

Factors Enabling the Measurement of Return on Investment (ROI) for Academic Staff Training in South African Public Universities

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Abstract

Institutions spend billions of rands in providing staff with training and development interventions to prepare them to meet the demands of the current dynamic environment. However, executives and other stakeholders demand value from all investments. The increasing pressure from top management to rationalise the costs and benefits of training investments led to the measurement of Return on Investment (ROI). However, measuring the economic value of human capital development is challenging as compared to measuring overall business profitability and performance. This study aims to investigate the factors that enable the measurement of ROI for academic staff training in South African public universities. The study/methodology was qualitative and the philosophical approach of interpretivism was adopted. A multi-case study design was used and 14 participants were purposively selected. The cases were comprehensive universities, traditional universities, universities of technology, and government institutions responsible for funding academic staff in South African public universities. Interviews were conducted and the data was analysed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the enablers for measuring ROI for academic staff training included accountability, holistic approach to Human Resource Development (HRD), institutional systems, willingness to conduct ROI, and HRD policy that is explicit on ROI.

Keywords: academic staff, enablers, ROI measurement, interventions, public universities, Return on Investment (ROI), training and development, training evaluation