The Effect Of Strategic Training On The Higher Educational Institutions Of Ethiopia

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Abstract
As higher educational institutions are the key for the development of any country, governments of the day are giving much emphasis for them. Ethiopian government, as such, has started giving annual strategic training for the higher educational institutions of the country at the beginning of each academic year since. The strategic training has main emphasis on implanting the core strategies of the institutions that are believed to lead to success of the sector in producing graduates with better knowledge and skill. Even though the government has been committed to give such annual training to all the members of the higher educational institutions mainly the universities of the country, majority of these institutions employees have been blaming the training as mere politics than providing better awareness of the institutional strategies. This study has been made on several employees of selected universities and it has been found that such trainings can lead to better performance if well designed objectives are set as strategic focus along with having better facility and delivery methods.

Key Words: Higher Educational Institutions, Strategic Training

1. Introduction
1.1. Background and Conceptual Clarification
An ever rapidly changing working environment demands for a lifelong learning as an essential coping strategy. Especially academic environments change from time to time which calls for continuous upgrading of employee skills and capabilities to improve on their job performance, growth and the ability to adapt to the rapidly changing economic environments for the organization to remain goal oriented (Amin et al., 2013).

Trainings are not easy tasks that one organization gives as desired, rather need for serious training need identification, well designed objective in line with the need, and determining appropriate way of delivery. So always it is very necessary for the organization to design training in a very careful manner (Armstrong, 2000), (Khan, Khan and Khan, 2011). Once needs for training are well identified and designed, many literatures proves them to have the capability to lead to larger performance improvements by those employees who took the training than those who didn’t. According to Wright &Geroy (2001), employee readiness and capabilities change through effective training programs held periodically. It enhances the knowledge, skills and attitude of the workers necessary for the future goals to be achieved by the organizations, thus contributing to superior organizational performance. Through training the employee competencies are developed and enable them to implement the job related work efficiently, and achieve firm objectives in a competitive manner.

Ethiopian higher educational institutions were fewer with lesser capacity to enroll in the past. But right after the fall of the military rule in 1995 the new government has tried to increase the number of universities from three to around forty even though criticized for not emphasizing on quality of education than mere increase in the number of universities. As such, the Ministry of Education (Ethiopian) has started to improve the quality of education through different means, like reviewing the curricula of the programs and above all by trying to have competent and updated staffs. That is why the ministry has started delivering strategic training for the whole staffs of the higher educational institutions in the country.
1.2. Problem Statement
Even though the ministry of education has strong commitment to provide annual strategic training for all the higher educational institutions in the country, it has failed to design the objectives of the training in a way it provide valuable awareness to the staff of the institutions and the way of the training deliver has been criticized by the trainees as not well considered. Ethiopian Ministry of Education has delivered strategic trainings at the eve of academic years for the last several years but the influence of the employees performance has net been yet evaluated in depth and at different training deliveries the staffs have showed inconvenience with the importance of the trainings than mere politics.

1.3. Objectives of the study
The main intention of this study has been to evaluate the previous strategic trainings efficiency from the perspectives of their objectives, delivery methods and facilities as viewed by the staff of the higher educational institutions in the country. The study intended to come up with the impact/influence of these training aspects on the final output/performance the institutions and their staff.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Training and its importance
Training is a systematic way of developing knowledge, skills and behavior required by employees to do their jobs adequately (Shaheen, Naqvi& Khan, 2013) or simply learning that is provided in order to improve performances required(Amin et al., 2013). On the other hand Elnaga and Imra (2013) define employee training as programs that provide workers with information, new skills, or professional development opportunities.

The success of an organization lies on the people who act and work within the organization. As such, for the employees in an organization to be able to perform their tasks and make meaningful contributions to organizational goals, they need to get the relevant skills and knowledge (Ospina and Watad, 1999). In the appreciation of this fact therefore, it is basic for organizations to assure the training and development needs of its employees, through its training need analysis and align such needs to the organizational overall needs and objectives in order to actualize the organizational vision and mission.

The importance of training is believed to be more obvious given the growing complexity of the work environment, the rapid change in organizations which further necessitates the need for training and development of employees to meet the challenges. Training helps to ensure that organizational members possess the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs effectively, take on new responsibilities, and adapt to changing conditions (Jones, George and Hill, 2000). That is why the higher educational institutions in Ethiopia are expected to take periodical training on the overall strategic directions of the educational sectors.

2.2. Training and Employees’ Performance
Existing literature presents evidence of the effects of training and development on employee performance. Some studies have proceeded by looking at performance in terms of employee performance in particular (Purcell, Hutchinson & Kinnie 2003; Harrison 2000) while others have extended to a general outlook of organizational performance (Swart et al. 2005; Guest 1997). In one way or another, the two are related in the sense that employee performance is a function of organizational performance since employee performance influences general organizational performance. In relation to the above, (Geroy & Wright, 2001) note that employee competencies change through effective training programs. It therefore not only improves the overall performance of the employees to effectively perform their current jobs but also enhances the knowledge, skills an attitude of the workers necessary for the future job, thus contributing to superior organizational performance.
2.3. Conceptual Framework

3. Methodology

This study has taken three universities purposively selected in being closer to the researcher namely Wollega University, Ambo University and Arsi University having a total of 2,267 instructors in these higher educational institutions from whom 344 samples have been chosen using Yamane Tarro’s 1967 formula. More than 370 (344+26) questionnaires were distributed having 26+ reserved ones and 344 were found being actually filled for the analysis.

The actually filled 344 questionnaires have been entered to SPSS 20 version and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics is presented in terms of the respondents percentage in rating the level of their perception to the training efficiency in terms of the objectives it has, methodology it is delivered with and the facilities provided for it. The inferential statistics mainly multiple linear regression is used to determine the level of effect that the training has on the employees’ performance with the following common model.

\[ ep = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ob} + \beta_2 \text{md} + \beta_3 \text{f} + \varepsilon \]

Where \( ep \) stands for employees performance as a dependent variable and \( \text{ob}, \text{md}, \text{f} \) stand for training objectives, method of delivery and training facilities respectively as independent variable. \( \varepsilon \) stands for error term tolerable in the models application.

4. Findings

4.1. Training objectives, methods of delivery and Training Facilities

The objectives of the strategic trainings delivered in the past several years in the higher educational institutions of Ethiopia have been evaluated from the perspectives of the significance the trainings have, timeliness of the concepts incorporated and the clarity of the objectives in being easily understood by the targets and the following has been found.
Table 4.1. Trainees level of agreement on the objectives of the Strategic Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Objective Dimensions seen</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Significant of the designed objectives</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>9.88</td>
<td>15.41</td>
<td>16.86</td>
<td>34.88</td>
<td>22.97</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Timeliness of the training objectives</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Clarity of the training objectives</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be observed from table 4.1 item one above, more than an average 199(57.85%)\(^1\) of the respondents have confirmed that the strategic trainings that they have taken in the past have considerable significances which is the key for the success of the training in advance. And here we can note that the remaining 145(42.15%)\(^2\) of the respondents have showed that they are not sure that the training objectives are set in relevant manner.

The second item of the same table above has showed that the majority 240(69.8%) of the respondent has proved that the strategic training objectives has incorporated contemporary issues helpful to update the staff with latest considerations of the higher educational institutions in the country. In another way, the remaining 104(30.2%) of the respondents have questioned the newness of the strategic training objectives given in the last several years.

The final dimension of the training objectives considered is the clarity of the strategic training for the trainees and the majority 224(65.1%) of the respondents have stated that the trainings they got were clear for being understood and the remaining 12(34.9%) of the respondents the training objectives were not satisfactorily clear.

The objectives of the training could be understood by the respondents well but if it is not delivered efficiently, the main goal that the training may completely fail and it is better to have efficient delivery of the trainings that we have brought to the targets. Here the training delivery method has been evaluated from the point of being attractive to the trainees, letting trainees participate and having proper and feedback taking.

Table 4.2. Trainees level of agreement on the delivery methods of the Strategic Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Objective Dimensions seen</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Attractiveness</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participatory</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Proper feedback collected</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item one of the table 4.2 above shows that little more than average 184(53.5%) of the respondents have believed that the training was delivered in an attractive manner while the remaining significant number 160(46.5%) of the respondents have questioned the attractiveness of the training delivery.

From the same table item 2 we can observe that the more than an average 1830(53.2) of the respondents indicated that the training delivery has failed to be participatory which is the key for implanting the concepts in the minds of the trainees while the fewer 161(46.8%) of the respondents perceived that the training was participatory in nature. The same way the majority 218(63.3%) of the

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\(^1\) 199(57.85%) represents the summation of the respondents who have agreed and strongly agreed

\(^2\) 145(42.15%) Refers all those who haven’t agreed yet...here after consider interpretations like this
respondents has showed that the trainers failed to take feedback on the progress and overall of the training even though some 126(36.6%) of the respondents argued that there has been feedback taking. The other important factor for the effectiveness of the training delivery is facility which is supportive to clarify and put concepts in the trainees mind. This study has tried to address the adequacy of facilities for this training as indicated below.

Table 4.3 Trainees level of agreement on the facilities of the Strategic Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Objective Dimensions seen</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Well organized training manuals</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>19.77</td>
<td>41.57</td>
<td>24.42</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>8.43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Adequate time allotted</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>27.03</td>
<td>47.38</td>
<td>13.66</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Location preference</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>19.19</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>15.99</td>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen from item 1 of the above table the majority 295(85.76%) of the respondents has claimed that there was no proper module prepared and distributed for the trainees during the delivery and the fewer 49(14.24%) of remaining respondents have showed the existence of such modules during the delivery.

The respondents have been raised with the adequacy of time allocated for the training delivery and majority 303(88.07%) of them have indicated the inadequacy of time during delivery while only fewer 41(11.92%) of the respondents have believed that the time allocated from the training was sufficient to deliver the concepts.

The final item of the same table above shows that the location preferences of the trainers was poor as perceived by majority 293(85.18%) of the respondents even though fewer 51(14.82%) of the respondents have perceived the location be safe for the trainings under consideration.

4.2. Perceived Employees’ Performance After The Trainings

The employees’ performance has been evaluated from the employees’ perception of the changes that the training has brought to the employees and the institutions as a whole as follows.

Table 4.4 Perceived performance of Employees after the Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Objective Dimensions seen</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Better capacity built</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ideal Gaps Filled</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Led to efficient resource utilization</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The performance of employees after the delivered training has been evaluated from the perspectives of the trainings outcomes on building better capacity in the employees, in filling ideal gaps the employees have had and from the point of leading efficient use of resources of the institutions. With this regard the majority of the employees have perceived that the training has brought better capacity and has filled the ideal gaps in the work environment while it fails to lead the trainees use the institutional resources in a better way.
4.3. The Effect of the strategic training on employees performance

Multiple linear regression has been used in order to prove whether the identified factors which are objectives of the training, efficiency of training delivery and facilities provided have significant effect on the employees’ performance in the higher institutions of the country.

4.3.1. Model Summary

The overall impact of the factors identified as well as the overall degree of association they have with the output of the training under consideration has been stated as follows.

**Table: 4.5. Model Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.656&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>.426</td>
<td>.798</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Facility, Objective, Efficiency of delivery

The model summary table shows the sum total effect of the identified training dimensions i.e. objectives, delivery method and facilities on the employees’ performance as shown by the R-square accounting for 43.1% this means the identified factors have the capability of influencing the overall employees performance at this level. Furthermore the degree of association between the whole dimensions and employees performance is shown to be significantly positive 65.6%, indicating the direction of relation these dimensions have is same and the better the objectives, methods of delivery and facilities are the much more the employees performance will be as it has been pointed by the R.

4.3.2. Analysis of Variance

The regression models fitness to the measure of predicting the effect of the predictors on the training output has been shown as follows.

**Table: 4.6. Model Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>163.635</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54.545</td>
<td>85.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>216.397</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>.636</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>380.032</td>
<td>343</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Output
b. Predictors: (Constant), Facility, Objective, Efficiency

This table has shown that the F value is significantly large enough to prove that the model used to measure the effect of the stated predictors on the output of the training good to fit. Therefore, the measured degree of association and the effect of the whole and individual predictors on the employees’ performance is evidenced. Here the residual has been shown to be larger still there are more remaining factors to be addressed by future studies on the similar nature trainings.

4.3.3. Coefficients of Factors of the Strategic Training

The sum total degree of association and sum effect of these predictors have been stated above well but the individual effects of each of these independent factors are evaluated as follows.

**Table: 4.7. Coefficients of Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Un standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.199</td>
<td>.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Objective</td>
<td>.393</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Efficiency delivery</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training Facility</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>.235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Training Output
According to the table 4.7 above the individual effects that the specific predictors have on the employees’ performance have been stated by the Beta values under standardized coefficients column. As such the most significant and higher effect comes from the objectives of the training accounting for 34.9%. This is to mean a unit change in the improvement of the training objectives will result in 34.9% deviation in the employees’ performance. The better the training objectives are the better the outputs will be and considering and the care that we have during setting the objectives of the training is key.

The other significant effect is from the facility used in the training stated to have an effect of 23.5% compared from all other factors addressed. This shows that a unit improvement in the provision of adequate facilities stated will improve our employees’ performance to this level and it is better if we could give much emphasis to this predictor as it has significant impact again.

Finally, the other significant factor stated by this table is the efficiency of the training delivery which has been shown to have 19.6% effect on the output of the training delivered as such in advance focusing on the suitability and efficiency of training delivery from the points raised in the descriptive part is also major to be considered for the future studies.

5.1. Conclusions
Being based on the data analyzed and summarized we conclude the following major points.

- The training objectives were convincing in that they were prepared being based on the contemporary issue and shown to have been explained well by the trainers. But it has been found that the practicability of these objectives was questioned by the findings of this study. Here the study has proved that the training objectives were found to have the largest effect on the overall output of the training and having better and clearly set objectives are the key to success of the training outcome.

- The training facilities were proved to be not adequate and there has been shortage of presentation manuals, lesser time allocated for delivery and poor locations were allocated. Interview results with main campus respondents has displayed that the groups provided with main auditorium different seats within the same were disturbing and one group participants were seen listening to other louder group discussions.

- The training delivery has been shown to have been seen to have failures in being attractive, participatory and collecting feedbacks. The delivery, even though tried to let the respondents freely participate in the discussions it was not found to be all inclusive specially at starting of the meeting and interviews has shown that this has been solved later on. The other big aspect found was that the lack of taking organized feedback from respondents at the end of the training which was the key for getting the results of the training.

- Finally, the perceived outputs of the training has shown that the training has brought attitudinal changes in settling the working environment and filled ideal gaps created by different social media and false information. The predictors raised, the objectives of the training, facilities and training delivery were shown also to have significant effect on the final desired output of the training.

5.2. Recommendations
Such trainings, unlike that of normal employee training and development programs need much more care in setting the objectives in a way that can show their pure intention and be explained for the targets in a convincing manner. According to the Society for Human Resource Department (SHRM) (2016), care full objectives should be the ones hitting specific and clearing objectives desired, realistic and can be implemented on practice after getting the training up. According to this review having these objectives prepared is not enough to have the desired objectives but the well-designed objectives should be kept/stated and clarified for the trainees in a convincing way at the start of the training. Therefore, such trainings requiring much intention like ours should be tried to be designed in a way that can convince and hold the attention of the targets and falsify the distorting agendas of the external parties that could dig the training and its proper completion with false propaganda. Additionally, since
the objectives of the training are the largest factors having significant effect it is advised not to go further unless we have set strong objectives and practicability mechanisms.

Training facilities are the other best inputs for efficiently getting the trainings delivered. The training should have well suiting locations for general and group discussions. General training sites should be supported with visible projections of the presentation and clear voice/speaker of the trainings and the group discussions should have to be provided with four walled disturbance free rooms. Stationeries and refreshments should also be delivered to targets fully.

Trainings should be delivered in an attractive and in a way it could get the attention and free minds of the concepts under the training. Trainings should also be conducted in a way that lets all to take part in by providing ideas freely. Generally, the University should focus on the training objective and their design along with their clear statement of the trainees, provide sufficient facilities of location stationary and others as well as the efficiency of the trainers in clarifying and easily handling their targets should always be focus for all trainings to be undertaken forward.

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