

Strategic managemnt

Business



Ohio university Shame Alexander is the personnel director of the Central State Medical Center. One of her responsibilities is to oversee the hospital's supervisory training programs. Recently Shame attended a professional conference where a special "packaged" training program was advertised for sale. The package includes a set of videotaped lectures by a distinguished management consultant plus a workbook containing readings, exercises, cases, tests, and other instructional aids.

The subjects covered in the program include motivation, group dynamics, communication skills, leadership effectiveness, performance appraisal, and the management of planned change. In the past Shame felt that the hospital had not lived up to its supervisory training goals. One of the reasons for this was the high cost of hiring external consultants to do the actual instruction. This packaged program was designed, presumably, so that persons from within the hospital could act as session coordinators.

The structure of the program provided through the videotapes and workbook agenda was supposed to substitute for a consultant's expertise. Because of this, Shame felt that use of the packaged program could substantially improve supervisory training in the hospital.

The cost of the program was \$3,500 for an initial purchase of the videotapes plus 50 workbooks. Additional workbooks were then available at \$8 per copy. Before purchasing the program, Shame needed the approval of the senior administrative staff. At the next staff meeting Shame proposed purchasing the training program.

She was surprised at the response. The hospital president was noncommittal; the vice-president was openly hostile; and the three associate administrators were varied in their enthusiasm.

It was the vice-president's opinion that dominated the discussion. He argued that to invest in such a program on the assumption that it would lead to improved supervisory practices was unwise. "This is especially true in respect to the proposed program," he said. "How could such a package possibly substitute for the training skills of an expert consultant? Shame argued her case and was left with the following challenge. The administrators would allow \$1,000 to be spent to rent the program with 30 workbooks. It would be up to Shame to demonstrate through a trial program that an eventual purchase would be worthwhile.

There were 160 supervisors in the hospital. The program was designed to be delivered in eight-hour sessions. It was preferred to schedule one session per week, with no more than 15 participants per session. Shame knew that she would have to present very strong evidence to gain administrative support for the continued use of the program.

Given the opportunity, she decided to implement a trial program in such a way that conclusive evidence on the value of the packaged training would be forthcoming.

Review Questions If you were Shame, what type of research design would you use to test this program? Why? 2. How would the design actually be implemented in this hospital setting? 3. What would be your research hypothesis?