in effective participation. Higher Education Institutions need to be proactive throughout the process of identifying and addressing the barriers and commit to create conducive environment that are supportive and focus on motivating for faculty members for effective participation in training and development programs.

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