

Identifying the Faculty Members' Training Needs to Develop Short Courses In-service Training: A Case Study from Mahshahr Islamic Azad University, Iran

IDENTIFIER LA FORMATION DES MEMBRES DU CORPS PROFESSORAL A BESOIN DE DEVELOPPER DES COURS A COURTE DUREE EN SERVICE DE LA FORMATION: UNE ETUDE DE CAS DE MAHSHAHR D'UNIVERSITE ISLAMIQUE D'AZAD, IRAN

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Received 27 September 2011; accepted 2 December 2011

Abstract

The present study aimed at finding out the faculty members' training needs to develop short courses in-service training. To this end, a questionnaire was given to 180 faculty members from Mahshahr Islamic Azad University. Type of applied research and its methods for data collection along with a survey questionnaire which included 30 open response questions were utilized. The validity of the type of content was approved with reliability equivalent to 946 / 0 respectively. For data analysis descriptive statistics (frequency, frequency, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics including t-and variance analysis to answer research questions were used. Research findings showed that the faculty members of Mahshahr Islamic Azad University need training in knowledge (English language training specialist, familiar with the directive of research, training circulars familiar with, familiar with active teaching methods), attitude (interested in participating in TOEFL training courses, participating in national and international conferences, visiting the higher education systems in different countries, and tending to use methods to increase motivation in students) and skill (skills in using electronic journals, skills in writing proposals, ability to use electronic library, the application of scientific methods Essay Writing).

Key words: Needs; Educational needs; Knowledge needs; Attitude required; Skill required

Résumé

La présente étude vise à découvrir la formation des membres du corps professoral a besoin de développer des cours de courte durée en service de la formation. À cette fin, un questionnaire a été remis à 180 membres du corps professoral de l'Université islamique Azad Mahchahr. Type de recherche appliquée et de ses méthodes de collecte de données avec un questionnaire qui comprenait 30 questions à réponses ouvertes ont été utilisées. La validité du type de contenu a été approuvé avec une fiabilité équivalente à 946 / 0 respectivement. Pour les statistiques d'analyse des données descriptives (fréquence, la fréquence, moyenne et écart type) et les statistiques inférentielles incluant t et analyse de la variance pour répondre aux questions de recherche ont été utilisés. Les résultats des recherches ont montré que les membres du corps professoral de l'Université islamique Azad Mahshahr besoin de formation en connaissances (spécialiste anglais de la formation linguistique, familier avec la directive de circulaires de recherche de formation, familier, familier avec les méthodes d'enseignement actives), l'attitude (intéressés à participer à des cours de formation au TOEFL , en participant à des conférences nationales et internationales, en visitant les systèmes d'enseignement supérieur dans différents pays, et qui tend à utiliser des méthodes pour accroître la motivation des étudiants) et des compétences (compétences dans l'utilisation des revues électroniques, les compétences en rédaction de propositions, la capacité à utiliser la bibliothèque électronique, l'application de la rédaction scientifique des méthodes).

Mots clés: Besoins; Besoins éducatifs particuliers; Besoins de connaissances; Attitude requise; Skill requis

Taher Bahrani, Mohammad Hossein Pour, Ahmad Asakereh (2011). Identifying the Faculty Members' Training Needs to Develop Short Courses In-service Training: A Case Study from Mahshahr Islamic Azad University, Iran. *Canadian Social Science*,

7(6), 187-190. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/j.css.1923669720110706.520>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.css.1923669720110706.520>

INTRODUCTION

The higher education system as a system which produces and spreads science has an essential role in the development of any country. In the same line, one of the essential responsibilities of the higher education system is the human resource training in the society, science development, discovering the existing problems and finding possible solutions for them. Accordingly, universities and higher education institutes have three major responsibilities: 1) producing science, 2) educating and training specialized human resources, and 3) providing specialized services to the society.

One of the major factors which cannot be ignored when a higher educational institution is to be established is the trained human resources of that institution which are the "teachers". University teachers are generally respected by the other people in the society because they have gained higher education to be transferred to other people. This transfer of knowledge is an indispensable part of the university teachers' lives. If this transfer of knowledge is not done well, the quality of higher education will be decreased. The quality and quantity of the faculty members can affect the whole system. The quality of a faculty member is measured based on his/her educational background such as the place where the faculty member has studied and his/her desire to do research during his/her education.

Considering the above issues, the main responsibilities of the faculty members can be summarized as teaching, answering the students' questions, supervising thesis, participating in educational meetings, and conducting research projects.

In the same line, Malayeri (2004) conducted a study to find out the in-service training needs of high school teachers in Tehran, Iran. The results of the study showed that high school teachers were significantly in need of in-service training. Accordingly, how teachers were supposed to deal with the students, how teachers were supposed to teach effectively, and how teachers were supposed to increase the motivation in the students were among the courses which received high importance.

Another study was conducted by Bazdar (2002) focused on the educational needs of primary school teachers in Elam, Iran. The results of the study were indicative of the fact that the in-service training needs for both Male and Female teacher were almost the same. As the result of the study, the necessary in-service training courses for the teachers were designed and conducted. In the same line, Bashi (2003) also conducted a study to find out the in-service educational needs of the educational

department staffs in different universities in Tehran, Iran.

The results of the study showed that the educational department staffs were in need of the following in-service training courses: 1) how to work with the computer-based educational related services, 2) how to get familiar with the higher educational systems of various countries, and 3) how to conduct research projects. Accordingly, the study emphasized the point that the educational department staffs were supposed to get familiar with the new computer-based educational services. This was found to be important to provide the necessary service to the students or others.

Other researchers such as Fathi and Ejargah (2008), Pololi et al., (2003), Xu and Chin (2001), have all underscored the role of in-service training of the faculty member to enhance the quality of the educational systems. Moreover, the in-service training should be on-going process because the faculty members need to know about the latest new methods which emerge.

However, no particular study could be found in the area which has investigated the needs for in-services training courses of Islamic Azad University faculty members. In the same line of argumentation, the present research aimed at taking a closer look at the in-service training needs of the faculty members of Mahshahr Islamic Azad University to enhance the educational system.

RESEARCH QUESTION

More particularly, the present research was set to provide answers to the following research question:

1. To what extent do the faculty members of Mahshahr Islamic Azad University are in need of in-service training knowledge courses?
2. To what extent do the faculty members of Mahshahr Islamic Azad University are in need of in-service training emotional courses?
3. To what extent do the faculty members of Mahshahr Islamic Azad University are in need of in-service training professional courses?

Methodology

Participants

The participants of the present research were 180 full-time and part-time faculty members including both males and females aged from 28 to 46 from Mahshahr Islamic Azad University in Iran. The participants were also from various majors including who were selected based on random sampling.

Instrument

The only instrument which was utilized for the data collection procedure was a sample questionnaire about the quality and the quantity of the current in-service training

courses which were taught to the faculty members. Moreover, the questionnaire included some questions in relation to other essential in-service training courses which were not included in the list of the offered courses. It should be mentioned that prior to the data collection procedure, the questionnaire was verified to ensure the internal validity of the data.

Procedure

The first step to take was to verify the questionnaire in terms of validity. Accordingly, the questionnaire was distributed to a sample population of faculty members from various fields including both males and females at Mahshahr Islamic Azad University first. Moreover, an expert in the field of educational sciences gave his input on the questions. After the questionnaires were collected, some minor modifications to the questions were applied accordingly. As a result of the modifications, the validity of the questionnaire was verified.

The second step was concerned with the actual data collection procedure. Accordingly, the questionnaire was given to 180 faculty member from Mahshahr Islamic Azad University. The 180 participants were selected based on random sampling from various fields. In relation to the data collection period, it should be mentioned that all the 180 questionnaires were gathered in a 2 weeks. This is because some of the participants required more time to answer the question. Accordingly, the researchers decided not to put any time pressure. After the questionnaires were gathered, the researchers started tabulating the data according to the research questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In relation to the questions in the questionnaire, it should be mentioned that they were divided into three major categories: 1) knowledge, 2) emotional, and 3) professional.

The knowledge questions which aimed at responding the first research question included, for example, the following questions:

- New methods of measuring the students learnt knowledge
- News methods of studying
- New methods of active teaching
- New methods of doing research
- New regulations of conducting research at university

The emotional questions which aimed at responding the second research question included, for example, the following questions:

- How to have a good relationship with the students/others
- How to increase the motivation in the students
- knowing the psychological theories

- knowing the new educational theories
- Learning English language
- Visiting various universities in various countries
- Participating in various national or international conferences

The professional questions which aimed at responding the third research question included, for example, the following questions:

- The ability to use digital library
- The ability to search for materials in the Internet
- The ability to use the Internet
- The ability to use email
- The ability to write proposal
- The ability to write research papers

Considering the first research question, the data obtained from the questionnaire were indicative of the fact that the participants of the study showed great interest in knowing about the new regulations and rules about how to conduct a research at universities. In fact, the need for knowledge related in-service training courses received equal importance.

In relation to the second research, the data showed that the majority of the participants in the research wanted to take part in various English language courses to improve their English language. This is because most of the teachers from other faculties rather than English language had problems with academic writing and other aspects of English language. Accordingly, universities can hold various in-service training English language courses to improve the faculty members' language ability. Moreover, the need for other in-service training courses also received equal importance.

Finally and in response to the third research question, the data gathered from the questionnaire proved that most of the participants wanted to participant in a type of in-service training course which could make them familiar with how to find electronic articles and how to write a scientific research paper. Other suggested courses received equal importance.

CONCLUSION

The present research was conducted to further investigate the faculty members' needs to various in-service training courses. It was found out that in-service training courses are directly integrated with the development of higher educational system. In fact, high levels of developments in higher education can be achieved if the faculty members are trained well. In order to hold suitable in-service training courses for the faculty members, universities should always consider the faculty members' needs and interest. In other words, this is not something to be prescribed once and for all. As a matter of fact, the faculty member needs for various in-service courses should always be studied and updated.

In the same line, it was found out that there was no

significant difference between the needs for various in-service training courses between males and females. Moreover, the educational background of the participants did not have any effect on determining the needs.

In a nutshell, the following suggestions can be offered based on the findings of the present research:

- Universities are encouraged to hold various in-service training courses
- Among the suggested courses, English language courses should be given priority
- Universities are encouraged to hold some on-line in-service training courses
- Universities should pave the path for the faculty member to have easy access to various on-line journals

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to acknowledge Islamic Azad University, Mahshahr Branch, Iran, for funding a research project out of which this paper is derived.

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