

**REVIEWING THE IMPLICATIONS OF TRAINING FOR ACADEMIC  
ADMINISTRATION STAFF AT CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY**

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**Abstract**

Training has an effect on employees' performances. Accordingly, the person who is responsible for employees' development must figure out the most effective way to train and develop employees. Central Michigan University (CMU) has recognized the importance of providing appropriate training for employees who have a duty in advising students. The reason is that these employees have a significant impact on students' educational performances. Thus, special attention to this category of employees is needed to improve advising quality. This research attempted to explore the impact of training on academic advising at CMU. Face-to-face interviews and online surveys were used as data collection tools for this study. The study scope consisted of professional and administrative employees who provide academic advising for students and two employees who provide academic advising for students in the MSA department. The primary question asked, what are the impacts of training on academic advisors at CMU? From the data collection, we found out that training had a major role in increasing the performance of professional and administrative employees when they served in an academic advising capacity. However, there were obstacles that the employees believed should be addressed, including unequal chances to receive training, inconsistent training, a focus on certain skills while others were ignored, a lack of trainers, problems in scheduling enough training time, lack of resources for maintaining policy awareness. Thus, this study provided recommendations to eliminate the negative outcomes of those obstacles. we suggested applying practices such as performing needs assessment for employees, evaluating training outcomes, presenting equal opportunities for receiving training, and providing available resources for employees to stay updated on the policy.

**Keywords:** Training, Development, Qualification, quality of outputs, Counseling, Educational achievement, Training Obstacles.

## **Section 1: Introduction**

### **Introduction:**

Day by day, the demands of training and its types have been significantly increasing for each individual who is seeking to improve skills (Khan, Khan, & Khan, 2011). Indeed, in all organizations, whether in public, private, or nonprofit sectors, training is considered one of the most important techniques to advance employees' performance. Training helps employees to raise their productivity and effectiveness. It also refines employees' skills to be able to reach the highest outcome (Khan et al., 2011). This increasing demand is due to the era's huge developments in technological and social interaction, as well as the growth of the world population.

Employees who receive appropriate training that covers most of their needs through the training process gain new approaches to perform their tasks effectively. In addition, training helps them to expand to new behaviors that allow them to deal with surrounding environments professionally. According to Lee, Sarr, and Lai 2014; 75), training "enhance employees' commitment and competence, which in turn, enhance employees' job behaviors and overall service-delivery".

Training's value appears in the area of developing human resources by preparing employees to complete all their assigned work and achieve organizational aims (Dabale, Jagero, & Nyauchi, 2014). Therefore, training comes as a top priority at Central Michigan University (CMU), especially for academic advisors and administrative employees in general. CMU established the HR Professional Development Programs department in order to cover employees' needs in areas of improvement, including increasing employee knowledge, capability, and skills. It also raises employees' confidence to perform work in the most creative ways. One of the department's methods is using training as an effective tool ("Welcome to Professional,").

There is a need to train administrative employees, especially academic advising employees. In fact, training them leads to changes in the individual or group, particularly in the areas of gaining new knowledge, methods of work, and skills. Also, training increases performance rates and promotes best-practice behaviors. It provides trainees with appropriate strategies to perform their responsibilities and tasks with higher quality outcomes. In fact, the relationship between student and academic advisor will lead students to academic achievements. By giving this position more attention, CMU will become a better place for completing one's education.

CMU executives have taken the importance of training under consideration: "We are dedicated to becoming *Your First Choice for Training and Development Needs at CMU!*" ("Welcome to Professional,"). They give a lot of support tools to the CMU academic advising employees by providing them with the appropriate training, such as technological, administrative, and communication training. In fact, due to the growing number of domestic and international students at CMU, which already has more than twenty-seven thousand students, there is an evident demand to develop the human resources who work for the university (Central Michigan University Website). In addition, the increasing number of students leads to an increase in the level of managerial task complexity. Along the same lines, this position, academic advising employees,

are crucial because they work closely with students. Accordingly, the level of accuracy and speed in achieving administrative tasks is critical. This is because “a lack of training and development for advisors might be a contributor to lower retention rates” (Mikluscak, 2010, p.1). Accordingly, in order to increase employees’ retention, the application of training should be considered by the university.

### **Research Question:**

Since CMU has faced an increasing number of students from all over the world, the needs of providing appropriate training for the employees who have a role in advising students are important. In order to direct students optimally, CMU is required to offer developmental tools for the employees who have close relationships with students in the area of guiding them toward academic accomplishments. Many research findings have the high value of training in seeking to improve employees’ outcomes.

The primary research problem emphasized this question: What are the impacts of training on academic advisors at CMU?

From this question, other minor questions were generated:

- 1- To which extent does training help the academic advisors to raise their performance?
- 2- Does training have any obstacles that limit it from achieving its goals in order to increase academic advisors’ performance? If yes, what are the suggested solutions to overcome these obstacles?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The research paper aimed to acknowledge the training impacts on academic advisor employees’ performance, to explore to what extent training increases academic advisor employees’ performance, to recognize if there are obstacles that face training and hinder its goal in raising academic advisor employees’ performances, and finally, to discover some solutions for overcoming training obstacles. This research can make a difference for those in leadership positions at CMU and all academic advising employees at CMU by informing them about training and its types in order to raise employees’ performance, especially in academic advising areas. This research is considered to be feedback for executives and other administrative departments as they seek to correct any insufficiencies. Accordingly, they can find solutions to most obstacles that are considered an impediment to reaching work goals.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study focused on training in order to increase academic advisors’ performance at CMU. The number of participants in the sample was planned to be around 50 male and female advisor employees at CMU in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, US. In addition, although one way to discover the impact of training on the academic advisors is to ask students about the quality of their advisors’ performance, the researcher did not involve this technique. The study did not include students in the sample in order to explore their opinion about their trained advisors.

## **Section2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction to the Literature**

In this section, we will concentrate on previous studies that have addressed two concepts: academic advisors and training. This section will review some aspects that relate to academic advisors' roles in improving students' performances, advisors' development, and advising tools. we will explore research that has emphasized the relationship between academic advisors and students. Also, the impact of training and development tools in advising will be discussed, as well as training roles in reducing wrong behavior-practice. In addition, the section will highlight some obstacles that limit training efficiency.

### **Presentation of the Literature**

Academic advisors' impact on students. One of the main roles for academic advisors is holding the student's hand toward success. Young-Jones, Burt, Dixon, and Hawthorne (2013) evaluated the way that academic advisors cover students' needs. They discussed the relationship between the students and their academic advisors from different angles: "Advisor accountability, advisor empowerment, student responsibility, student self-efficacy, student study skills, and perceived support" (Young-Jones et al., 2013, p. 1). All of these aspects that were mentioned above play vital roles in students' ability to succeed.

Young-Jones et al. (2013) investigated the factors that enhance students' achievement during their educational journeys. One of these factors is to provide appropriate academic advising that enhances students' experiences and supports students in order to help them have more educational achievements. The authors discovered the ways that help students to attend classes through academic advising. They said, "One area in which an institution can formally implement quality exchanges between students and the academic environment is through the academic advising process" (Young-Jones et al., 2013, p. 8). According to the authors, although the level of advising quality obviously could affect the students' educational attainment, some organizations have not considered the importance of advising efficiency. This fact was a result of the survey that was conducted in some institutions; a small number of these institutions had a system that supported the advising process in order to raise students' efficiency.

Academic advisors, in order to be successful in driving students toward achievement, have to consider the obstacles that might negatively influence the students. They can accomplish this by setting an accurate plan designed to eliminate students' difficulties. Darling (2015), in his study, mentioned some types of obstacles that students may have. One type of student who experiences obstacles is commuter students, who are the "students who do not live in institution-owned housing" (Jacoby, 1989, p. 5, as cited by Darling, 2015). Academic advisors have to account for commuter students' issues, which include their low level of engagement, whether in their social or academic lives. Consequently, this may cause them to feel marginalized and unwelcome. However, academic advisors can professionally handle commuter students' issues by creating an appropriate plan with respect to their educational objectives.

Tools that support the academic advising process. The academic advising process contains different types of tools that are used in order to enhance the process of providing advice. One of the most effective tools is using technology to support the academic advising process. The authors Feghali, Zbib, and Hallal (2011) discussed the usage of technology to manage student advising. The researchers in this study aimed to introduce their new approach to advising, which was “the Online Advisor”. They emphasized the importance of creating a “Web-based Tool” for students to use during their academic careers (Feghali et al., 2011, p. 82). They reasoned that the online advisor approach allows students and academic advisors to utilize the technology tools that are provided by the university. Accordingly, this will quicken the process of advising with lesser effort.

Feghali et al.’s (2011) study aimed to examine the effectiveness of technology usage when processing academic advising at the Olayan School of Business. Feghali et al. (2011) stressed the significance of supporting students to complete their required classes in order to graduate. Academic advisors, while achieving tasks, might face different issues, chances, and improvements, and they must be able to adapt to these changeable situations. In addition, the authors highlighted the benefit of using technology to raise the quality of decisions and to simplify the process of providing advising. Using technology as an advising tool will support the area of “leveraging repetitive tasks on software and dedicating time” (Feghali et al., 2011, p. 82). The authors mentioned an idea that information system (IS) students at the American University of Beirut have come up with. IS students proposed a system that contains students’ educational details, such as academic plans and class requirements. Accordingly, authorized persons can have access to the students’ profiles and can check students’ status and their educational level.

Moreover, Feghali et al. (2011) presented the benefit of technology usage. Technology enhances the process of offering services. For example, advisors and students will benefit from technology by generating high accuracy decisions. The researcher pointed out the university’s role in improving academic advisors’ usage of technology and addressing their ability to benefit from this tool. Additionally, the web-based tool and data that relate to students should be under consideration when implementing improvements. Moreover, universities should assess student and advisor interaction in order to evaluate their quality. Technology usage will help advisors and students to save their time. For example, prior to a face-to-face meeting, advisors can have access to the students’ profiles to get needed information in order to provide quick advice and accurate plans in a short time (Feghali et al., 2011). In addition, students can access their online advisors to check necessary information. The online advisor provides needed data and answers for common questions that help students in the areas of solving problems, making decisions, and setting plans. Moreover, depending on the students’ majors, the online advisor provides categories for the “pre-requisites, core-requisites, a number of credits attained, and graduation requirements” (Feghali et al., 2011, p. 86). Accordingly, the online advisor tool will be a vital resource for students and advisors.



An alternative strategy that Soni, Kosicek, and Sandbothe (2014) presented is employing business process improvement to academic advising. The authors stated that the goal of business process improvement is “to eliminate waste” and “produce goods or services with lower cost and/or higher quality” (Soni et al., 2014, p. 104). This can be done by applying “quality function deployment, benchmarking, value chain analysis and business process reengineering” (Soni et al., 2014, p. 104). The authors focused on the developments that are not expensive or difficult to implement when providing advise. One improvement that was made was that advisors had access to students’ files prior to the appointments. As a result, it allowed advisors to be well prepared in order to provide the most effective advising.

A lot of research has provided academic advisors with strategies to realize students’ disorders, as well as tools to handle these disorders. Robbins (2012) stated that academic advisors are not required to fully understand how to handle students’ health problems; however, academic advisors are expected to identify the existence of the problem from communication with students. The author listed the positions that can hold the responsibility of advising, such as faculty, directors, coordinators, and graduated assistants. Robbins (2012) highlighted training’s role in the area of raising advisors’ effectiveness to handle difficult situations. He offered the three types of training that are needed, informational, relational, and conceptual. Each one of these types focuses on some areas of advisors’ personal growth, such as interpersonal skills, mental theories, and supportive tools. In the end, Robbins (2012) highlighted the benefit of working together and cooperating between advisors and counselors in order to provide the best practice of advising.

Supporting advisors’ development. In the area of advisors’ growth, Daly and Sidell (2013), in their study, recommended supplying appropriate training for academic advisors. The researchers used provided information to assess academic advising and its level of effectiveness, as well as aspects of advisors’ strengths and obstacles. Accordingly, this will enable universities to determine which training program is proper for their academic advisors. The authors pointed out the importance of offering effective tools for students to have a superior education, and one of these tools is academic advising.

In order to improve the quality of the advising, Daly and Sidell (2013) emphasized using training as a tool to improve academic advisors’ skills. Moreover, the authors found out that one of the academic advisors’ challenges was receiving too little attention from the universities. This was obvious in the university’s lack of training, which resulted in the advisors not understanding the university’s new requirements. As a result, the authors suggested that the central advising office and social work program director could be responsible for providing training (Daly & Sidell, 2013).

Indeed, training and development for academic advisors is an assistance tool; accordingly, it should be evaluated yearly in order to guarantee the benefit for the academic advisors (Gordon, Habley, & Grites, 2011). The authors provided some strategies that can be used within a training program to help the trainees get great value from the program. Trainers can apply a case study, simulations, and role-plays (Gordon et al., 2011). A provided training program is required to cover the main aspects of “conceptual, informational, and relational

skills” (Gordon et al., 2011, p 338). Additionally, training should reach the advisors’ level of expectations and match their vision of growth. Also, advisors, in seeking to develop their skills and achieve great development, have to benefit from the training they receive. They should consider what they have learned from each training session and create an accurate plan to advance. The authors stated that most of the time, universities change their educational programs, including classes’ hours, requirements, and electives; consequently, students need someone to inform and direct them about any updates and changes that relate to their education.

**Training impact and obstacles.** Kroll and Moynihan (2015) highlighted the main roles of training in improving employees’ outcomes. Training can be used as a tool to reduce the gap between employees’ ability and the level of task complexity. The researchers underlined the positive results of utilizing training as a developmental strategy. The need for training is noticeable when the organizations are planning to set new policies and work procedures. Appropriate training is an effective method that helps employees to implement these new policies within their work. Also, training provides employees with enough instructions and clarification of the new policies application. Training should meet employees’ needs and expectations. Although training efficiency is noticeable by most organizations, there is a lack of training applications in the area of employee development (Kroll & Moynihan, 2015).

In fact, besides the lack of provided training within most organizations, Witesman and Wise (2012) pointed out other negative aspects of the training implementation. The researchers stated that most organizations have provided training with less consideration of the employees’ needs. Accordingly, most provided training does not cover employees’ needs and ultimately results in low quality of employees’ performances. Witesman and Wise (2012) discussed the training impact on creating positive changes in the employees’ behaviors. Training supports employees to obtain needed skills and preserve work values.

### **Summary of the Literature**

This section aimed to cover many aspects that relate to the advisors’ impact on students’ performance. Also, it highlighted the close relationship between academic advisors and students, since advisors’ main role is directing students toward achieving their educational goals. Accordingly, their level of efficiency will be reflected in students’ outcomes in the school. Most of the researchers in this field have focused on students’ performance and what types of factors impact their level of achievement during their educational journey. One of the most common factors is a performance of academic advising employees, who direct students and give them appropriate counsel about their courses, as well as support them to handle any obstacles that hinder achieving their goals. In this case, providing development tools for academic advisors is an important requirement. Executives who work in the area of employee development must consider training as one of the best methods to increase the quality of academic advisors. In fact, many studies have discussed the relationships between students and their academic advisors. Finally, this chapter highlighted the studies that emphasized the importance of training academic advisors, as well as training obstacles.

### **Section 3: Research Methodology**

#### **Research Approach**

The aim of this research was to identify the impact of training on academic advising employees at CMU. Also, this study sought to recognize the steps that should be taken to develop academic advising positions, as well as realize the potential obstacles that limit training quality. Finally, effective solutions to handle those obstacles, if there were any, were discovered.

In this section, the researcher will explain the study's approach and the tools that will be utilized. Also, we will introduce the study samples, such as the number of participants, their positions, and other information. The study tools to collect the data will be provided, as well as the ways of analyzing the ultimate findings.

#### **Data Collection Method and Procedures**

Data collected. First, there were four people who were expected to be interviewed and two types of interviews that were conducted, one for employees who are in managerial positions and one for employees who have a role in providing academic advising. The reason was interviewing them would help to gain more knowledge and information in general about developing and training academic advising employees at CMU.

Second, the researcher surveyed individuals from the Professional and Administrative Positions who have academic advising responsibilities and was planning to survey academic advisors in the Academic Advising and Assistance Department. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used in order to get a sufficient amount of information about academic advisors' perspectives about the training that was provided for them.

Primary research question and sub-question data details. The primary research problem emphasized this question: What are the impacts of training on academic advisors at CMU? In order to answer the primary research question, it was important that the sub-questions were answered as well. The collected data from interviews and surveys were intended to answer the sub-questions. In order to conduct the study, the number of academic advisors and employees who have tasks that involve advising students needed to be identified.

The first sub-question asked to what extent training helped the academic advisors to raise their performances.

The second sub-question asked if training had any obstacles that limited it from achieving its goals in order to increase academic advisors' performance.

The third sub-question asked if there were obstacles, what the suggested solutions were to overcome these obstacles.

In addition, the interview tool was used to answer the primary research question with more general information.

Data collection procedures. Two types of collecting methods were implemented in the research. First, an online survey was planned to be used as a tool to collect research data from CMU's academic advisors in the Academic Advising and Assistance Department, as well as the staff who are in Professional and Administrative Positions that have academic advising responsibilities. Indeed, collecting data from different positions would support the researcher and guide the study to reach accurate findings.



**Target Population.** This study aimed to collect data from CMU's employees who have a role in advising students. The people in the sample were the employees who have a role in providing academic advice for students, varied between male and female employees. In fact, there was not a targeted number for the survey, and the study depended on the number of the responses, while the target number for the interview was planned to be four employees. The interview was planned to be conducted with the Manager of Professional Development Programs within the Human Resources Department at CMU and the Executive Director of the Academic Advising and Assistance Department, as well as two employees who provide academic advising for students in the MSA department. All of them are working for CMU.

**Sample Details.** All of the participants in the sample are working at CMU. Employees who have a task in advising students were under consideration, including both male and female employees. Also, four employees were planned to be interviewed: the Manager of Professional Development Programs within the Human Resources Department at CMU and the Executive Director of the Academic Advising and Assistance Department, as well as two employees who provide academic advising for students in the MSA department.

**Procedures.** After approving the survey questions, the HR and the academic advising departments at CMU sent out the survey to the academic advisors and professional and administrative staff who have a role in providing academic advising via email.

**Timing.** The online survey was distributed to the targeted people, and the interviews were conducted when meetings were scheduled. Both surveys and interviews were planned to be conducted during the first two weeks after receiving approval. In case of a lack of responses within the first two weeks, extending the timeframe might have been needed.

### **Methodological Limitations**

This research did not cover all employees at CMU. The researcher focused on the positions that relevantly work with students to adjust their schedule, especially the employees who have a role in advising students, including directing them to be successful and eliminating their educational problems. In addition, the study only targeted employees at CMU, therefore limiting the ability to generalize the findings and recommendations, as well as reducing the application of the conclusions to all people in the same position outside of CMU.

## **Section 4: Data Analysis**

### **Introduction**

This research aimed to review the impact of training in academic advising at CMU. Certain types of CMU employees who have academic advising duties were the target for this study. The research data was collected using an online survey and interviews. In this study, we originally intended to survey two groups: the employees who worked as professional and administrative staff, and the employees who worked within the academic advising department. However, permission could not be acquired to distribute the surveys to academic advising employees, so the researcher had to limit the scope of the study to include only the professional and administrative staff who have a role in advising students. This also lowered the number of participants from 50 to 33. we received

permission from the HR employee responsible for employee relations to distribute the survey to professional and administrative staff.

In addition, we scheduled meetings with employees within the MSA department to conduct face-to-face interviews. However, we to limit the interviews from four to two employees who provided academic advice for students in the MSA department, instead of also interviewing two other positions: the executive director of Academic Advising and Assistance at CMU and the manager of Professional Development Programs within the Human Resources Department at CMU. These positions were not interviewed because of scheduling issues.

This section will present the results of both tools: online surveys and interviews. The result of the online survey will be shown using text, figures, and tables. The result will also be analyzed using descriptive statistics. The interview results will consist of content analysis to pin-point the key ideas, words, and themes that were used by the interviewees.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

**Question one.** This question asked participants whether or not they were academic advisors or if they had a role in advising students. Out of 33 participants who responded, 11 (33%) answered yes, and 22 (67%) answered no. The participants who answered yes were asked to continue answering the survey; the participants who answered no were asked to cease the survey. The number of responses varied between the questions because some participants did not answer the entire survey.

**Question two.** This question asked whether or not the participants were provided with training for their advising role. Out of 11 participants who responded, nine (82%) answered yes, and two (18%) answered no.

**Question three.** This question asked the participants whether or not the provided training helped them to raise their performance quality. Out of 10 participants who responded, the majority of the responses were “agree” (50%) and “strongly agree” (30%). However, one participant chose “strongly disagree” (10%), and one chose “neither agree nor disagree” (10%). According to the responses, it is obvious that training does have a positive impact on performance quality. The responses to this survey question can be found in Figure 1.

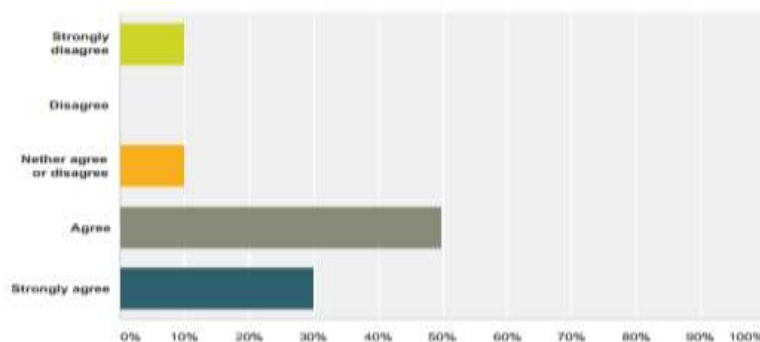


Figure 1. The impact of training in performance.

**Question four.** This question asked the participants whether or not the training curriculum contents provided the skills needed for an academic advising role. Out of 10 participants who responded, most respondents chose “agree” (70%) and “strongly agree” (10%). Only one participant answered, “neither agree nor disagree” (20%). Overall, this showed that training curriculum does provide the skills needed for an academic advising role. The responses to this survey question can be found in Figure 2.

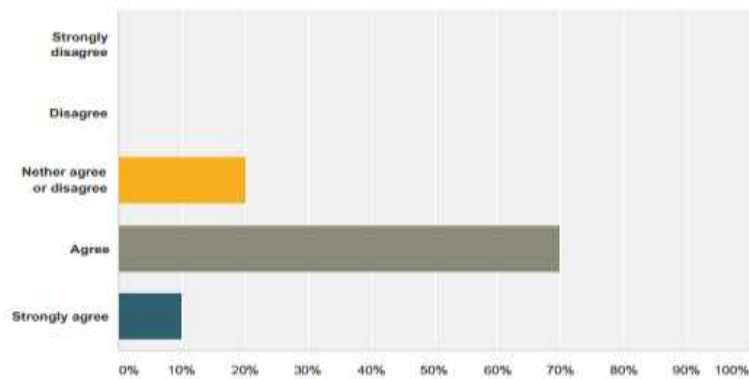


Figure 2. Training curriculum provides the skills needed for an academic advising role.

**Question five.** This question asked the participants whether or not the training contributed to increasing skills and creativity to perform advising tasks professionally. Out of 10 participants who responded, the majority responded “agree” (70%), and “strongly agree” (10%). Only one participant chose “strongly disagree” (10%), and one participants responded “neither agree or disagree” (10%). The overall result of this question revealed that training does help to increase the employees’ skills and creativity to perform advising tasks professionally. The responses to this survey question can be found in Figure 3.

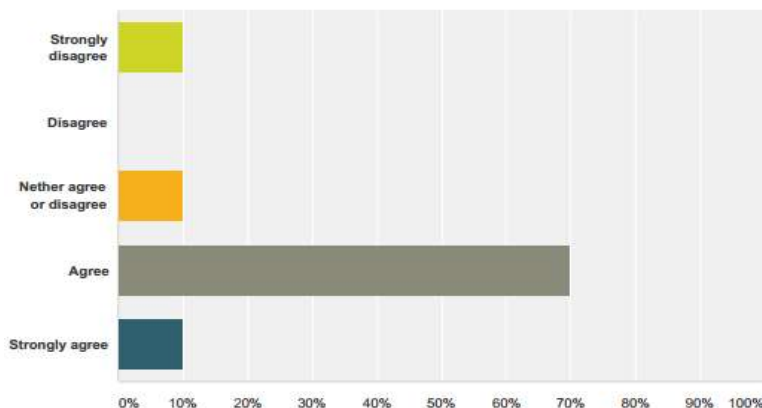


Figure 3. Training contributes to increasing skills and creativity to perform advising tasks professionally.

**Question six.** This question asked the participants whether or not the chance to receive training was always available. Out of 10 participants who responded, the responses were more split between agree and disagree. Three participants chose “agree” (30%), and only one participant chose “strongly agree” (10%). On the other hand, three participants chose “disagree” (30%), and

two chose “strongly disagree” (20%). There was one participant who selected “neither agree or disagree” (10%). Accordingly, not all employees agreed that the chance to receive training was always available. The responses to this survey question can be found in Figure 4.

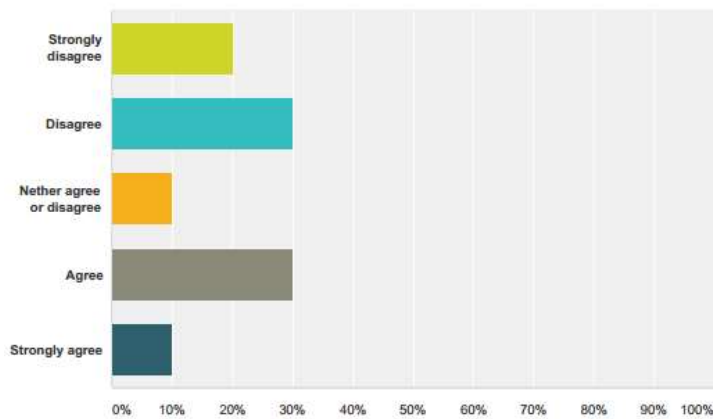


Figure 4. The chance to receive training was always available.

**Question seven.** This question asked the participants whether or not there was a chance for them to determine which type of training is needed. Out of 10 participants who responded, about half of respondents chose “agree” (40%) and “strongly agree” (10%). Of the other half of respondents, three selected “neither agree or disagree” (30%), and two chose “strongly disagree” (20%). Thus, not all employees agreed that they had a chance to determine the type of training that is needed. The responses to this survey question can be found in Figure 5.

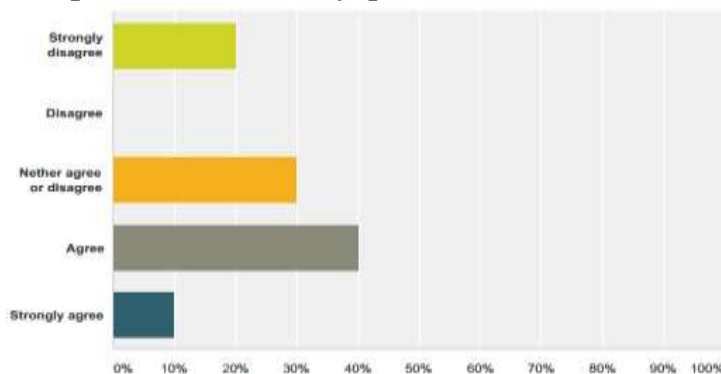


Figure 5. Shows chance for them to determine which type of training is needed.

**Question eight.** This question asked the participants whether or not training increased their ability to create appropriate decisions and offer quick solutions to advising-related issues. Out of 10 participants who responded, the majority of the participants answered “agree” (60%) and “strongly agree” (20%). In contrast, there was one participant who selected “neither agree or disagree” (10%) and one who answered “strongly disagree” (10%). Overall, most of employees agreed that training does increase their ability to create appropriate decisions and offer quick solutions to advising-related issues. The responses to this survey question can be found in Figure 6.

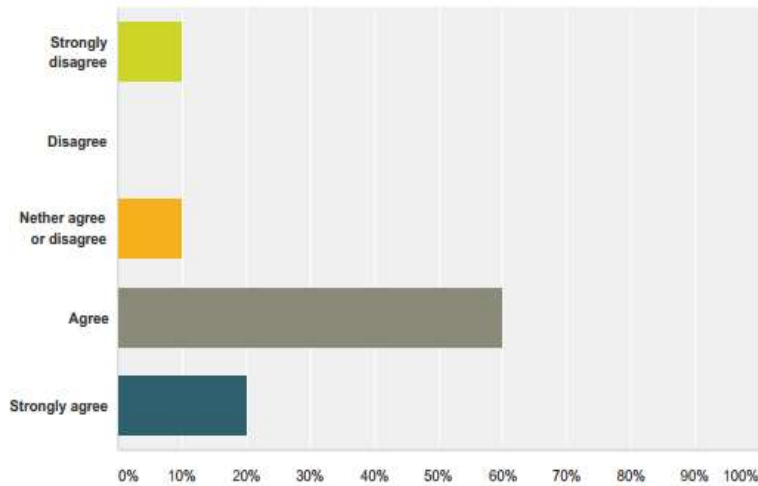


Figure 6. Training increased their ability to create appropriate decisions and offer quick solutions to advising-related issues.

**Question nine.** This question asked the participants which areas of their work experience training most contributed to. There were five statements, as well as an “other” response. The participants were able to choose one or more answers that best represented their opinion. The most chosen answer was “Training increases the confidence level of academic advising employees” (90%). The second most frequent answer was “Training reduces work mistakes while employees perform tasks” (80%). There were two answers that had the same percentage of responses, “Training promotes collaboration among academic advising employees” (50%) and “Training allows academic advising employees to reach their potential for achieving complex tasks” (50%). The least chosen answer was “Training contributes to the elimination of work pressure” (20%). Thus, the employees agreed that training has the biggest effect on their level of confidence, reducing mistakes, and promoting collaboration among academic advising employees, as well as allowing academic advising employees to achieve complex goals. The responses to this survey question can be found in Table 1.

Answer Choices	Responses
Training promotes collaboration among academic advising employees	50%
Training increases the confidence level of academic advising employees	90%
Training contributes to the elimination of work pressure	20%
Training reduces work mistakes while employees perform tasks	80%
Training allows academic advising employees to reach their potential for achieving complex tasks	50%
Other: Please specify: .....	0%

Table 1. Areas of employees’ work experience training most contribute to.



**Question ten.** This question asked the participants whether or not there were some obstacles that limited the benefits of training. Out of 10 participants who responded, half of the participants selected “agree” (50%). The rest of the responses were split between “neither agree nor disagree” (30%), “disagree” (10%), and “strongly disagree” (10%). This result suggested that some employees have experienced obstacles and some have not. The responses to this survey question can be found in Figure 7.

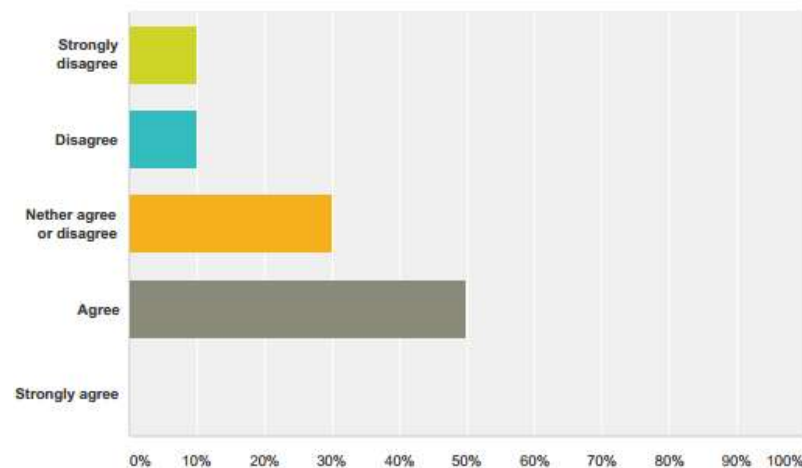


Figure 7. The existence of obstacles that limit the benefits of training.

**Question eleven.** This question asked the participants if they answered the previous question with “strongly agree” or “agree,” from their experience, what they believed the most obvious obstacles that limited training efficiency was. There were eight options, as well as an “other” response, and the participants were able to choose one or more answers. Out of five participants who responded, three of them selected “The chance to receive training is not equal between employees” (60%). The second most chosen option was “The training curriculum focuses on certain skills while ignoring others” (40%). The rest of the responses were between “There are not enough trainers who are available to train” (20%) “The hours that are assigned for training do not cover all training requests” (20%), and “other” (20%). The person who chose “other” stated that “Currently, the training is just done within a person's own staff.” The result showed that the biggest obstacle in training was the chance to receive training is not equal between employees. The responses to this survey question can be found in Table 2.

Answer Choices	Responses
There are not enough trainers who are available to train	20%
There is no chance for academic advisors to determine which type of training is needed	0%
The Trainer focuses on telling more than teaching the skills	0%
There is not enough incentive for academic advising employees to participate in training	0%
There are no incentives or bonuses for academic advising employees who join the training program	0%
The chance to receive training is not equal between employees	60%
The training curriculum focuses on certain skills while ignoring others	40%
The hours that are assigned for training do not cover all training requests	20%
Other: Please specify: .....	20%

Table 2. The most obvious obstacles that limited training efficiency.

Question twelve. This question asked the participants the suggested solutions for overcoming potential obstacle(s). There were four options, as well as an “other” response, and the participants were able to choose one or more answers. Out of 10 participants who responded, the most chosen answer was “Requiring continual training” (60%), while 50% of participants selected “Performing needs assessments.” Also, there were four participants who selected “Evaluating training outcomes” (40%), and two participants answered, “Considering training equality for the employees” (20%). The result of the question illustrated that the employees chose to require continual training as the best solution to overcome potential obstacles. The responses to this survey question can be found in Table 3.

Table 3. The suggested solutions for overcoming potential obstacles.

Answer Choices	Responses
Performing needs assessments	50%
Evaluating training outcomes	40%
Considering training equality for the employees	20%
Requiring continual training	60%
Other: Please specify: .....	0%

Face-to-face interview results. The first question asked whether or not they thought CMU development programs had met their needs, and why or why not. Interviewee A responded by saying that CMU's HR Professional Development did not meet her needs because they did not have formal academic advising training, and training was only done by the academic advising department. On the other hand, Interviewee B disagreed with Interviewee A and said that yes, the development program had covered her needs. She elaborated by expressing her opinion that the development programs had provided her with many options in order to raise her advising performance:

Working in higher education, it is commonly encouraged that employees are "life-long learners", so, we are offered many opportunities to attend workshops and conferences and collaborate with other colleagues to find "best practices" so we can best serve our students.

*The second question* asked whether or not the interviewees received training that focused on academic advising, and if yes, they were asked about their experience with this training. If not, the participants were asked if there were any other skills that should be included in that training. Both interviewees answered that they had received training. Interviewee A answered that she received training that focused on academic advising, but the advising mostly was provided by her coworkers within the department rather than the HR department:

Most academic advisors have worked within the advising area or within a college university setting and have some experience prior to the position. The training was provided by fellow academic advisors (co-workers) that are/were in the positions currently. The training was for a set period of time, such as four to six weeks. Then they were always available to assist with further training and advising when the situation would arise.

Interviewee A added that the other skills that should be in the training included time management, customer service skills, and how to use various systems. In the same vein, Interviewee B said she received training that improved her academic advising skills, especially, when she was trained by observing other advisors' performances:

When I first hired on, I was given the opportunity to "shadow" advisors who were familiar with the students and the programs. By observing their interactions I was able to informally practice and train to understand the appropriate communications with the students. Additionally, we have open lines of communication so we can work with one another to find the answers to any issues or concerns that we may have regarding any advising questions.

Interviewee B elaborated that what refined her skills was attending conferences conducted by The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), The Michigan Academic Advising Association (MIACADA), and McGill Institute for Aerospace Engineering (MIAE) besides participating in workshops. She added that the other skills that should be in the training included cultural differences awareness, empathy training, and general counseling techniques.

The third question asked about common obstacles that might limit academic advising efficiency. Both interviewees agreed that there were some obstacles that could hinder their ability to best practice advise. Interviewee A specifically mentioned that the most prominent issue was in communicating changes in policy. She expressed that for advising in general, the employees have to stay up to date in order to become aware of the newest policy, which can be difficult and time-consuming, too. She emphasized the importance of knowing new policies by saying:

The constant changing of policies and/or procedures makes it imperative for the advisor to maintain their knowledge or at least have resources that they can go to. These can affect the outcome of the student obtaining their degree.

However, Interviewee B thought that lack of financial resources for training, English language barriers, and cultural issues were the most obvious obstacles that affect the advising role.

The next question asked if the participants thought the training was one of the best solutions to overcome those obstacles and if so, why or why not. Both interviewees had the same point of view. In particular, Interviewee A answered that the solutions depended on the obstacles, but that training will always be advantageous for the academic advisors when trying to maintain their skills. Similarly, Interviewee B answered training would be the best solution for overcoming obstacles, and she followed her answer by stating that training helps academic advisors to identify students' needs and address them successfully. Also, she stressed the importance of continuing training throughout her advising career in order to be better prepared for any potential obstacles and student-related issues:

“Professional” educational opportunities, to learn from the experts how to continue to improve our advising skills and be knowledgeable about the programs that we advise for.

### **Section 5: Conclusion, and Recommendations**

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Training should be taken step by step in order to ensure its efficiency, which means carefully planning for each stage when providing training for professional and administrative employees who have duties in advising students at CMU. The author suggests several steps when implementing training as a tool to develop the employees' advising skills. The HR department and MSA department at CMU could utilize the following recommendations since the study's scope involved employees who work within those departments.

1. Needs assessment. The needs assessment should be considered as a method that simplifies the process of identifying employees' weaknesses. Then, the results of the needs assessment can help accurately create a training program that improves individual performances. There are many methods that help in identifying employees' weaknesses, such as distributing questionnaires and interviewing employees personally. In fact, these steps are important when evaluating training outcomes.

2. Evaluating training outcomes. By applying a needs assessment as the first step, the department responsible for providing training can identify employees' weaknesses when they are advising students. Then training can be used to address these weaknesses. As a final step, the training outcomes should be evaluated in order to ensure that training eliminated those weaknesses. Evaluation is critical when planning for future training because it will help the training coordinator to avoid making the same mistakes, and it will identify the most effective methods for helping employees to obtain skills.

3. Equal opportunities for receiving training. In addition to applying needs assessment results, employees should be treated equally when provided with training. There are several ways to achieve equality between employees. For example, employees should be assigned a minimum number of training sessions per year/semester. If employees need additional training, optional training sessions can be provided to them in order to help them be on the same level of proficiency as their peers. In addition, as part of achieving equality, employees should receive training that focuses on basic skills such as communication, technology usage, and time management. Thus, all employees are able to utilize those skills successfully.

4. Available resources. Employees should receive the training that informs them about how to implement policies. Also, training is imperative for the employees to become aware of the resources that inform them about policy changes. Accordingly, that will prevent the employees from providing students with inaccurate information. There are multiple ways to help employees in this area, such as giving all employees the contact information of people with whom they can consult regarding different situations. Also, whenever a policy change takes place, the employees should be provided with new training that helps them in implementing those policies.

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## مراجعة الآثار المترتبة على تدريب الموظفين الإداريين الأكاديميين في جامعة ميشيغان المركزية

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### المستخلص

مما لا شك فيه ان التدريب له تأثير على جودة أداء الموظفين ومستوى عطاءهم في المنظمات. وفقاً لذلك، فإن كل منظمة توظف فرداً مسؤول عن تطوير الموظفين ويلزمه معرفة الطريقة الأكثر فاعلية لتدريبهم وتأهيلهم بما يتوافق مع متطلبات بيئة العمل و أدركت جامعة ميشيغان المركزية ان توفير التدريب المناسب للموظفين الذين لديهم مهمة تقديم المشورة للطلاب من ضمن اهم الأسباب لرفع مستوى التحصيل العلمي ودعمهم خلال مسيرتهم الجامعية. والسبب هو أن المشرفين الأكاديميين لديهم تأثير كبير على الأداء التعليمي للطلاب بحكم الالتماس المباشر بهم. ومن ثم فإن هناك حاجة إلى إيلاء الاهتمام الخاص لهذه الفئة من الموظفين لتحسين جودة عملية تقديم المشورة. في هذا البحث تم التركيز على تعزيز فكرة مدى تأثير التدريب على عملية الإرشاد الأكاديمي بجامعة متشغان المركزية الى جانب تسليط الضوء على النقاط التي قد تعيق عملية التدريب وتقلل من فاعليته. إذ جرى اللجوء الى المقابلات وجهاً لوجه والاستطلاعات عبر الإنترنت كأدوات لجمع البيانات لهذه الدراسة. يتكون نطاق الدراسة من موظفين محترفين وإداريين يقدمون المشورة الأكاديمية للطلاب في قسم العلوم الإدارية بالجامعة. إذ كان التساؤل الرئيسي للبحث: ما هي آثار التدريب على المستشارين الأكاديميين في جامعة متشغان المركزية؟ من خلال البيانات التي جمعها، تأكد المؤلف أن التدريب له دور رئيسي وحاسم في زيادة وصقل أداء الموظفين والمشرفين الأكاديميين عند تقديمهم خدمة استشارية أكاديمية. ومع ذلك و وفقاً لرأي العينة البحثية، فقد كانت هناك عقبات ينبغي معالجتها لضمان الافادة المثلى من عمليات التدريب والتطوير المقدمة من قبل الجامعة. تمثلت العقبات في عدم وجود فرص متكافئة لتلقي التدريب والتدريب غير المتناسق مع الاحتياج الفعلي والتركيز على مهارات معينة بينما جرى تجاهل مهارات أخرى ونقص المدربين و مشاكل في تحديد وقت التدريب كاف، ونقص الوعي بالسياسات المتعلقة بالتدريب و نقص الموارد المالية للتدريب، والحوازر اللغوية بين الطلاب ومستشاريهم. وبالتالي، قدمت هذه الدراسة توصيات تحاول معالجة النتائج السلبية لتلك العقبات. و اقترح المؤلف تطبيق ممارسات مثل إجراء تقييم الاحتياجات للموظفين، وتقييم نتائج التدريب، وتقديم فرص متساوية لتلقي التدريب وفق الحاجة وغيرها.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التدريب، التطوير، التأهيل، جودة المخرجات، الإرشاد، التحصيل العلمي، عقبات التدريب