

Challenges Experienced by Public Higher Education Institutions of Learning in the Implementation of Training and Development: A Case Study of Saudi Arabian Higher Education

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Received: August 9, 2021 Accepted: September 7, 2021 Online Published: September 14, 2021

doi:10.5430/jbar.v10n2p36

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/jbar.v10n2p36>

Abstract

The present case study aimed to investigate challenges in learning in Saudi Arabia's higher education institutions in the context of the implementation of training and development. A qualitative study design was used, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 75 faculty members and human resource managers working in four public universities in Saudi Arabia. The interviews were recorded, and thematic analysis was applied to the collected data. On-campus and off-campus methods are used to implement training programmes in all four universities, regardless of the flaws of both types of training. Due to a lack of time, the majority of respondents indicated that their heavy teaching workload prevented them from engaging in university training and development. Multifactorial challenges are involved in the higher education institutions of learning with regards to the application of training and development in Saudi Arabia. One of the most significant obstacles that Saudi Arabian institution administrators face in their attempts to innovate and strengthen learning and teaching methods and methodologies is a shortage of qualified and domestic trained faculty. Because of contact breakdowns, hiring highly skilled and technically trained international teachers, for example, introduces language gaps and reduces the efficacy of teaching and learning processes. The key consideration is the execution of preparation and growth; universities have a smaller chance of achieving the goal value. With too much money being spent on training and growth, the question is not what organizations should prepare, but, rather, whether training is worthwhile and efficient.

Keywords: Education, Saudi Arabia, challenges, training

1. Introduction

Education plays a key role in a country's development and growth. While all levels of education are important, higher education is especially important for training qualified workers, generating and disseminating knowledge, and meeting individual and social expectations (Lund et al., 2020). As a result, nations that want to advance in terms of modernization must place a greater emphasis on education in general, and higher education in particular. Higher education institutions are the birthplaces of economic and social progress, as they are the epicentres of intensive knowledge production and consumption (Xing & Marwala 2017). In the recent decade, higher education institutions have played an important role in developing the potential of human resources to fulfil various employment demands in the labor market (Kromydas, 2017). Also, public service and higher education institutions play important roles in the growth of societies. As with commercial organizations nowadays, universities have become more reliant on information and technology and internet-based services to provide their stakeholders with the requested educational services (Abdulatif & Hamad, 2020). Public sector institutions face many challenges in the continuation of education regarding training and development. Public higher education institutions (PHEIs) are increasingly characterized worldwide by the new dimension of commodification and marketization and confronted with a significant challenge in terms of striking a balance between traditional academic operations (Eder 2020).

Training and development (T&D) is one of the vital departments in every organization. Because of its significance in organizational success, policymakers are concerned about training and development (Al-Hanawi, Khan et al., 2019). Saudi Arabia is a Muslim-majority country that had a population of 33.4 million people in 2018. The majority of the

population is over the age of 50, and the illiteracy rate dropped significantly from 60% in 1972 to 5.6% in 2018. In 2018, the labor market stance showed that 12,688,042 people were employed, with 70% (KPMG, 2019) of them working in the private sector (DiClaudio, 2019). According to statistics, the Saudi workforce has a greater capacity to learn and develop. The demand for higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has increased dramatically over the last 20 years. The government of Saudi Arabia has recognized, in both policy and practice, the necessity of developing its university system to standard as a significant increase in access to higher education with a range of traditional and non-traditional disciplines. Saudi Arabia currently supplies 60% of the world's oil and will likely continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Directly relevant to the future social and economic growth of the country (ALZYADAT and Business, 2021). Saudi businesses, industries, academics, and students operating in a rapidly changing and increasingly global business worldwide will be involved in the country's future economic, social, and political growth strategies and opportunities (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). Saudi Arabian education has four distinct characteristics: a focus on Islamic education, a centralized system of control and educational support, state funding, and a general gender segregation policy (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013).

Academic institutions play critical roles in the development of effective teaching methods. Management plays the most important role in developing successful strategies. As a result, academic institutions pay special attention to administrative staff and strive to ensure that they have a positive reputation. Teaching staff and management, according to Newton (2003), work in accordance with the educational institution's requirements (Newton, 2003). It is important for the development of an effective teaching approach that public institution management manages its resources effectively. Management should be knowledgeable and skilled enough to formulate policies and measures that will help improve the situation (Gian, 2021). One of the most important duties of a school's administration is to ensure that an efficient system is in place to regularly monitor teachers' performance and abilities (Doe et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, an institution's management faces challenges in training and development, which can be overcome by close monitoring and improvement of faculty members' education and skills. Globalization has had a significant impact on the evolution of educational approaches and methods. Similarly, integrating technology has resulted in new teaching methods and approaches. Education is evolving at a rapid pace thanks in part to technological advancements (Doe et al., 2020). New teaching domains and methods are being developed, with significant implications for teachers. As a result, it can be said that the role of higher education public sector management is crucial, as it encounters a variety of obstacles that obstruct training and staff development.

Training and development have always been difficult tasks for all Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia's educational organizations face significant challenges. The present study aimed to investigate the challenges experienced by higher education institutions related to training and development in Saudi Arabia. The current findings will help Saudi government authorities create policies for the higher education institution of public interest. The current study has focused on the universities and involved faculty members to identify the main challenges regarding training and development implementation.

2. Literature Review (Theoretical Background)

2.1 Resource-Based View Theory: RBT

Based on the RBT theory, the main challenges were identified in Saudi higher education institutions. BRT in field of strategic management, the resource-based view theory (RBT) has appeared as one of the numerous significant explanations of an organization's effectiveness. Barney was the first to present the firm's resource-based perspective (Krug & Governance, 2003). Resources and skills have since been identified as being significantly inconsiderate of the origins of long-term competitive advantage. The RBT's most significant part is the phases of resource characteristics that could lead to long-term competitive advantages. Resources and skills are required to acquire the features of being Inimitable (I), Rare (R), Valuable (V), and Non-substitutable (N), thereby leading to a long-term competitive advantage—hence, the VRIN structure. Experimental and theoretical work in other non-strategic management disciplines, such as HRM management, marketing, international business, and economics, have all been mainly affected by the RBT logic (Buller and McEvoy 2012). The model shown below explains the key points of the RBT (Figure 1).

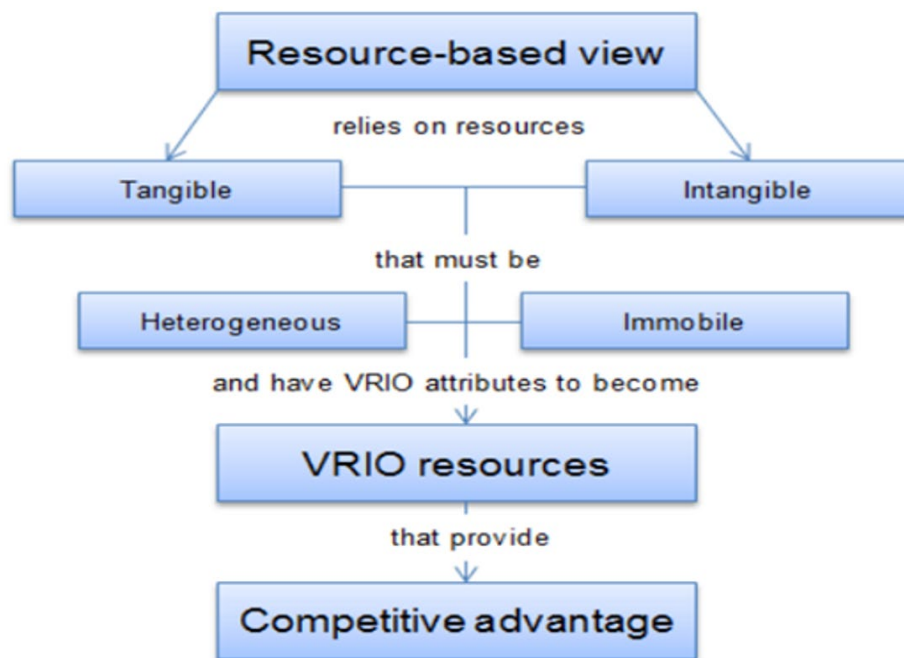


Figure 1. Resource-Based View Theory

2.2 The Significance of Human Resources in Achieving Competitive Advantage

The importance of human resources was supported or explained in the work of Edit Penrose, who developed the resource-based theory of competition. Some researchers in the field of human resources claim that human resource management, as well as competitive advantage both of concepts, is related to each other (Penrose & Penrose, 2009; Chelladurai & Kerwin, 2018). According to Schuler, employee behavior was revealed in the costs and efficiency of business procedures (Cooke et al., 2020). One of his papers indicated that management guru Peter Drucker believes that a company's or industry's competitiveness depends on the efficient use of information as well as knowledge, or the achievement and application of knowledge (Drucker, 2019). Other scholars highlight the importance or role of managers in human resource management concerns or problems.

Many authors have used the resource-based method, supported by Penrose, to highlight the potential of human resources as sources of competitive advantage. This methodology was used by Wright, McMahan, and Mc Williams to investigate how human resources can be a source of long-term competitive advantage (Desa & Asaari, 2020). Employees' skills and abilities were observed as a source of competition by Snell, Youndt, and Wright, who sought to incorporate the resource-based approach and the principle of organizational learning. Eight competitive factors are presented in the World Competitiveness Report of the International Institute for Management Development (Kiseľáková et al., 2018). Three of them deal with employees' skills and capabilities directly or indirectly, as well as highlight the role or importance of human resource management in achieving competitive advantage.

2.3 Three Competitiveness Factors

- The managerial capability that delivers long-term coordination to respond to changes in the global environment; for the integration of business activities, there is a level of entrepreneurship and expertise
- The opportunity to apply existing technology in effective and creative ways to gain a competitive edge.
- A knowledge-based society with a professional workforce that boosts a nation's efficiency and competitiveness. Krueger and Lindahl's work also highlights the effect of human resources on macroeconomic productivity and economic development (2001).

According to some author's study, human resources skills and abilities by making sufficient investments in human capital through higher education and skills training that improves their abilities is the key to improving productivity in the economies studied (Mahmood & Alkahtani, 2018). Human resources have a social dimension that makes them

much more valuable than physical resources in a complex situation (Briongos-Figuero, Cobos-Siles et al., 2020). Other human resource researchers and managers claim that the organizational unit (division, department) for human resource management is critical to enhancing company efficiency (Strandberg, 2009). The contribution of human resources to improving a company's competitive position is determined by their attributes, as well as, more importantly, how well they perform their roles. The VRIO system, created by Barney, can be used to carry out this estimation (Berisha Qehaja & Kutllovci, 2015). The application of the VRIO system should address the question of whether the company's resources, involving human resources, would measure a strength or weakness. This structure's heading is an acronym made up of the first letters of the names of its constituents, namely (Wadhia, 2009):

Value: This is one source that is useful in fending off threats or capitalizing on environmental changes.

Rarity: This is a resource that is infrequently presented between current or future competitors.

Inimitable: This is a resource that is difficult or problematic to duplicate or reproduce.

Organization: Does the company use the resource, or is the company structured in such a way that the resource can be used efficiently? If the company's management cannot understand these characteristics of its human resources, it cannot be assumed that the company can create or improve its competitive advantage through human resources. Human resources that are defined by VRIO system components, on the other hand, can be considered high-quality human resources that can provide long-term competitive advantage. The figure below explains the VRIO system components: Figure 2.

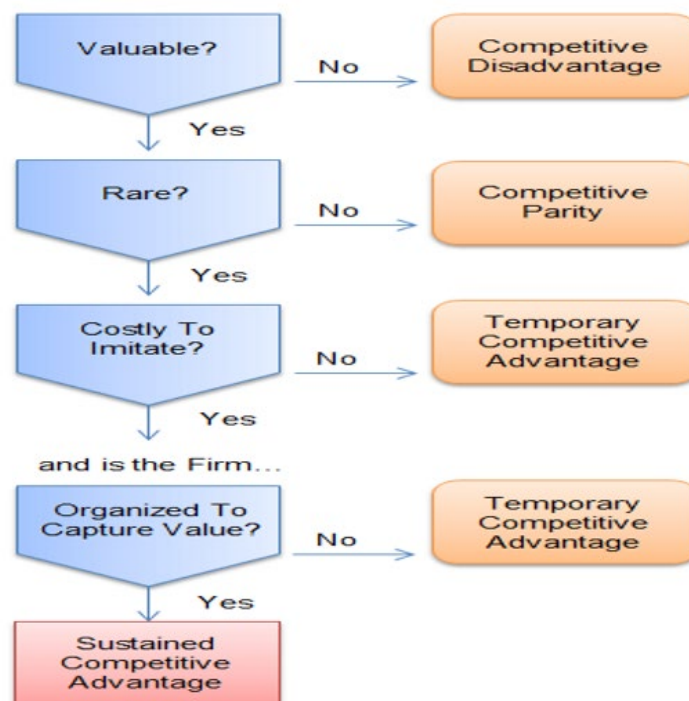


Figure 2. Resource-Based View Theory

2.4 Applying RBT to Public-Sector Organizations

The concept and principle of RBV in private organizations is now being extended to public-sector organizations, according to HRM literature (Xiao et al., 2020). One of the main questions is about the application of the RBV concept in public-sector organizations. There are some researchers; according to their discussion, it is problematic and challenging. According to Hansen (2007), it is more challenging or complicated for public-sector organizations to be familiar with their line of business and the powers that influence that business. Furthermore, RBV emphasizes competition, while public organizations emphasize cooperation (Rosenberg Hansen & Ferlie, 2016). RBV stresses the importance of an organization's ability to acquire specific exclusive resources to achieve competitive advantage

over other organizations. According to Carmeli and Tishler, resource components and the success of a public organization are inextricably linked. According to Ferlie, RBV can be used in the public sector because aspects of strategic techniques used in the private sector can also be used in the public sector (Hansen, 2007).

Burton and Rycroft-Malone used RBV principles to examine the effects of (often complex) healthcare, quality control measures are used. They concluded that the principles were useful in comprehending the effects of dynamic quality management programmes. According to RBV, the most effective way for an organization to attain a competitive edge is to make the best use of its internal capital (Hansen, 2007). Public-sector agencies, according to Matthews and Shulman, should deliver efficient and effective service distribution and production for the benefit of the general public. Popa, Dobrin, Popescu, and Draghici discovered that, when it comes to determining competitive advantage, public-sector organizations differentiate between different types of competitive advantage (Rosenberg, Hansen, & Ferlie, 2016). They aim to achieve competitive advantage by identifying and cultivating the distinguishing characteristics and basic skills that set them apart from other public institutions. As a result, applying the RBT to public-sector organizations will help to clarify how HRM theories move from one sector to the next. In the field of HRM, RBV has had a significant impact on the HRM function's increasingly strategic aspects. It has aided in the formation of a theoretical link between strategy and HRM by establishing a stronger link between HRM and organizational success. Human capital, or purely worker activities, leads to competitive advantage in a business, according to the RBT. (Kamoche, 2001).

HRM activities can be measured as an important internal factor influencing organizational success, according to Sabiu, Tang, and Joarder, because they allow the workforce to perform through the effective use of an internal resource base. Many human resources (HR) researchers have provided evidence that human resource management has a significant impact on the success of businesses. Quresh, Akbar, Khan, Sheikh, and Hijazi, for example, found a link between HRM practices and the financial performance of 46 Pakistani banks (Sabiu et al., 2016). In a separate report, Lazim and Azizan discovered that HRM activities play a significant role in delivering business success in the organization. Karami, Sahebalzamani, and Sarabi conducted a more recent Middle Eastern study on the effect of HR practices in private banks in an Iranian city and discovered that the use of adequate HR practices aligning with an organization's strategy would increase organizational efficiency. All HR tasks tested, according to the findings, have a positive relationship with financial results (Al Wahshi, 2016).

2.5 Implementation of Training and Development Programmes

Training and development implementation is the fourth step of training and process, according to Yamnill (Milhem et al., 2014). The term "training implementation" refers to the process of transforming training programmes into the desired outcomes using a particular diagram or process. Training implementation, according to Ahammad, is a process of putting all learning outcomes into practice within the training environment. According to the available literature, this is the most difficult part of the training process because one incorrect step can lead to entire training programmes failing (Carey, 2017). We have presented results similar to Rosalin et al.'s (2018) findings; the implementation of training is based completely upon the skills and propensity of the trainers (García-Carmona, 2018). The trainers should acquire efficient communication skills so that they can convey training and information to the individuals in a suitable manner. Whether the selected trainers are prepared to deliver the training must be determined. Furthermore, the design of training and development does not imply that the task has been completed. The implementation of the training is crucial. If the staff, equipment, content, course, and subjects are ready, the training will be introduced. The implementation stage necessitates ongoing adjustments, refinements, and redesigns. To achieve organizational success, management must devise a sound strategy for designing and implementing training. Our findings have shown that the management must focus on two key elements: the trainer and the physical setup. Furthermore, the trainer's achievement, experience, and behavior influence both the training implementation and the trainees' learning levels. Iqbal et al., (2011), for example, discovered that trainer performance has a direct effect on training implementation and learning (Iqbal et al., 2011). Al-Mughairi (2018) also revealed that a trainer's behavior affects a trainee's performance and learning (Al-Mughairi, 2018). The performance and behavior of trainers have an impact on the success of training and development programmes (Imran et al., 2015). According to Yamnill (2001), any error at this stage can lead to the failure of the entire training programme (Diamantidis et al., 2014). Furthermore, there is a significant impact on trainer performance and trainees' reactions, which might support the organizations objectives. According to the literature, there are some researchers that have found Figure 3:

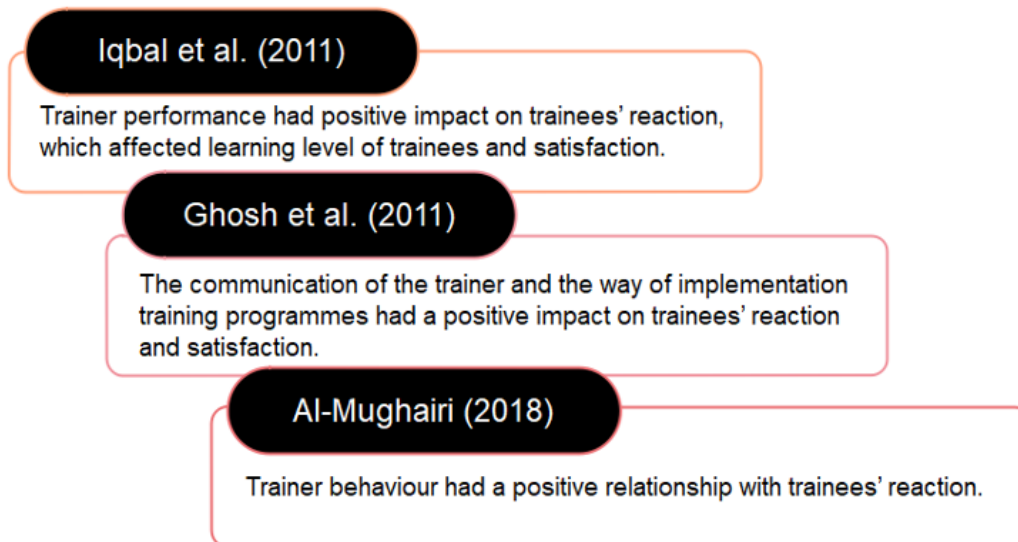


Figure 3. Previous studies

This section lacks research in Arab organizations, as a researcher believes that a trainee's positive reaction will assist them in developing knowledge and skills to improve the organization's performance. This statement prompted the researcher to investigate the causes of poor training and development outcomes in Arab organizations, particularly universities in Saudi Arabia. It is possible that training and development are not being delivered properly, or that trainer performance and behavior are a factor. This study will look at the challenges that universities are facing.

2.6 Training Characteristics Post-Training

2.6.1 Off-the-Job Training

The resistance has been reported in our study for the off-the-job training and has compared with other studies. OJT (off-the-job training) refers to taking workers out of the workplace to train them (Jacobs, 2003). According to some research, OJT is a necessary training technique used to help reduce work stress by removing some of the hustle and bustle and unavoidable frustration of a day-to-day job, thereby allowing workers to absorb the training programme more effectively (McDargh, 2020). Furthermore, OJT might provide trainees with new skills that they could not retain in the workplace or after a work-related move to another country. Furthermore, according to a report by the NEC Group, OJT has improved the expertise and skills of employees in recent years (Anjum, 2020). Lectures and seminars, vestibule training, simulated exercises, sensitivity training, and transactional advice are all examples of off-the-job provision, according to Vasanthi and Basariya (2019). Al-Athari (2000) found that training methods adopted by several organizations in the Arab world have performed inadequately in the process of supporting trainees during their learning (Wamuyu, 2020). It is possible that teachers are not familiar enough with the latest training techniques, such as group discussions and case study reviews, or that trainees cannot agree that these new methods have any real value, and therefore the introduction of new training methods is seen as time-consuming and wasteful (Llorent-Bedmar et al., 2020). Traditional and predictable training methods are most commonly used in Arab organizations, according to Atiyyah (AlKaabi et al., 2020). They are very limited in scope, with lectures being the most prevalent mode of information dissemination. Open discussion groups, research into interesting case studies, role-playing exercises, appropriate games, and the creation of useful simulations are all rarely used (Wang & Braman, 2009). They could be used in tandem to encourage workers to change their working environment, allowing them to interact with people from different backgrounds and cultures. Furthermore, some public sector organizations in developing countries use OJT to transfer experience from developed countries by sending workers for training and education in developed countries. According to a 2018 Saudi Ministry of Education report, Saudi Arabia's higher education institutions sent 92,997 employees to various countries to be educated and trained. They could be used in tandem to encourage workers to change their working environment, allowing them to interact with people from different backgrounds and cultures. Furthermore, some public sector organizations in developing countries use OJT to transfer experience from developed countries by sending workers for training and education in developed

countries.

The Saudi government benefits from this approach because it raises living standards and increases the number of skilled Saudi workers (Hilal et al., 2015). However, this approach has a negative effect on organizations because, due to costs such as transportation and lodging, it is a more costly way of getting access to education. Lynch discovered that employees who have received on-the-job training are more likely to stay with their current employers (Poyrazli & Grahame, 2007). Those who have participated in off-the-job training, on the other hand, will most likely move on to new jobs soon (Hilal et al., 2015). Saudi Arabia's government is confronted with similar challenges.

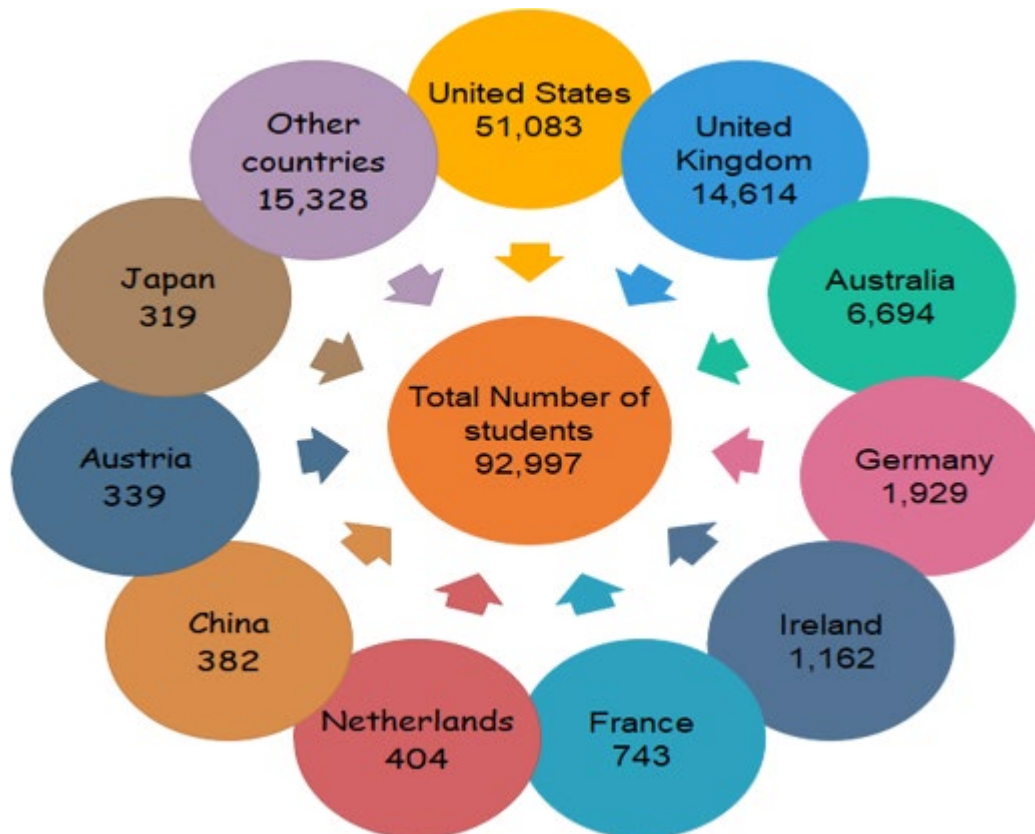


Figure 4. Saudi Ministry of Education 2018 report

2.6.2 On-the-Job Training

According to Arthur et al., (2003), training efficiency appears to vary depending on the training delivery system chosen and the assignment or special skill being taught and near to our findings (Arthur Jr et al., 2003). On-the-job and off-the-job training systems are the two most common types of training. Supervisors perform on-the-job training in some organizations, preferring it to off-the-job training for reasons outlined by Klink and Streumer (Van der Klink & Streumer, 2002). They claimed that the positive relationship between training benefits and costs, the ability to train just-in-time, and the expectation of successful transfer of what was learned to the worker's workplace are the three main incentives for widespread use of on-the-job training. This might be the most satisfying training method for the whole group. It can range from participants simply observing and then imitating the ways and processes used by experienced employees to taking part in carefully structured programmes intended as office practice or workshops. This type of training, which takes place on an organization's premises, could involve watching a skilled employee perform (Kumareswaran, 2018).

This type of training is typically reserved for and provided to new or inexperienced workers, who learn mainly by watching peers or superiors perform tasks and then trying to imitate their actions (Jackson, 2020). This happens often in the workplace. When new technology is introduced, it can be used to enhance the skills of existing employees, such as cross-training employees in a particular department or work unit or orienting transferred or promoted

employees to their new stations and responsibilities (García-Juan et al., 2019).

Reid and Barrington described the technique of “observing an experienced worker” as a “well-established on-the-job procedure” (Collier, 2017). Managers and properly qualified workers provide new hires with any information they need in this situation, and these new hires gradually absorb the company’s practices and standards (Kum et al., 2014). However, although this is the most common and widely used training method by various organizations, and despite its value (particularly for inexperienced workers), it has flaws. Beardwell and Holden pointed out that while this approach might well instil the skills that a person is expected to demonstrate to new employees, that person might lack the ability to train new employees on how to develop those skills (Beardwell et al., 2004). Unfortunately, crucial information could be misplaced or omitted as the demonstrator makes deeply ingrained and, therefore, possibly irreversible decisions about what is and is not necessary in the process being taught.

Essentially, this is a technique known as “learning by exposure” (Kennedy et al., 2020). It assumes not only that a knowledgeable employee has some expertise, but also that a new employee is capable of learning skills and gaining knowledge without pre-designated assistance, except for co-workers’ guidance (Beardwell et al., 2004). As a result, whether there are no incentives to learn or no incentives not to learn, the results are often unsatisfactory, as the would-be trainers are unqualified or unprepared to carry out the required tasks or fulfil the training role.

In addition, as Cole (2002) pointed out, other techniques are used in on-the-job training, one of which is job instruction, which allows trainees to access routine instructions in manual and clerical jobs. In contrast to the “sitting by Nellie” approach, the teachers in this method of instruction are always properly qualified. Another effective strategy is coaching, which consists of a manager assisting a colleague in developing managerial skills through a mentoring process (HHASSAN, 2015). Employees might also benefit from ‘shadowing and work rotation,’ which allows them to gain new skills and knowledge by moving from one department to another, or even to different branches or subsidiaries of the same company. This method has the potential to significantly improve an employee’s learning experience (Eraut et al., 2000). One disadvantage of job rotation is that employees are not always accepted by their colleagues and are often regarded as roadblocks by managers and other employees in performing their daily duties (Cole, 2000). Although rotation allows workers to demonstrate effective skills during their temporary jobs, Raelin (2000) claimed that there is little opportunity for them to reflect on these skills, though they are performed successfully (Raelin, 2008).

Gomez-Mejia et al., (2001) reported nearly the same results with regards to cross-functional training, in which employees are expected to work in several departments or areas of the institution. The method’s objective here is to teach employees how to perform processes in a variety of related fields, not just in their assigned jobs. Most businesses use team training because they believe that increased efficiency can be achieved through the organized use of collective and cooperative units (Morlà-Folch et al., 2019). Typically, employers prefer to implement on-the-job training because it requires less investment of money or time in terms of resources, trainer wages, and instructional design strategies, as noted. However, the strategy has some drawbacks. Managers and supervisors, for example, might not advocate using the same procedure to find work. They might advocate for less effective techniques because they do not fully comprehend the importance of extensive practice, consistent and meaningful demonstration, and the accumulation of feedback in effective on-the-job training. This type of training could result in poor results if these potential dangers are not anticipated and addressed (Morlà-Folch et al., 2019).

Another way to explore and theorize about learning that occurs in the workplace, according to Sambrook (2005), is to think about it in terms of training “at” and “in” work. Learning “at” work refers to the more formal provision of training and education programmes, such as the familiar induction process and a variety of other official and unofficial in-house programmes (Sambrook, 2005). A significant benefit of training “at” work is the separation of training from actual work, in which training is done away from the workplace at a purpose-related venue or technical space that is still within the primary workplace. Workplace learning, on the other hand, is a more casual process (Sambrook, 2005).

2.7 Challenges Faced in the Implementation of T&D

Over the last decade, Saudi Arabia’s higher education system has been one of the fastest-growing in the world. Saudi higher education has faced numerous challenges as a result of its rapid geographical and quantitative expansion. The government and educational planners have made various attempts to overcome the main challenges that higher education faces (Abouammoh, 2018). According to the current findings, which are similar to those reported and available in the literature, implementation is one of the stages of the training process that has a significant impact on the value of training programmes. The researcher posed a series of questions and sub-questions to obtain a detailed understanding of the obstacles to training programme implementation, as well as the methods used to overcome

those challenges (Domitrovich et al., 2000).

Table 1. Challenges in the implementation of training and development, comparing world and Saudi Arabian universities

Challenges in the Implementation of Training and Development		Saudi Arabia University Challenges	Global Scenario
I-Trainings:			
i.	Faculty interest	Lack of interest in trainings, on- and off-campus trainings (Aziz, Mullins et al., 2005).	Proper training arrangement for faculty members through most of the world (Schleicher, 2012).
ii.	Time management	Lack of time is one of the issues, as is work overload (Khalifa, 2014).	Still one of the prime issues, as well as the management of time (Delisle, 2020).
iii.	Financial support	Lack of financial support provided by the university (Alkhazim, 2003).	Developed world providing more than enough funds to its universities and staff (Kaul, Conceição et al., 2003).
iv.	Off-campus trainings	Limited T&D for non-Saudi employees (Kattuah, 2013).	Equal T&D opportunities in most of countries (Davidson et al., 2002).

3. Method

3.1 Study Design

A research design is the procedures and plans necessary to fulfil the objectives and answer the research questions (Dresch et al., 2015). This study can be considered a qualitative exploratory study aimed at exploring the challenges faced by the TNA in four public universities in the context of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) based on academic and HR managers' experience. Hence, the incorporation of a case study approach was highly suitable for this research. Saudi Arabia faces lacking in the applicability of the knowledge. A case study framework allowed the researcher to undertake a thorough examination to achieve the purpose of this study.

3.2 Sampling and Referral Sampling

3.2.1 Sampling

A sample is defined as a subset of entities from which evidence is gathered. This study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with 75 faculty members and senior managers working in four public universities in Saudi Arabia, selected using purposive non-random sampling. The two criteria for selecting universities were that they were considered 'emerging' with regards to their date of establishment (Table 3) and that they had individuals willing to take part in the study. These criteria make this the first study to explore challenges and tensions in the T&D process in emerging universities in the Saudi higher education sector. To ensure respondents' anonymity and confidentiality, the universities were given pseudonyms. The composition of the sample is shown in Table 4.

Table 2. Participating universities

University	Establishment Date
University A	1998
University B	2005
University C	2006
University D	2014

Table 3. Details of the study participants

Participants	Gender	University A	University B	University C	University D	Total
Senior Managers	Male	4	3	3	4	14
	Female	3	4	3	4	14
Academic Staff	Male	5	7	6	8	26
	Female	5	5	4	7	21
Total		17	19	16	23	75

3.3 Thematic Analysis

The data from the semi-structured interviews were analysed using the thematic analysis (TA) approach. This technique is known for its versatility, which allows researchers to access more interesting data in the research questionnaire, sample size, composition, data collection method, and methods to generate meaning (Terry, Hayfield et al., 2017). Researchers have been using TA to explore personal or social experiences surrounding topics such as challenges and to ask questions about the implications of these experiences, which makes it suitable for this study. TA can also be used to analyse a small number with one or two participants or a large number of interview studies with 60 or more participants. This indicates that the technique is suitable for the current study to conduct a large number of interviews. The researcher has used six phases of TA to analyse this data. According to Braun and Clarke, the TA method has six stages for analysing data, each of which must be completed correctly before one moves on to the next; instead, analysis is a recursive process (Cormack et al., 2018). The following figure (Figure 5) demonstrates these six stages and presents the procedures in each stage:

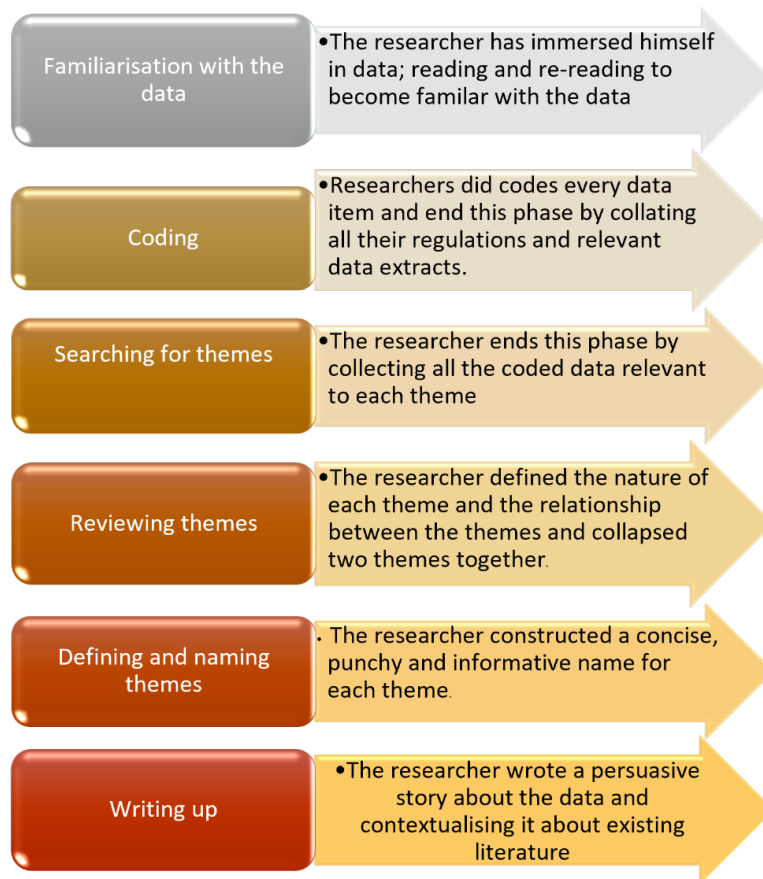


Figure 5. Six stages of the TA technique

The data analysis brings tight some important challenges of T&D in public universities, particularly in Saudi Arabia, based on the experiences of academicians and HR managers. The data collected from the interview was translated and transcribed by the researcher and then transferred to NVivo12 software for analysis. The data analysis process produced several key themes and sub-themes, as shown below.

4. Findings

4.1 The Key Study Participants

This section presents the key participants in the current study.

Table 4. Demographic details of the participants

Participants	Gender	University A	University B	University C	University D	Total
Senior Managers	Male	4	3	2	4	13
	Female	3	2	3	3	11
Academic Staff	Male	5	3	6	8	22
	Female	5	4	4	7	20
Total		17	12	15	22	75

4.2 Challenges Experienced by Public Higher Education Institutions of Learning in Implementing T&D

The researcher asked several questions and sub-questions to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced in the implementation of training programmes. He also researched the methods used to implement training programmes in all these universities and found that public universities use two methods: on-campus and off-campus. The main focus of this section will be on the responses to Q2.

4.2.1 Senior Management Perspective

4.2.1.1 Lack of Interest Among Faculty Members

Several senior directors reported a lack of seriousness among members when training is held outside the university. Some members considered it a way to relax or a form of recreation. This is for several reasons, as summarised by those respondents. The first of these reasons is the absence of follow-up by the employers and the participants' supervisors. Second, some participants had no confidence in the training programmes they participated in because they were not free to select the programme that would meet their training needs.

Participant A037 said:

Some faculty members consider participation in off-campus programmes as an opportunity for recreation and relaxation. This affects the effectiveness of training programmes, and it is a challenge for either external, internal, or on-campus implementation of the training courses.

Participant A033 added the following:

Training programmes conducted off-campus are considered one of the means of luxury and tourism according to what some members think because there is no follow-up by the employers and the supervisors. [This] affect[s] the result and the purpose of these training courses. What is supposed to be a training course appears to be a holiday for most faculty members; so, there is a lack of intent when such courses are conducted off-campus.

As shown above, more faculty members consider participation in off-campus programmes as an opportunity for recreation and relaxation. This impact on-campus training; more senior managers noted that some academic members had shown a lack of interest in on-campus training because they did not receive the same financial advantages as they did with off-campus T&D.

For example, Participant A014 appreciated the fact that:

Members did not have the will and morale to participate in implementing these programmes or attending the programmes on-campus. The lack of interest among faculty members in achieving the programmes' goals is very evident. Also, a group of trainees considered these courses to attain well-being and financial gain only, which resulted in a lack of interest of faculty members [in] attend[ing] any T&D implementation on-campus because they believe these programmes will not advance their careers.

In the context of the issues related to what is reported by Participant A029:

The faculty members do not have the real desire to participate in these courses due to the absence of any financial incentive. This makes participation in on-campus training programmes irrelevant to them as they do not see any personal gain if they attend these training programmes.

Additionally, more senior directors concluded that some members of the academic staff believe that they do not need developing on-campus programmes because they were educated in developed countries, where they got higher degrees. Therefore, they think that T&D on-campus, or in Saudi Arabia in general, would not meet their ambitions.

As Participant A016 stated:

Most of the faculty members believe that obtaining higher university degrees excuses them from participating in training courses provided by the university. [T]hey think they graduated from top universities overseas, I mean developed countries, so they believe that T&D on-campus or in Saudi Arabia, in general, is useless.

4.2.1.2 Lack of Financial Support Provided by the University

Regarding the implementation of off-campus training, most senior employees (directors) confirmed that the university's lack of financial support is another challenge that they faced. An HR director who has 13 years of experience in the HR department at one of the public universities said:

As for off-campus training, the lack of financial support for the implementation of training programmes is considered as the significant challenge faced by this type of training course because we cannot send many faculty members outside the university based on the proposed budget for each year; as you know, that will cost the university more money. In fact, in the last three years, we can see a lack of government support for this kind of training method (A10).

Participant A036 shared the following views:

Concerning the challenges faced by implementing training courses outside the campus, we have already mentioned the high cost that the university bears [in] implement[ing] off-campus training programmes, which results in the small number of nominations available for faculty members to participate in the courses outside the university campus.

Also, several senior manager participants reported the high cost of designing on-campus programmes as another challenge currently faced by universities' HR departments. Thus, universities do not update the training design or define it differently. They do not follow a new training model, as they believe that the high costs do not justify the need to introduce new training programmes for the university faculty staff.

Participant A008, who is one of the senior managers at the university, said:

The high cost of designing training courses on-campus by centres or professionals is the major challenge in designing training programmes and delivering training indoor. This is because they ask for huge sums of money to take on the responsibility of designing the T&D for every college in the university. We in HR cannot provide this money and cover every college training need with our budget.

Participant A021, who is responsible for designing and offering on-campus T&D, revealed:

[There is] not enough money to attract professional designers to work on training design on-campus if we combine that with our budget in the HR department. Our budget is about 5 million Saudi Riyal per year for T&D design and every T&D processing. So, this budget is not enough to train and develop 5,000 academic staff, making it difficult for us in HR to upskill our faculty staff and the teachers to keep up with the modern teaching methodologies.

Another participant (an HR director) noted that the lack of facilities in universities is another challenge.

Participant A001 said:

The lack of training facilities such as rooms or auditoriums limits us to design] deliver the T&D programmes on-campus. For example, we do not have any workshop room for every college, which has affected the training design. The lack of world-class facilities has an impact on the overall quality of education in the Kingdom. Especially these colleges like engineering and medicine which need more practise training.

The university policy practices have been identified as a challenge with regards to the design of T&D on-campus in public universities in Saudi Arabia. Some senior managers said that there was insufficient time to design training courses and deliver them on-campus in a way that met faculty members' needs.

Participant A006, who is one of the senior managers, said:

The time available to design the on-campus programme is not enough because the top managers need to complete all T&D programmes at the end of each semester. So, that means all T&D programmes should be completed in about four months. This policy affected the quality of our programmes; as you can see, we do not have time to design the T&D programmes because the university administration only thinks about the number of training programmes, not the quality, and closed the finishing statement at the end of the fiscal year. That has affected the quality of the training programmes as just rushing through to meet the semester deadlines results in mediocre training programmes which do not meet the objective of developing advanced programmes for the faculty members.

Another senior manager supported that by adding:

There is a lack of sufficient time to design and deliver training programmes on-campus, which affected us in the college because HR needs to finish the training programmes in a short time. This affects the faculty members in their lecture schedule, which, in my view, is the lack of design in general (A032).

4.2.2 Academic Staff Perspective

4.2.2.1 Lack of Time

The vast majority of respondents stated that a heavy teaching workload prevented them from participating in T&D inside the university due to lack of time.

Participant B008 stated:

The challenge faced when attending on-campus or off-campus training is the lack of time. This causes the faculty members to feel reluctant to participate in these training courses. Academic staff are already struggling to find sufficient time to handle their enormous workloads and meet their very tight deadlines; so, it is highly unlikely for them to attend these training courses.

Participant B020 supported this view by saying:

The most prominent challenge in implementing on-campus training is the additional burden placed on the faculty members, as the training courses' implementation occurs after the end of the official working hours. This forces the faculty members to stay at work until late in the evening. The additional teaching and administrative load prevented faculty members from participating in training courses. Also, the implementation of programmes after working hours prevented female members from participating.

Several female staff members face challenges in attending T&D off-campus because family circumstances can be linked to a lack of time, especially among married women who have children. Participant B008 stated:

The difficulty of moving and traveling due to the family circumstances [of] female faculty members, which makes attending the training outside the university arduous and honest, could be why most of us abstain from training outside the campus even though some of us are keen [to do so].

4.2.2.2 Limited Off-Campus T&D for Non-Saudi Employees

Most of the respondents affirmed that bias in selecting members for off-campus T&D is another challenge faced by non-Saudi nationals, as the participants will receive a financial reward. Some employees, as shown above, use off-campus T&D as an opportunity for recreation and relaxation. There was a sense of discontent among some non-Saudi nationals because of what they viewed as bias in selecting participants for off-campus T&D training. They alleged that training needs were determined based on personal relationships.

Notwithstanding the reality that most academic staff in Saudi Arabia are foreign-born, they have limited access to HRD opportunities. The Ministry of Education (2019) reported that 63% of Saudi Arabia's professors are foreign-born. For example, one participant indicated that since he started working for the university, he had received the opportunity to participate in only a single training programme. He said that the course he attended was organized within the university. However, Saudi nationals received help in attending international seminars and conferences on numerous occasions, even though they had the exact expectations.

This statement was supported by Participant B029, who said:

People who attended a training programme were selected based on personal relationships and not on experience or competence in training or training needs. This especially affects those of us who are non-Saudi citizens. When we do not get opportunities to attend training and development programmes off-campus, our performance may be negatively affected.

The expectations of Saudi nationals and foreign workers are equivalent. However, based on the participants' views,

career and training development opportunities are limited for those who do not hold Saudi citizenship, as they are restricted mostly to internal training. This is the basis upon which some participants believe that the system results in discrimination and inequality, with Saudi citizens seen as getting preferential treatment at the expense of their counterparts from other countries. This seems to be mismatched if one considers that an academic institution's success depends on the ability of its entire workforce, whether they are citizens or foreigners.

While I appreciate the training and development programmes held by this university, I still believe that there is a need for more training courses aligned with the needs of faculty members. In my case, since I started working for this university, I have only attended a single training course, and it was held within the university.

4. Discussion

This study has shown the Saudi Arabian higher education sector, specifically publicly funded universities, using both T and T&D implementation methods (on-the-job training and off-the-job training). However, most participants (academic staff) showed a lack of interest in attending (on-the-job training). Many factors might account for these outcomes. Academic staff believes (on-the-job training) is poor training programmes and does not meet the staff needs. Based on the interviews, this obstacle can be credited to the fact that numerous participants lacked confidence in training programmes designed and implemented on-campus. This could be because of bad experiences with such programmes, or the fact that the participants had not been allowed to be involved in the decision-making process, leaving them exposed to improper decisions made by either the company or the supervisors. This conclusion agrees with the findings of Chen et al., (2004), who proposed that an organisation that fails to involve employees in making decisions about their self-development and training will discourage employees from participating in those programmes. This idea is supported by Chen et al., (2004), who said that the course content of a good training programme should be suitable for the requirements of the job and requires training methods identified by those being trained. The same scholars concluded that motivation depends on the degree to which the individuals being trained believe that the training will benefit their carrier and ability to do their work.

From the senior management perspective, the academic staff has little motivation to attend on-the-job T&D programmes and preferring of job T&D methods. The reason could be the rewards policy in Saudi public universities. This policy provides rewards for off-job T&D, such as monetary rewards and free tickets for travelling. Also, the academic staff does not need to carry out any scholarly work, such as research, teaching, etc. On the other hand, there are no rewards for on-the-job training; also, the academic must simultaneously carry out academic work, which means there is no holiday or free time during these T&D periods. In addition, the academic staff's lack of time is a challenge because they must juggle their academic work and on-the-job training. That has been supported by Tenant et al., (2002); most trainers struggle with time management, especially with regards to daily training sessions. Also, many of the academic staff members interviewed for this study do not have a real desire to participate in these courses due to the absence of a financial incentive. This makes participation in on-campus training programmes irrelevant to them, as they do not see any personal gain. That could be a reason for the low academic motivation to attend on-the-job training. Looking at this matter from the expectancy theory view, the reward has a positive impact on the employee's motivation and performance. Victor Vroom (1964) emphasized that the perceptions of individuals towards obtaining rewards at work have a positive impact on their training efforts. This view was also supported by Holton and Baldwin (2003), who concluded that expectations from training are influenced by a distinct connection between outcomes and rewards. The same schools noted that when employees anticipated that the training would result in increased rewards, they tended to perform better.

Another obstacle mentioned from the senior managers' perspective is the lack of financial support provided by the university. In addition, they reported a lack of financial resources and a high cost of designing on-campus programmes as challenges that universities face. This could be one of the challenges faced by T&D generally in Arab countries, as more researchers have found that. For example, Al-Sayyed's (2014) study showed that human resource development in Arab countries lacks financial support and that these countries must develop human capital by improving training and development programmes. Also, a lack of training facilities, such as rooms or auditoriums, limit us to design deliver the T&D programmes in on-campus.

The majority of the academic staff interviewed expressed disappointment with the on-the-job training design and environment, including classrooms, accommodations, equipment, and physical facilities. This could explain the dearth of interest in getting involved in training within the university. Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that most researchers have found that learning is significantly influenced by the training environment. Facticeau et al., (1995) agreed with this view and proposed that the right training environment has a positive influence on employees' motivation. Environment has also been noted to have a positive influence on trainees' satisfaction. For

example, studies by Kirkpatrick (1996) concluded that learning is positively impacted by trainees' positive reactions. Holton and Baldwin (2003) supported this idea and added that numerous factors, such as the attributes of the trainer, the training design, extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, the training environment, the ability to transfer training, social support, and trainee readiness impact trainees' views of the programme. Tracey et al., (2001) suggested that the participants' motivation impacts how prepared such a participant is in relation to the programme. The same views were expressed by Karakowsky (1996), who proposed that when a trainee believes that the training is of no value to their job, they will devote less effort and time to acquiring the knowledge and skills that the job requires.

That will help the organisation achieve the training objectives, which in turn will assist the organisation in achieving competitive advantage. Also, the researcher found that most of the interviewees (academic staff) who complained about the training environment had studied abroad or attended a T&D programme in developed countries such as the UK and the USA. That could be because they had experienced an excellent training environment compared to their work when they returned home. This issue could cause public universities in Saudi Arabia to lose their staff. To see the available literature, review the Saudi Arabia government faced issues, with about 79% of Saudi employees who have been trained in developed countries expressing a willingness to extend their stay abroad (Hilal, 2015). That may be because they have a great training environment, which encourages them to stay overseas. Most organisations in the Arab world lack T&D facilities, which, when they do exist, are traditional, limited, and used infrequently (Charney and Conway, 2005). This could be one of the reasons for the lack of interest in on-the-job training. In fact, such employees must practice the skills they learned in the workplace to achieve the values of T&D programmes; otherwise, these programmes could be a way to lose a time. Charney and Conway (2005) found that the training environment should be similar to the workplace in order to help participants practice what they learn in the workplace and thereby get the benefits of the training programmes.

In terms of the responses related to on-the-job training, the academic staff said that they often repeat programmes they have participated in before. This implies that they believe that the training is often a cut and paste job, with insignificant changes like different trainers, venues, or dates. There might be several reasons for this state of affairs among universities in Saudi Arabia. The first reason is linked to the lack of systematic policies and training procedures in governing and organising the process. For instance, the T&D coordinators interviewed in this study reported that they had no substantial role in designing the on-the-job training with regards to determining the objectives, techniques, or resources. The interviews also show that many senior managers believe that the HR aspect is beyond the scope of their responsibilities because they do not have the knowledge and skills to handle it. Added to this, universities in Saudi Arabia do not have any job descriptions or training paths for HR roles in public universities. This contradicts the suggestion by Herschbach (1997), who believed that training HR managers is essential to correctly delivering T&D programmes.

4.1 Study Limitations

This study has several limitations. The findings cannot be generalised to private universities in Saudi Arabia. The same research carried out in private universities could yield different results. Future research should consider a quantitative or mixed-methods methodology to achieve more refined results.

5. Conclusion

Many challenges still exist in the Saudi higher education system, especially with regards to training and development in the context of implementation. Major challenges include financial issues, a lack of interest among faculty members, a lack of off-campus training for non-Saudi nationals, and time management. Lack of time and work overload might affect the efficiency of faculty members. A proper policy implemented by the Saudi government could tackle existing training and development challenges. Implementation of training and development is the main factor and universities get less of a chance to achieve the target value. Our findings cannot be generalized, and countrywide studies are needed to explore more challenges in this area.

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