

**ADOPTION AND IMPACT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF  
JAMSHORO EDUCATION CITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This paper aims to investigate the impact of the adoption of quality assurance mechanisms in higher Education Institutions (HEIs) i.e. Universities in Jamshoro Education City (JEC). This analysis is based upon the data collected through various proforma utilized by Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) to conduct self-assessment of degree programs offered in Universities. These proforma are part of self-assessment manual provided by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC). To evaluate the impact of quality assurance mechanism on quality of education, the viewpoint of JEC's students is investigated through in-depth survey and interviews. As per identified parameters, it is found that the HEC's quality enhancement policy is not implemented at the required pace. Once the required standards are implemented appropriately then the quality of higher education in JEC can be enhanced drastically.*

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**Keywords:** Jamshoro, Higher Education, Self-Assessment, Quality Enhancement Cell.

**INTRODUCTION**

Higher education is regarded as a regular field to attain the numerous requirements of the national and global communities (Fatemeh, 2011). It is further stated by Fatemeh (2011) that any policy must have elements of international contexts but also needs to reflect the right expectations of the local and national communities. Similarly, to meet international and local parameters of higher education, the effective use of technical methodologies, approaches and policies are pre-requisite for developing the educational programs and courses. In addition, these courses analyze the native culture and information, besides teaching language, culture and history, also examines characteristics and the growth of the labour force. Galligan

(2008) suggested that core values and intercultural understanding are must to devise educational programs.

The concept to maintain the quality of education is a multidimensional and dynamic concept (Mok, 2007). Hence, to achieve the consensus of all stakeholders for providing quality in education in society is a challenging task. It covers the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to be well associated for the obtaining educational goals alongside productive contribution in society (UNICEF, 2000). In the contemporary technological era, in all higher education disciplines, the position of quality education can't be denied. Quality of education is a form of capital investment in qualified human resource, which ultimately boosts economic growth (Mughal & Manzoor, 1999).

The world is a global village, connected through various resources of education. For achievement of political, social and economic development, higher education is regarded as one of its major components (UNESCO, 2000). For higher education quality education is compulsory, because the higher education institutions are accountable to society, students and to other institutions. In higher education, quality of education is surrounded by all the processes for systematic evaluation and monitoring to develop higher quality educational institutions.

The South African Council on higher education quality in one of its briefs stated that quality assurance in higher education institutions is a process of ensuring that specified standards have been achieved (HEQC, 2004:28). Quality assurance is a procedure of indicating superiority, responsibility and significance for money. It is a process through which a higher education institution guarantees its stakeholders that its learning, teaching and other various services will consistently reach a standard of excellence. Such assurances are necessary goals for any institution itself. Increasingly, it is also compulsory for public institutions to be accountable, and provide assurances to all stakeholders and the state that they are delivering the services for which they are funded. Thus, ensures that they are providing value for money. Therefore, quality assurance includes all the processes within the institution, where quality is maintained, evaluated and improved (Duff *et.al.*, 2000:xv).

**HEC-QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**

The purpose of HEC to introduced QECs in universities was to maintain and improve the academic quality of higher education in Pakistan. The QECs insure that the standards for provision of quality education as set by HEC, agree with the plans proposed by it. HEC designs and develop the plans to enhance the standards of education. HEC trying to achieve excellence in higher education by taking major initiatives to enhance the performance and quality of universities as per lines of best international practices. In this regards HEC initiated the primary step to outline the performance evaluation standards for the universities. For this, numbers of documents are defined and every document articulates a detailed element of the institutional quality. These documents are equally important for achieving the desired certifications to quality enhancement in higher education.

Among the documents available “The Manual for Self-Assessment” is an important document to conduct Self-Assessment of degree programs. The Self-Assessment is an essential element in completing the HEC initiated process of standardization of higher education institutions (HEIs). The purpose of this manual is to devise the guidelines for the implementation of Self-Assessment Practices (SAPs) at a department / program level in the institutes. The SAPs are basically Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) practices.

The methods for the quality evaluation of academic programs are developed by HEC (Kanwal, 2007). The QECs manages the SAPs or IQA under the umbrella of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of HEC at higher education institutions and universities.

Moreover, with the establishment of QAA at HEC, at National Quality Assurance Committee (NQAC) meeting it was decided the QECs needs to be established at all higher education institutions, to enforce a strong impact of internal quality assurance practices. To fill the gap between necessary and preferred status of quality education special emphasis was given to these practices (HEC, 2011).

These QECs are an integral part of the universities concerned. Furthermore, The QECs works with authorities and management for making the accreditation of programs. However, with superior complexity the institutional act of evaluation has numerous more measurements (HEC, 2006). The role of QECs in implementing SAPs is crucial to safeguard the interest of HEIs to provide quality education. The special effects of Self-Assessment will agree to the

procedures of Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs to be provided by the HEC in view with best practices of External Quality Assurance (Raouf, 2010).

Quality of academic programs in general is the agreement of all the stakeholders upon effective learning environment, which is constantly improving in the light of global standards. In modern years, it has become an obligation that HEIs establish the success of their academic courses and programs by providing quality education, with having positive impact on the society and stakeholders. For improving these standards HEC is working continuously. Through QAA performance evaluation standards, HEC measure institutions individually on periodic basis. These periodic reviews are based upon onsite assessment of degree programs offered by HEIs. These tasks are performed by Assessment Teams (AT), under the direction of QAA. The quality standards witnessed by a university are documented first as an outcome of successful performance assessment reviews, through evaluation of institutional successes against pre-defined principles (HEC, 2011).

The QECs in future will aim to help universities in implementing program specifications, adopting quality assurance (QA) practices. With the passage of time, QECs evolving as a bridge between HEC and various accreditation agencies engaged in accrediting degree programs of the university. QECs are also working on merging various manuals being used by QA bodies to accrediting / recognize various degree programs. These manuals will work as master manuals for performing self-assessment and accreditation practices.

All the universities existing in JEC i.e. UoS, MUET and LUMHS are making efforts to provide the quality education to their enrolled students. The Table 1 highlights the background of these selected universities.

**TABLE-1**  
**BACKGROUND OF QEC ESTABLISHMENT**

S #	Name of University	QEC Establishment (Year)	QECs Phase of Establishment
1.	Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences, Jamshoro	2006	<b>First</b> This phase consists first 10 public sector universities, where QECs established.
2.	University of Sindh, Jamshoro	2007	<b>Second</b> This phase consists second 20 public sector universities, where QECs established.
3.	Mehran University of Engineering & Technology, Jamshoro	In 2000 ISO-9000 Cell was established and was reformed as QEC in 2007.	<b>Second</b> This phase consists second 20 public sector universities, where QECs established

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research the JEC was selected to measure the performance of quality assurance practices through self-assessment proformae being implemented by QECs. The JEC consists of three main universities i-e: University of Sindh (UoS), Mehran University of Engineering Technology (MUET) and Liaquat University of Medical Health Science (LUMHS). Sample sizes of 100 students per university were selected to undertake this research. The main parameters for survey questionnaires were selected through the survey proformae of QEC's i-e: Students course and teacher evaluation, however, pilot survey and interviews were conducted to identify any other relevant parameters to measure the performance and impact of quality assurance practices in the said universities. In this respect, seven parameters were finalized to carry out this research. These parameters are:

- i) Course Content and Organization.
- ii) Impact of Teaching Methods.
- iii) Teachers Exposure to Current Issues.
- iv) Learning Resources.
- v) Assessment.
- vi) Knowledge of the Subject.
- vii) Instructors Punctuality & Preparations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through questionnaire form Data was collected from the students of three universities of Jamshoro Education City (JEC). From each university 100 samples were collected. For data analysis, various statistical tests and descriptive statistics are used. For example the data collected is represented in table 2 for course content and organization portion of the research.

**TABLE-2**  
**DETAILS FOR COURSE CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION**

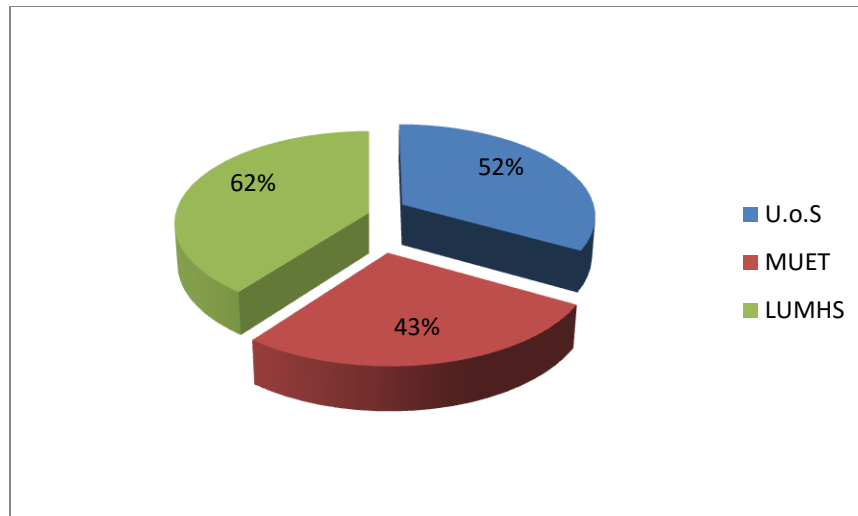
University	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
MUET	100	2.97	1.214	9%	38%	4%	43%	6%
LUHMS	100	3.58	1.156	8%	16%	0%	62%	14%
UoS	100	3.76	1.093	4%	12%	8%	52%	24%

To make the analysis more precise the response is mainly judged on parameter i.e. level of Agreement. If the level of agreement of students is higher than (50%) it is termed as highly satisfactory, equal or near to (50%) termed as neutral/satisfactory and if response is less than (50%) it is termed as unsatisfactory.

### (i) Course Content and Organization

In order to identify the response of students about courses contents and its organization following question is inquired from students i.e. subject syllabus summarized enough having clear objectives, easily manageable for timely access to materials, notification of changes, etc.

Through the response it is identified that most of the students are facing the problem that some of the teachers only recommend the books and emphasis on self-study approach. Hence, students or learners are not aware about the clear objectives of subjects being offered to them. It makes the contents of courses difficult to manage for the time available until examination.



**FIGURE-1**  
**COURSE CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION**

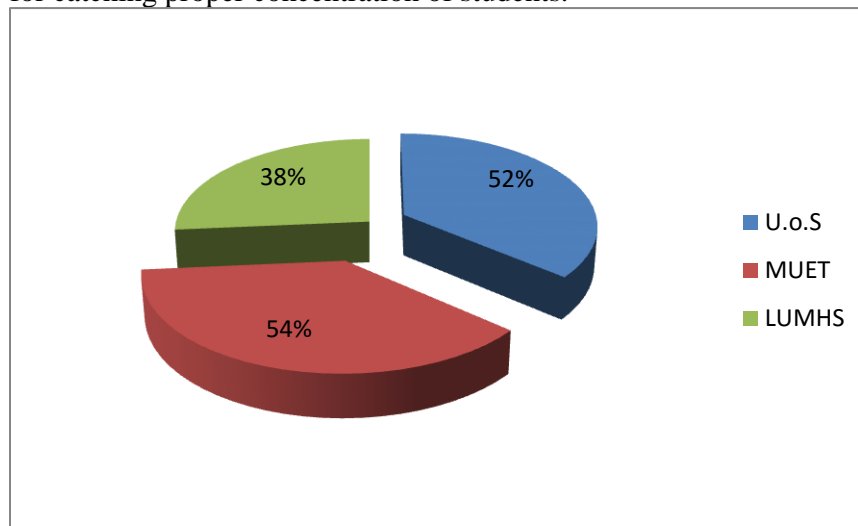
The students of LUMHS are more optimistic (62%) that the subject contents of courses offered to them are summarized enough as compared to students of the other two universities. Whereas, the UoS students' response is said to be neutral as nearly half of students surveyed agreed with the facts that their course content are summarized. It is surprising that MUET students have shown highest variation (Standard deviation 1.214) in response and low agreement 43% with the summarization of course contents. This indicates that depending upon the department, the course contents are not fairly summarized enough.

#### **(ii) Impact of Learning Environment & Teaching Methods**

Teaching methodologies and learning environment have a strong impact on interest creation for subjects offered to them. To find the impact of learning environment and teaching methodologies a question i.e. learning an environment and teaching method enhances your interest in the subject is being asked from the students.

Most of the students of three universities of Sindh province responded that they face the same problem that some of the teachers do not perform well in delivering the lecture due to their weak communication skills and learning environment of the classroom. This results in lesser understanding of the subjects being offered to

them. Hence, the question arises, if the subject is not fully understood by students, how they can develop interest in that subject. Teachers must have good delivering skills, which help students understand and for catching proper concentration of students.



**FIGURE-2**  
**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND TEACHING DELIVERY METHOD**  
**ENHANCES STUDENT INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT**

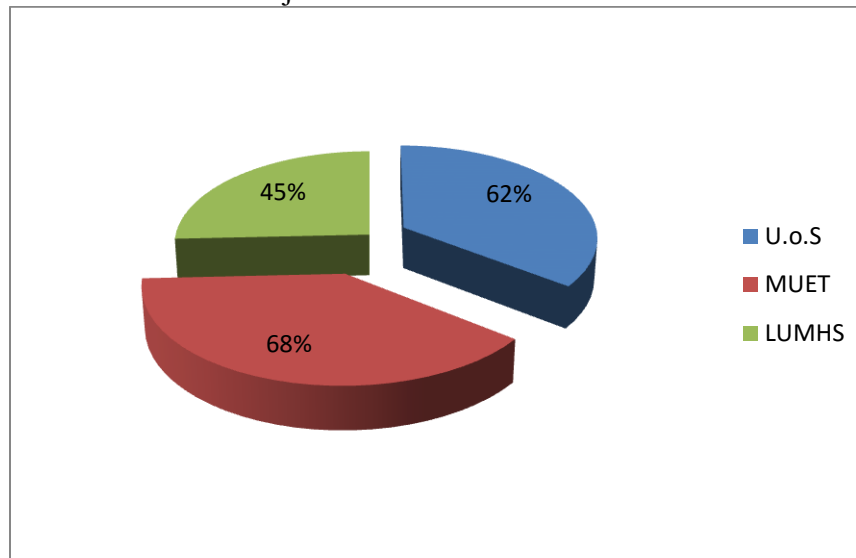
The mean of above factor is 4.05, it means that the students of MUET (54%) are more satisfied with the teacher's delivery method. However, UoS students are (52%) satisfied. But it is alarming that the LUMHS student's satisfaction with the teaching methodologies adopted by their teachers is very low i.e: 38%.

### **(iii) Teachers' Awareness and Exposure to Current Practical Issues of Offered Subject**

To better understand the contents of a subject it is necessary that the teachers should provide the awareness regarding current situations of issues/problems of the field, which are concerned with the subject under study. Therefore, to identify the practical knowledge possess by the instructors regarding the real-life problems to be solved by the subject under study a question i.e. How much your instructor is aware and exposed to current issues concerning with the subject under study is investigated from students.



The students believe that, most of the teachers in their universities share knowledge concerning the practical field and are aware of the latest trends in the subjects.



**FIGURE-3**  
**TEACHERS ARE EXPOSED TO CURRENT ISSUES**

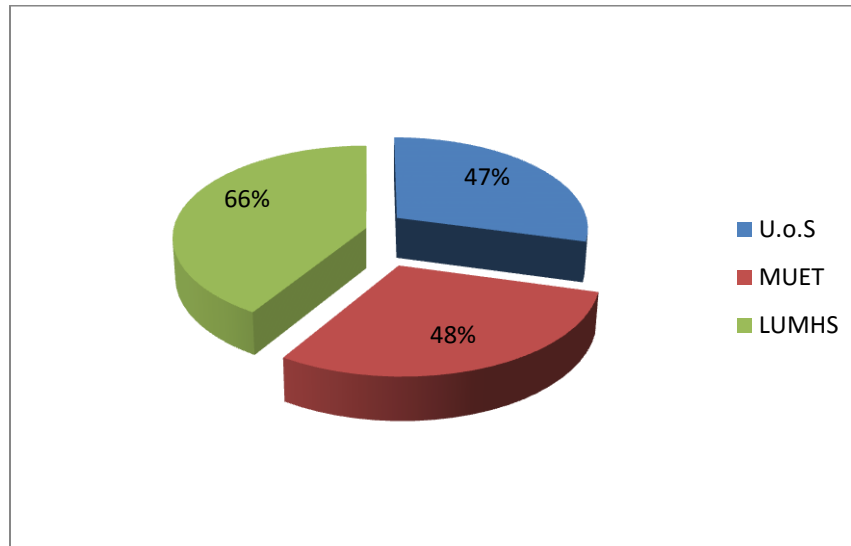
The mean of above factor is 3.85, which means that the students of MUET and UoS (68%) and (62%) respectively, strongly agree with this factor that most of their teachers are exposed to the latest trend concerning with the subject under study. However, only 45% of LUMHS students have positively responded to this question, which again requires the attention of the concerned quarters.

#### **(iv) Learning Resources**

Learning resources such as learning materials (Lesson Plans, Course Notes etc.), recommended reading Books and learning resources in the library are pre-requisite for provision of quality education. Therefore, a question: Do you receive adequate and appropriate learning resources in your university? Was inquired from the students?

During the interaction, students responded that, many teachers were not eager to provide subject notes and assistance material for their lecture. Many of the teachers use old edition of books, and to

curb this practice university management has not taken any substantial measures.

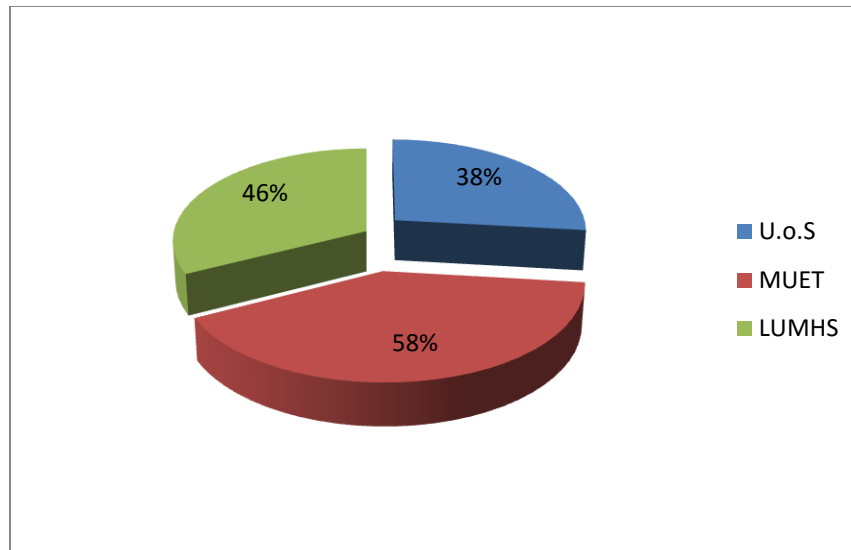


**FIGURE-4**  
**COURSE MATERIAL/SUBJECT NOTES ARE USEFUL**

The highest mean of above particular factor is 3.96 for LUMHS, which shows 66% of respondents are strongly agree that they receive adequate and appropriate learning resources. Whereas, the other universities i.e. MUET (48%) and UoS (47%) represent the unsatisfaction of students for learning resources they received at their respective institutes.

#### **(v) Quality of Assessment**

The above question is inquired from the students as most of the students always worried about the contents of question paper that is it is focused on teachers given syllabus/ content, or paper is out of the course/ syllabus.

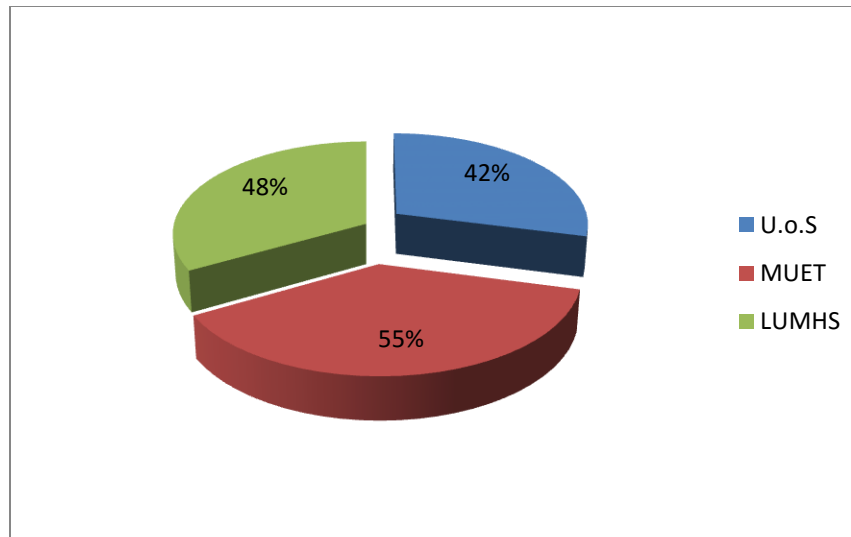


**FIGURE-5**  
**ASSIGNMENT/TEST/EXAM GIVEN CONFORM TO THE COURSE CONTENT**

The mean of above factor is 4.05, which shows that the students of MUET strongly agree that assignment / test/ exam was given from related lectures material. However, students in UoS and LUMHS have shown their disagreement and inform that some untaught questions may be part of final examinations.

**(vi) Knowledge of the subject**

A teacher having sound knowledge is essential for the provision of quality education. To identify the quality of knowledge, possess by the faculty members following question is being asked from the respondent's i-e: Do faculty members have sound subject knowledge?



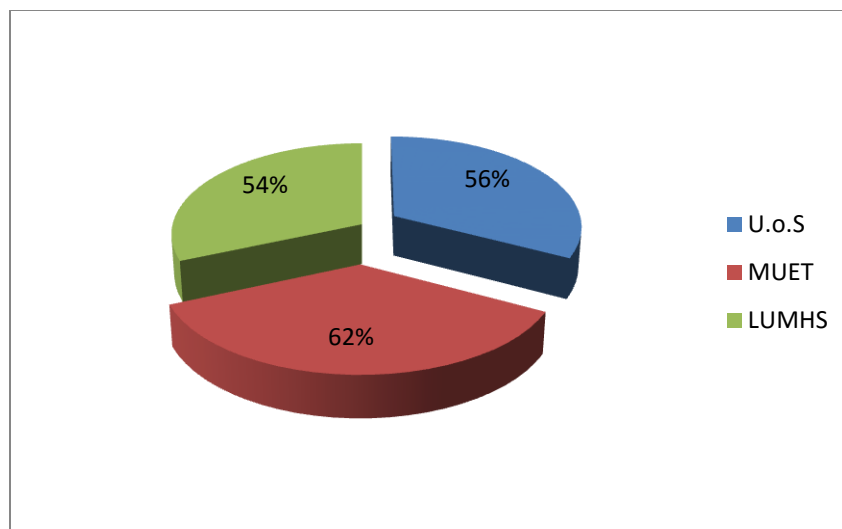
**FIGURE-6**  
**FACULTY MEMBERS HAVE SOUND SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE**

The mean of above factor is 3.84 for the students of MUET, which is higher than other universities. However, UoS and LUMHS students are less than 50% agreed, which indicate that students are not satisfied with the knowledge possess by their instructors.

#### **(vii) Instructors Punctuality & Preparations**

The punctuality of teacher in taking classes is another factor through which HEC tries to measure the provision of quality education in HEIs. It is a general perception in masses that teachers are not punctual and fully prepared to deliver the lecture in the class. To identify the truth a question i-e: Is your teachers always punctual and prepared for each class/ teaching session? Was also asked from the students?

From the result in Figure 7, it can be seen easily that teachers are punctual and well prepared in taking the classes in all the three universities under study.

**FIGURE-7**

**INSTRUCTOR IS ALWAYS PREPARED FOR EACH CLASS/ TEACHING SESSION**

The highest mean value of this factor is 4.14 for MUET students as 62% are strongly agreeing with the fact that the teachers follow strict class timings. The others HEIs students i.e. UoS (56%) and LUMHS (54%) also show good satisfaction level with respect to teachers punctuality in class.

#### **DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The ranking of HEIs of JEC as per identified factors is represented in table 3.

**TABLE-3**  
**RANKING OF HEIS AS PER IDENTIFIED PARAMETERS**

Rank			
Parameters	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Course Content and Organization	LUMHS	UoS	MUET
Impact of Learning Environment & Teaching Methods	MUET	UoS	LUMHS
Teachers' awareness and exposure to current practical issues of offered subject	MUET	UoS	LUMHS
Learning Resources	LUMHS	MUET	UoS
Quality of Assessment	MUET	LUMHS	UoS
Knowledge of the subject	MUET	LUMHS	UoS
Instructors Punctuality & Preparations	MUET	UoS	LUMHS

The Table 3 shows that not a single university of JEC remained on top in all factors for provision of quality education. Hence, keeping in view the findings each HEI in JEC needs to improve in areas, where it is ranked lower. It is therefore concluded that the quality enhancement policy of HEC is not being implemented as per required pace.

By implementing the rules and policies of HEC, universities can improve the quality of higher education and obtain higher HEC's rankings. It will ultimately contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Quality policies may be implemented if universities by:

- Proper coordination among the academic and management side;
- Having efficient HR faculty assessment system;
- Emphasizing on the external examination system;
- Recruitment of faculty members without any political intervention and influence.
- Awarding perks and incentives to faculty members for performance on research and teaching;
- Removing teachers from admiration posts
- Increase the quantity of books and research journals.

In future, research is further expanded to analyze the impact of QECs in achieving its core task of implementing QA practices, its acceptability among various stakeholders and improvement it caused in provision of quality education. Further attempts will be made to find the co-relationship between QECs ranking and its impact on improving the overall ranking of universities being done by HEC.

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