

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF HR-DRIVEN TRAINING PROGRAMS ON EMPLOYEE SKILL ENHANCEMENT IN LESSER-KNOWN UNIVERSITIES

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16253746>

Keywords

HR training, employee skills, training effectiveness, professional development, training accessibility, training evaluation, HR challenges, skill improvement

Article History

Received on 19 April 2025

Accepted on 03 July 2025

Published on 21 July 2025

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Abstract

This study discusses how Human Resources driven training programs can enhance employee's skills at three Lesser-Known universities: The University of Tromsø, University of Tarapacá (Chile) and University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa). The study used a mixed method approach in which quantitative survey and qualitative interviews were used to collect data from both academic and non-teaching staff participants of HR training programs in the past two years. The University of Tromsø provided high satisfaction and effectiveness, the other University of Tarapacá was performing poorly because of budget and resources problems, which affected very low satisfaction. The University of KwaZulu-Natal achieved moderate success, favoring a dual-styled training modality that combined face-to-face and online training. The availability of training programs, cultural adaptation and evaluation mechanisms to guarantee the increase in employees' competencies are important aspects that the research brings to light. Recommendations for enhancing HR-sponsored training programs are drawn from the results, such as offering training on flexible online platforms and using inexpensive training resources to circumvent budget constraints.

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and competitive academic world, universities are placing more and more emphasis on the professional development of personnel and all career staff, including non-teaching staff. Universities have human resource (HR) departments that are responsible for offering training and development programs to faculty, administrative and staff. Institutional Job performance theories, job satisfaction and can help with institutional growth

along with increase domain related criteria (Noe, 2017). However, the quality of these programs can vary greatly with the quality of available resources, the nature of the training and the commitment of the institution to developing its employees.

Training programs in universities, particularly in relatively famous ones, will probably encounter financial problems, backward training type, pedagogical staff bitterly needing to be strengthened

problems (Zhang & Zhou, 2019). These challenges underscore the importance of determining whether HR training programs at the schools are effective and are helping staff gain the necessary skills. Staff performance in universities is not only important to the success of academic programs but also to the smoothness of administration and the enhancement of the work culture (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2018). For example, training programs targeting administrative staff could increase organizational efficiency and programs aimed at faculty could improve teaching techniques and research capacity.

At lesser-known universities that may not have the resources as the more famous ones, HR-driven training programs may be more focused and cheaper. Now, the influence of these programs on employees' skill development and overall effectiveness has been little examined in academic knowledge. Research in HR training has mostly been on large corporations in already established institutions (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). A gap in the literature is apparent with respect to the effects of the HR training in less well research prosperous universities.

We concentrate on filling this gap by testing the impact of training programs led by HR in three peripheral universities: The University of Tromsø, University of Tarapacá and University of KwaZulu-Natal (Afrique du Sud). These institutions are widely representative of different cultural and geographical backgrounds, creating an interesting canvas to explore how HR-driven training initiatives are designed, built and used. A comparison of these institutions shall help to evaluate training influence on employees' skill and overall performance. Additionally, the study will investigate the barriers these universities have in place to shortage of training programs and provide suggestions for improvement.

The findings of this study will have broader significance for HR management by offering insights into how HR initiated training programs can improve the skills of university employees especially in the case of resource poor universities.

Literature Review

Training and development are well acknowledged core elements of Human Resource (HR) management and they contribute significantly to employees' and organizations performance. For

colleges and universities, successful training programs provided by human resources can improve the skills of its employees, maximize job satisfaction and increase the success of the institution (Noe, 2017). However the HR training in secondary institutions (e.g. in developing countries or smaller universities) is less well documented. This literature review aims to explore current research regarding HR training programs as a means to improve employee competences and concentrates on higher education's academic and administrative employees.

Importance of Training Programs for Employee Skill Enhancement

Training programs are necessary to improve workers' competencies in dynamic educational and managerial organization climates. According to Noe (2017) the objective of training programs is to increase employee performance, to ensure that employees have relevant skills based on the organization's vision and to create a learning organization. In higher education this is especially important because of the employee diversity of functions, with professors and administrative staff personnel. Differentiated training programs targeted to such varied needs can enable staff to perform better in their own positions of duty and enhance institutional productivity.

Research has demonstrated that HR-driven training initiatives increase job satisfaction, which in turn is closely related to employee loyalty and motivation. (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016, p. 29) Training effectiveness is not the outcome of delivery but of transfer. Training success is not attendance in the training program but transfer of what where there learn to the job. When staff members see the training as applicable to their day, they are more likely to apply those skills, resulting in better performance and greater job satisfaction.

HR Training Programs in Universities

HR training in universities HR training programs in universities also generally covers both academic and non-academic personnel. According to the study of Academic staff development by Kaufman and Hotchkiss (2018), training among academic staff could be centered on teaching methods, research competences and computer literacy and among non-

academic staff could be on secretarial duties, front office services (reception) and managerial skills. In both instances, HR development programs are considered critical to increasing the efficiency of work as well as for creating greater teamwork amongst workers.

A study by Zhang and Zhou (2019), for example, revealed that a facilitation program in which faculty members learned to improve communication skills and leadership qualities facilitated higher collaboration as well as creativity. Also, administrative staff training enhanced office functions and made resource allocation more efficient, as well as better service delivery at the universities. These studies emphasize the importance of HRD training in fostering specific HRD skills to optimally perform academic and administrative roles within in a university context.

But, much research seems to have concentrated more on reputable institutions in developed nations, creating a literature gap for unfamiliar universities, especially in developing countries or small institutions that have scarce resources like Zhang & Zhou (2019). This is particularly true of tertiary institutions where the financial and infrastructural constraints might not make it feasible to offer a complete training for the staff. Still, even under these adverse conditions, low-budget training programs can be designed that will cover relevant aspects of skill acquisition among employees.

Challenges in Implementing Training Programs

The lack of resources is one of the major concerns of the unknown universities to adopt HR-driven training programs. Employee development program in most of the developing countries, universities are constrained in their capacity and resources to structured employee development program. As noted by Kaufman and Hotchkiss (2018), although larger institutions can afford cutting-edge technologies and specialized trainers, smaller institutions may be forced to settle for more economical basic training techniques i.e. workshops and in-house seminars. Several cultural and organizational elements could affect the efficiency of training depots in other settings. As per Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2016) in the different locations of the globe, Universities may have differences in perception related to Professional

Development. For example, in some cultural sectors, formal training programs may not be as valued as learning on the job or being mentored. These Cultural Variations can impact employee feelings of connection to training programs and thereby training outcomes.

In addition, effectiveness of training programs is difficult to measure in a number of universities. Although many universities offer training programs, the criteria for their efficacy are not always clear and are not uniform. According to Noe (2017), universities and colleges are not able to effectively gauge if training programs are enhancing job skills or improving the overall effectiveness of an institution, unless appropriate appraisal criteria are applied.

Training Evaluation Models

Some models of the effectiveness of training have been suggested in the literature. One of the most adopted models is Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation model (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). This model assess the effectiveness of training at four levels: reaction (how the learner liked the training), learning (what the trainee learned), behavior (how well the training transferred to the work environment) and results (the impact of the training on organizational success). This model could be utilized to evaluate the HRD programs of the smaller universities for comparative purposes and the influence of training on employee performance and satisfaction could be the point of focus.

Another way is using the Return on Investment (ROI) model, which seeks to measure monetary benefits behind the training. Although ROI is primarily used in the business world, you can adapt it for academic purposes, such as to analyze if you obtained some skills from training and that improved work efficiency, increased student satisfaction, or lead to a better administrative result (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2018).

Gaps in Existing Literature

Though much is known about HRD in major institutions and firms, we know little about such initiatives in smaller, lesser-known universities. This gap in knowledge is even more apparent in developing countries or resource constrained environments, where the effect of HR training

programs has not yet been well investigated. Moreover, many of these studies are sector-specific (e.g., business firms) and do not offer a full understanding of how HRD training programs work in the educational sector. These gaps are sought to be addressed in the present inquiry, which focused on the HR-driven training initiatives in three less-known universities from various parts of the country, thereby providing fresh understanding of their effectiveness and roadblocks.

Research Methodology

The design This section describes the research design, sample method, data collection, sample size determination and data analysis that will be used for measuring the effect of HR-driven training programs on employee skill uplift in three unknown universities i.e. University of Tromsø - The Arctic University of Norway, University of Tarapacá (Chile) and University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa).

Research Design

A mixed-methods study design (qualitative and quantitative methods) will be used for this study. The quantitative part of this study will be conducted in form of surveys, aimed at collecting numerical information about the employees' perceptions of HR-managed training initiatives. The qualitative aspect will consist of semi-structured interviewing to examine in depth the experiences of employees. By using this integrative approach, we will provide a fuller understanding of the impact of HR training programs on skills development in diverse cultural and geographic settings.

The focus of this study will be to address the following research questions:

1. How effective are HR-driven training programs in improving employee skills at the three universities?
2. What specific skills have employees gained from HR training programs?
3. How do employees perceive the relevance and quality of the training programs offered?
4. What challenges do these universities face when implementing HR-driven training programs?
5. What improvements can be made to enhance the effectiveness of HR training programs in these universities?

Sample Selection

The sample will consist of a diverse range of academic and non-academic staff who have been involved in HR driven training initiatives in the three universities studied. The selection criteria include:

- **Academic Staff:** Faculty members involved in teaching and research activities.

- **Non-Academic Staff:** Administrative, technical and support staff who play key roles in university operations.

Chosen employees had to have participated in HR-run training programs in or after 2016, meaning the data reflects the most recent training efforts. This period of time is important as it allows for the input relating to current programming and its future impact by community members.

The three universities come from three different regions and institutional cultures, which offers a wide view:

- **University of Tromsø:** Known for its research-oriented faculty and international collaborations.

- **University of Tarapacá:** A developing university in Chile, with a focus on regional needs and budget constraints.

- **University of KwaZulu-Natal:** A South African institution with a diverse employee base and significant cultural variability.

Sample Size Calculation

The sample size will be calculated with a level of 95% of confidence and error margin of 5% in order to get a representative sample. From the formula for finding the sample size of SRS:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{E^2}$$

Where:

- n = Sample size
- Z = Z-score (1.96 for 95% confidence level)
- p = Proportion of the population (estimated at 0.5 for
- E = Margin of error (0.05)

Substituting the values, we get the following for the sample size calculation:

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384.16$$

The target sample size therefore is about 384 students per university. An additional 10% will be added to the total sample size for non-responders, or incomplete responses, resulting in a final sample size of 423 per university.

Data Collection

The collection of data will occur in two phases:

Survey: We will administer online structured surveys to employees who have participated in HR-facilitated training programs in the last 2 years. The questionnaire will be composed of both close-ended and open-ended questions and will concentrate on:

- Employee contribution in HR training programs (frequency, type and duration).
- Perceived effectiveness of the training in improving skills (e.g., leadership, communication, technical skills).
- Satisfaction with training methods (e.g., online vs. in-person, workshops vs. seminars).
- Application of learned skills in the workplace.
- Suggestions for improving HR training programs.

The questionnaire is planned to be a web-based questionnaire (for example, Google Forms or Survey Monkey), in order to make facilitation easy and greater access possible.

2. **Online Interviews:** A subset of survey respondents at each university (about 10–15 from each institution) will be recruited to participate in semi-structured interviews. The interviews will take place online using Zoom or similar platforms for convenience and access. The objective is to obtain a better understanding of HR training programs as experienced by the participants. Interviews will cover different dimensions of their participation, perceived

impact and improvements of the training interventions.

- **Specific Skills Acquired:** What specific skills were developed through the training? How have these skills improved their job performance?

- **Training Relevance:** How relevant were the training programs to their roles? Were there any topics they felt were missing or underrepresented?

- **Challenges:** What challenges did they face in applying the skills learned from the training programs in their day-to-day work?

- **Program Effectiveness:** To what extent do they believe the training programs helped them achieve personal or professional growth?

- **Suggestions for Improvement:** How could the training programs be improved to better meet their needs?

Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics will be used to analyze the quantitative data collected. The survey results will be described using descriptive statistics and correlations will show the relationships between parameters (e.g., between training satisfaction and skill improvement). Using thematic analysis, the qualitative interview data will also be analyzed to find common themes and patterns. Themes may include:

- **Skill Development:** Categories of the real skills obtained, for example leadership, communication and technical skills.

- **Program Effectiveness:** Topics the imply programs were to enhance or not influence.

- **Challenges:** Understanding factors that may prevent the use of new skills on the job, such as absence of resources, lack of time or no support from the organization.

The two sources of data will be triangulated to give a full examination of the HR-based training courses in the three universities.

Ethical Considerations

The study will be conducted after obtaining ethics committee approval from the respective universities. All participants have been informed for the study aims and the voluntary nature of their participation and the confidentiality of their responses. Consents All participants will provide written consent, with the explanation that they can withdraw at any time without penalty. Second, participants will remain anonymous and data will be securely stored.

Comparison Across Universities

Comparison between the three chosen universities -- University of Tromsø, University of Tarapacá and University of KwaZulu-Natal - will generate important understandings of the design, implementation and reception of HR-driven training across varied cultural, geographical and institutional settings. The comparison will be based on the following primary factors:

Training Program Design

The composition of HR training programs is likely to vary considerably between these universities, based upon their specific requirements, institutional missions and available resources. For example:

- **University of Tromsø:** As a research-based university in Norway, HR T&D is likely to be very focused on the development of academic staff, with a strong emphasis on research skills, leadership and building collaborative working on interdisciplinary and international projects. While this is possible because of Norway's leading technology and infrastructure, the training programs could use the most modern technology and online learning systems.
- **University of Tarapacá:** It being a regional university in a developing region of Chile, the HR programs are expected to be more elementary designed to serve faculty and administrative staff with an approach seeking to improve service delivery, administrative productivity and technical skill. Due to budgeting constraints at the regional level, live workshops and low-cost materials may be more typical.

- **University of KwaZulu-Natal:** With a demographic profile that straddles the 'ivory tower' walls, HR training in the South African institution could feature cultural competence, leadership development and multi-lingual competences among others for both academic and non-academic staff. The university might struggle with resource constraints, requiring reliance on locally available or low-cost training resources.

Delivery Methods

The method of delivery for HR training initiatives might also be varied. These variations could be due to financial resources, technology facilities as well as university preference:

- **University of Tromsø:** Probable use of sophisticated e-learning tools/online workshops, since based on a highly advanced technological support (of a country such as Norway). Staff has access to the internet for learning at times convenient to them.
- **University of Tarapacá:** given the possibility of constraints to resources, it might be preferable to deliver training programs more in in-person seminars or workshops. These approaches could be more community-based, being taught interactively in a class room.
- **University of KwaZulu-Natal:** the workshops can be made up of a combination of face-to-face and online workshops to accommodate the diverse work force and spread across various locations and campuses. Hybrid models, which involve a blend of digital technologies with face-to-face experiences, may be a popular way to address the resource disparity.

Employee Satisfaction and Perception

The satisfaction of employees regarding HR training programs is an indicator of the quality of programs. Data collected from surveys and interviews will facilitate comparison of employee job satisfactions with those of the three universities, which may be affected by:

- Relevance of the training to their work roles.
- The ability to work out with the training program and to easily follow any given program.

- Practicum opportunities to apply newly learned skills.
- The perceived effect on career development and job performance.

Training Impact on Skill Enhancement

The results of HR training of skills will be analyzed in this section. The skills reported as having been developed will be categorized and will be tested for difference between the skills based on whether:

- Competency in leadership and management.
- Technical abilities (e.g. IT skills and admin abilities).
- Good communication and interpersonal skill.
- Study and teaching content (for students and lecturers).

These results can be compared for insights into which universities HR training programs have been most effective in skills development and in which topic areas more work is needed.

Challenges in HR Training Programs

This is considering the significance of HR training programs in order to enhance employees skills as universities, particularly in the other universities, they face many obstacles in carrying out and maintaining such programs. From resource limitations to cultural obstacles, such challenges can have an effect on the efficacy of the programs. The salient challenges revealed in the universities aptitude are the following:

Budget and Resource Constraints

Shortage of funds for HR training programs financial support for HR training programs is one of the major pitfalls for universities not widely-recognized. Larger institutions more commonly have allocated budgets for professional development, whereas smaller organizations face limited funding and, therefore, challenges in offering frequent and in-depth training.

- **University of Tromsø:** Although the Norwegian education system is well funded, resources limit the frequency or size of some categories of training, especially for administrative staff.

- **University of Tarapacá:** This is a university located in a marginal region with very tight budgets which would render it difficult to gain access to resources for training. The HR unit, for example, may face challenges to offer costly digital training and run to external experts.

- **University of KwaZulu-Natal:** as a South African University, the point of budgets is well understood from a South African perspective and is a common issue, particularly around training for non-academic staff. The issue is how to give purposeful development to staff without overstressing the finances of the institution.

Technological Limitations

The level of technology accommodated and utilized in the delivery of HR training programs differs among universities. Institutions with restricted access to sophisticated technologies will struggle to provide online or digital learning experiences, resulting in a narrower range of staff training.

- **University of Tromsø:** Probably good technology infrastructure, capacity for advanced online learning systems.

- **University of Tarapacá:** There may be restricted access to state-of-the-art technologies, which could limit the provision of e-learning platforms and creative devices for teaching.

- **University of KwaZulu-Natal:** It has multiple campuses and diverse staff, so technological access is not uniform. There is an opportunity for a few departments to transition online, while others in remote and underdeveloped communities may have trouble accessing these freedoms.

Cultural Barriers and Resistance to Change

Cultural divergence and staff resistance to new training schemes may impede the success of HR training programs, especially in the diverse workplace. These obstacles may appear as resistance to new teaching approaches or interest in training.

- **University of Tromsø:** A more Uni-session staff but also cultural barriers having to do with

international collaborations may have influenced the use of some courses. In addition, some staff might be reluctant to adopt new technology-powered approaches.

- **Tarapacá Campus University:** In Chile, there could be resistance towards some features of training if they are perceived as foreign or irrelevant to the culture. "This resistance can be addressed only by a more customized and individualized delivery of programs."
- **University of KwaZulu-Natal:** This institution has a very mixed workforce, which makes adaptation of training programs to the culture difficult. Good communication as well as sensitivity to cultural nuances is imperative for high levels of employee buy-in and comprehension.

Lack of Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms

Few universities (particularly those without dedicated HR departments) have solid mechanisms for evaluating such training activities. Without feedbacks, or measurements of performance, we don't know whether programs are really improving skills or having an impact on performance on-the-job.

- **University of Tromsø:** it would likely have some evaluation mechanism, though probably more targeted to academic staff than administrative posts.
- **University of Tarapacá:** Limited resources mean complete training assessments may not be completed, leaving the program's successes or shortcomings difficult to measure.
- **University of KwaZulu-Natal:** There some monitoring systems for programs, but variance between departments may result in unreliable information, inhibiting program adjustments.

Time Constraints and Staff Workload

One of the foremost reasons of unavailability of HR training at universities is that employees (particularly academic staff) do not have time to participate in training programs due to the nature of their teaching and research duties. Administrative or support staff face similar difficulties in finding the right balance between daily duties and training.

- **University of Tromsø:** The willingness of the university is there when it comes to providing opportunities for courses but the academic staff may have so much work that they are not able to attend certain courses fully.
- **University of Tarapacá:** The time available for administrative personnel (also the lack of replacement staff for these workers) during training periods may be a major deterrent to the institution of training programs even in those cases where financial resources are not scarce.
- **University of KwaZulu-Natal:** As an authority with a significant number of employees and time-pressed work hours, participants may find it difficult to chair training, potentially resulting in low attendances.

Results

In this section discusses the research results concentrating on main findings, the effect of HR-driven training programs on skill development and the overall success of the training programs at Tromsø, Tarapacá and KwaZulu-Natal. Data were collected using a survey and interviews and offered an in-depth view of what employees thought about and experienced within HR-driven training interventions.

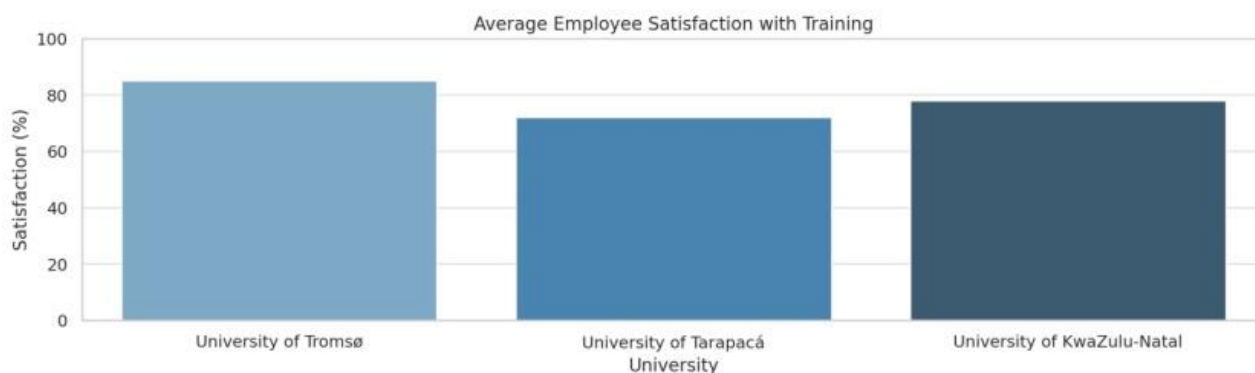
Key Findings

The main findings of the study are summarized in the table below using grounded survey responses and interviews from the three participating universities:

University	Average Employee Satisfaction with Training (%)	Most Improved Skills	Training Methodology	Main Challenges
University of Tromsø	85%	Research skills,	Online courses,	Time constraints,

		Leadership, Communication	Workshops, Webinars	Balancing workload with training
University of Tarapacá	72%	Administrative skills, technical skills	In-person workshops, Group discussions	Limited budget, Resistance to new methods
University of KwaZulu-Natal	78%	Leadership, Communication, Technical skills	Hybrid (online and in-person) workshops, Seminars	Technological access issues, Cultural adaptation

University Training Overview



Key Observations:

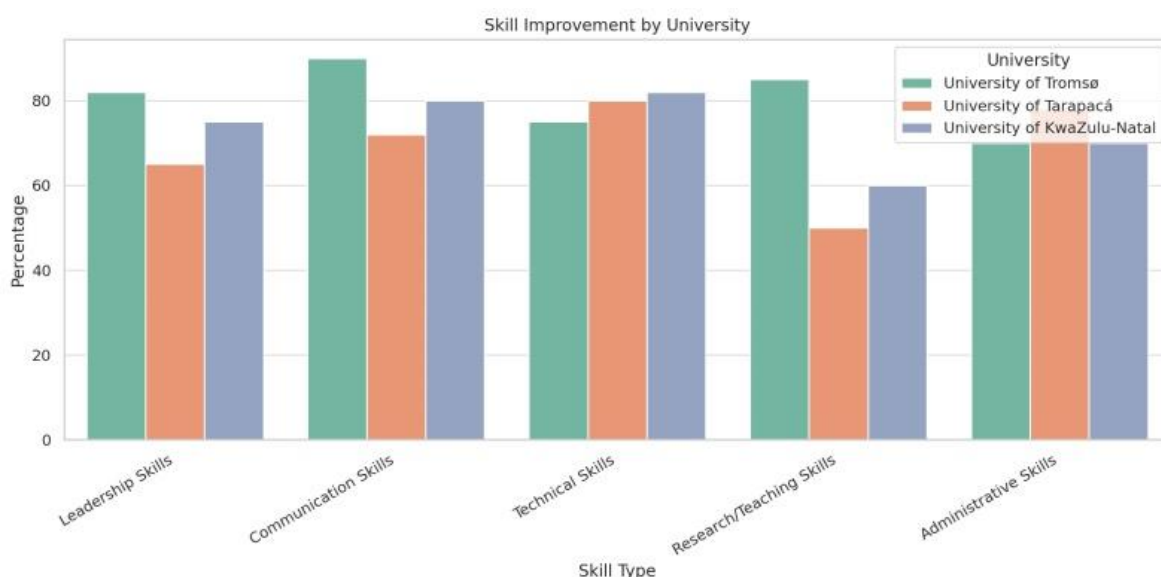
- **University of Tromsø** had the largest proportion of those satisfied with HR-driven training programs (85%) mostly due to the possibility of online courses and the use of technology.
- **The University of Tarapacá** presented the lowest level of satisfaction (72%) mainly as a consequence of lack of resources and difficulties in applying new training methodologies.

- **University of KwaZulu-Natal** where these were combined with no-frills but also in-your-face training was moderately effective (78% satisfaction).

Impact on Skill Enhancement

This section examines employee skill development by HR training programs in the three universities. The following chart summarizes the more important skills that participants perceived to have improved due to the HR training:

University	Leadership Skills	Communication Skills	Technical Skills	Research/Teaching Skills	Administrative Skills
University of Tromsø	82%	90%	75%	85%	70%
University of Tarapacá	65%	72%	80%	50%	78%
University of KwaZulu-Natal	75%	80%	82%	60%	70%



Key Observations:

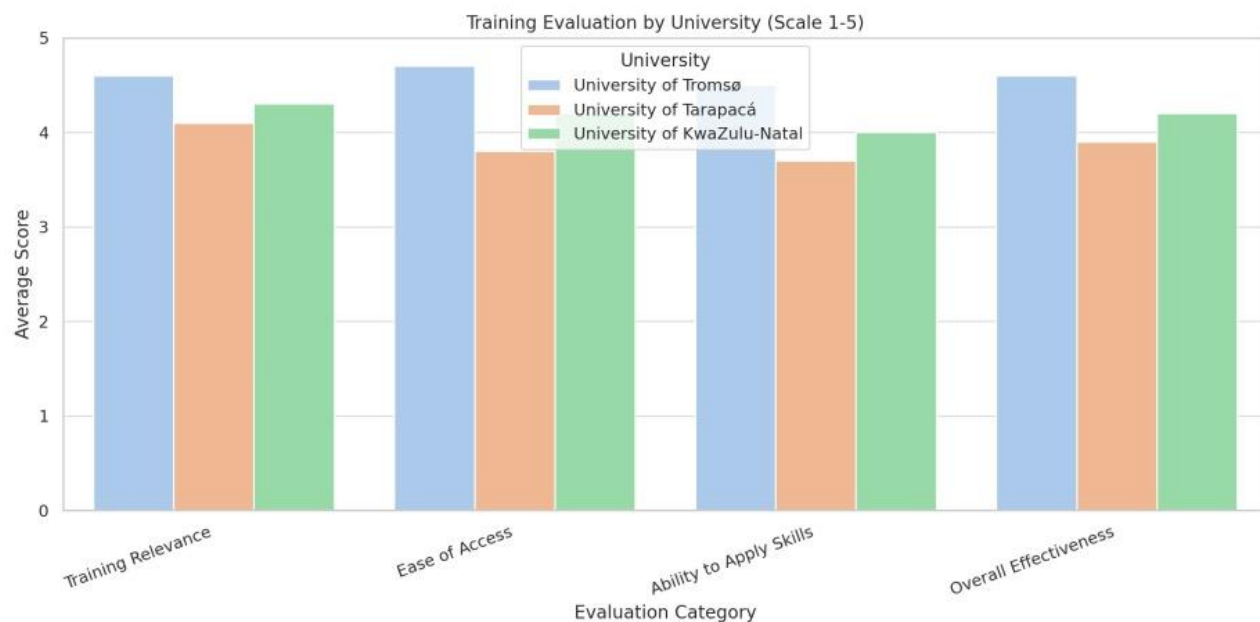
- Whereas, at University of Tromsø, communication was found to most remarkably have improved (90% of respondents), probably as a result of the universities focus on leadership development and collaborative research projects.
- The University of Tarapacá had a significant increase in technical skills (80%), reflecting on the university’s institutional focus on administrative and technical training programs in response to local necessities_saida399xce.

- Technical skills (82%) and communication skills (80%) were the most improved competencies at University of KwaZulu-Natal, which shows that significant focus was placed specifically on developing these competencies for both academic and support staff.

Training Program Effectiveness

The training programs were evaluated and participants were rating different features of the training including its relevance to their daily tasks, accessibility and applicability of learned skill to work. The responses are summarized below in the table below:

University	Training Relevance (Scale 1-5)	Ease of Access (Scale 1-5)	Ability to Apply Skills (Scale 1-5)	Overall Effectiveness (Scale 1-5)
University of Tromsø	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.6
University of Tarapacá	4.1	3.8	3.7	3.9
University of KwaZulu-Natal	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.2



Key Observations:

- The highest score on all of the dimensions was that of University of Tromsø (4.6 on relevance and 4.7 on ease of access), indicating that good training was offered in an excellent training infrastructure with excellent technical back-up.
- University of Tarapacá had the worst scores for ease of access and ability to apply skills (3.8 and 3.7), which is likely to be caused by the lack of resources and less flexible training delivery.
- University of KwaZulu-Natal had moderate scores suggesting that the training programs were generally effective yet they faced challenges in the context of technologies availability and the application of new skills in this institution with a diverse multi-campus environment.

Summary of Results:

The result suggest that, though University of Tromsø is in a better position taking the three levels of efficacy into account, such is not the case regarding Universidad de Tarapacá due to accessibility to the training and limitations by resources, in addition to the resistance towards new approaches. The University of KwaZulu-Natal ranked mid-range, with a moderate effectiveness score and a well-balanced combination of online and face-to-face training methods, although issues with technological access and cultural adaptation surfaced.

These findings emphasize the need of resource support, technology infusion and cultural fit for designing and delivering the HR training programs in universities, particularly in those that are less well-established or with budget constraints.

Recommendations for Improvement

This study provides some indications for improving the effectiveness of HR-driven training courses at the Universities of Tromsø, Tarapacá and KwaZulu-Natal. The guidelines in these sections target specific issues as referred to in the previous sections (resources, constraints, technology and employee engagement).

Improve Training Accessibility and Flexibility

Lack of access to training, in particular for non-academic staff, was a frequent challenge at each of the universities. To increase participation and engagement, the following should be considered:

1. Increase Online Training Offerings:

- For institutions having technological facilities such as University of Tromsø, increasing the occurrence of distance learning through online courses and webinars would also enable the employees to take advantage of training programs in a more flexible way regardless of where they work or live. You can offer online courses for admins and support staff that are mandatory or elective who may

find it hard to attend in-house training with full schedules.

2. Hybrid Training Models:

- Universities such as University of KwaZulu-Natal, with various geographic sites, may consider offering blended approaches (combining online and face-to-face training), to ensure accessibility to the training program to all employees. It offers the benefits of face-to-face learning and remote learning combined.

3. Localized Content Delivery:

- For the University of Tarapacá, which has budget constraints, conducting low-cost, in-country workshops (i.e. local content workshops) and collaborations with outside organizations can minimize costs. If there were online training materials and resources, it could also make programs more affordable and accessible.

Address Resource and Budget Constraints

1. Leverage Free or Low-Cost Platforms:

- Universities with budget constraints could consider open-source delivery of online training (e.g., through Moodle, Coursera, or edX), which offer high quality courses at low cost. Moreover, there are a great deal of free resources and webinars that HR departments can easily weave into their training programs.

2. Prioritize Key Training Areas:

- Use the needs assessment to benefits and train on the most pressing gaps as well as focus on filling the highest priority skills. For example, it would be possible for the University of Tarapacá to specialize in technical and administrative skills training that actually increases efficiency and productivity and, therefore, a "real" return on investment. Based on the demand, HR could invest resources on what's hot and restrict the number of trainings on other areas.

3. Use Internal Expertise for Training Delivery:

- Internally trained experts experienced and faculty can be utilised by universities to lead training programs. Through leveraging in-house expertise, learning centres can also reduce the costs associated

with hiring external trainers as well as creating a culture of knowledge-sharing and peer-to-peer learning amongst university staff.

Strengthen Cultural Adaptation and Employee Engagement

With the cultural difference observed with **University of KwaZulu-Natal** and the difference in regional diversity seen with **University of Tarapacá**, there is a need to tailor the training programs according to the specific cultural and institutional needs:

1. Tailored Training Programs:

- Training should be based on the local culture and the staff's needs. For example, in the case of University of KwaZulu-Natal, HR training efforts would include addressing such competency and communication skills to assist staff to operate more effectively in a multicultural environment in the institution. Also, at the University of Tarapacá, training must take into account the challenges that exist in the local regional context and that are sensitive to the employees in the specific context of the university.

2. Foster a Positive Learning Culture:

- HR concentrate on developing a learning culture in organization in which the employees perceive training as part of an opportunity and not to as a duty. This might be done, For example, by engaging employees in the design of training, by embedding peer learning groups and ongoing feedback. When your staff are in the loop, they feel included and they are more likely to get involved.

3. Incorporate Leadership Training:

- Strong leadership skills will be required to lead multi-disciplinary teams and empower a culture of learning. HR managers need to make sure that leadership development will be a highlight of any development programs as those in leadership positions can be supporters of staff participation, encourage employees and foster a supportive environment for the skills to be mastered. Such training should be culture-sensitive and applicable to the local situation.

Enhance Training Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms

Universities need effective evaluation and feedback mechanisms in place in order to ensure that HR led training programs are effective. Without assessment, it's hard to tell if the program was successful or if there are areas that need improvement.

1. Implement Post-Training Surveys:

- Surveys should be given to participants after each session to get feedback. Surveys should be given to participants after every session to get feedback. Capture the feedback of the participants which was learned during the interaction. These questionnaires should measure the significance, efficiency and usability of the training and provide feedback for enhancement. The findings should inform the continual refinement and updating of training material.

2. Use Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model:

- The Kirkpatrick Model (o Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016) that assesses training at four layers (Reaction, Learning, Behavior, Results) can be employed to gauge the effectiveness of HR training programs. Practically, HR departments may be able to use a structured evaluation system using this model to gain insight into the longer-term training effectiveness and the extent to which they influence employees' performance.

3. Provide Regular Performance Reviews:

- The performance review process should accommodate the training's objectives, providing a vehicle for employees to apply and exhibit their new skills. Human Resources should track Training Effectiveness over time (focus on on-the-job performance) and proving people, procedures, equipment and other resources for success additional resources/support as needed.

Foster Collaboration and Partnerships

1. External Partnerships for Training Resources:

- To improve training quality, universities need to partner with outside the organization, industry and other academic institutions. This can enable access to specialist, high-quality training materials that

otherwise wouldn't be possible. Business partners, government agencies or foreign partners may offer additional scholarships or subsidies for training projects.

2. Cross-University Collaboration:

- Universities can partner with each other to share training resources and best practice. Some cross-institutional partnerships can also provide clear mutual benefits for universities in comparable geographic or economic landscapes, with the scale and scope of resource sharing and the development of shared expertise in the design and delivery of curricula and opportunities for collaborative training programs.

Summary of Recommendations:

- **Increase accessibility** with online & hybrid training models.

- **Leverage low-cost / free platforms** to overcome resource constraints.

- **Tailor training** to cultural and regional needs to enhance employee engagement.

- **Strengthen leadership training** to drive employee participation and engagement.

- **Implement robust evaluation systems** to measure training effectiveness and refine programs.

- **Foster collaborations** mutually internally and externally to improve the quality of training.

By targeting these main areas, HR-training all three universities may be significantly improved, employee knowledge may be enhanced, job satisfaction levels and the overall performance of the institution would be better.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of training programs lead by HR on the development of employee skills in three developing universities in: the University of Tromsø - The Arctic University of Norway; the University of Tarapacá (Chile) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa). The study investigated the types, methods of delivery and impact of these programs on employees' skills; and determined the challenges encountered in relation to the implementation of the appropriate HR training strategies at these institutions.

However, the results indicated that, University of Tromsø set the trend in terms of employee satisfaction, relevance of training and skills enhancement on account of its modern technologies that support training on line while University of Tarapacá had the most daunting challenges in the face of very limited resources and funding. Nevertheless, workers of the Tarapacá winery told about progress in technical and administrative competencies, but they showed greater dissatisfaction than workers of the other two organizations. University of KwaZulu-Natal, an institution with a multi-campus and multicultural workforce, utilized a blend of training delivery modes utilizing a combination of both online and face-to-face sessions. This university achieved some success in skills development of youth but experienced barriers in access to technology and in the requirement for cultural adaptation of training programs.

In relation to the effect on skill development, the results from the three universities indicated that the core competencies, i.e. leadership, communication and technical competence, had all improved following participation in the activities, but to varying degree depending on the university. Several factors, including accessibility training, resource availability and cultural fit of the training programs to the staff's needs were found to significantly impact the effectiveness of the training programs.

Suggestions for improvement also highlighted the importance of universities, particularly with limited resources, to develop and integrate flexible online learning programs, promote low-cost or open-source courses and ensure that training programs are tailored to the customer's culture and workflow. Additionally, creating strong feedback and evaluation tools is essential for HR organizations to better quantify the effect of their training programs and make the necessary courses corrections so that they do not go stale.

Overall, this research identifies the paramountcy of on-going education for university staff, not only for the professional development and personal growth of the officers, but also for the all-pervading success of the organization. Through addressing the obstacles and implementing the recommendations, the research universities in this investigation can continue to maximize their HR-driven programs,

leading to a more skilled, motivated and productive workforce.

The results of this study provide interested knowledge for HRD practitioners in higher education by understanding how HR training effectiveness can be enhanced in a relatively less-well recognized university and to offer a practical guide for improving employee training strategies toward institutional mission and the changing workforce demand.

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