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IMPROVING RESEARCH CULTURE SYSTEM THROUGH QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES IN THE UNIVERSITIES OF PAKISTAN

Abstract

The explanation of this research was to investigate about improving research culture system through Quality Assurance Practices (QAP) in the Universities of Pakistan pertaining to the views of students, teachers and Directors of Quality Enhancement Cells' (QEC's) and to differentiate the ideas of students, teachers and Directors of QECs regarding research culture system as well as offer quality assurance practices in the universities of Pakistan. This study had a quantitative and qualitative research design. This study was conducted on a sample of 28 universities (public and private sector) of Pakistan by using multi- stage sampling techniques. Questionnaires and semi structured interviews were intended to congregare information from students, teachers and Directors of QECs related to research culture system about quality assurance practices in the universities of Pakistan. The data was analyzed by using descriptive, inferential statistics and SPSS. The study showing that students, teachers and Directors of QECs faced a lot of problems without research culture system in higher education. On the bases of data analysis, key findings of the study were derived; majority of the teachers, students and Directors opined that seminars, which was conducted in most of the universities to disseminate the results of different researches and views of

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different experts, workshops, follow up systems after training, research projects, teachers' participation in seminars, collaboration with other departments and publication of articles were being carried out among universities to enhance the research culture system. Lack of physical facilities, no training for faculty, provision of funds, research journals, communication system and feedback system were major problems faced by the Quality Assurance Practices in the universities. Following suggestions can be accelerated to enhance Quality Assurance Practices in the universities; new edition of books, provision of sufficient resources, addition of latest software, provision of modern professional development skills for academic staff, feedback system and provision of latest research journals.

Key Words: *Research Culture, Quality Assurance, Research projects, Seminars*

Introduction

Today, quality in the institutions is the big issue to achieve the international standards. Arcaro (2007) explained about the forces and methodologies for changing the educational scenario. To bring quality in the institutions, it is needed to participate in research culture activities in the world. According to Isani and Virk (2014), quality is divided into many dimensions, which play a vital role to enhance the quality in higher education. We should prepare framework on the basis of research culture for evaluation of quality infrastructure, students support services, curriculum and resources.

In Pakistan, quality is not up to the mark now a days in higher education. Due to some limited facilities, the level of quality education is deteriorated rapidly. Our higher education system was not supported by modern educational scenario. Therefore, many factors which are affecting quality education system, i.e., inadequate system of admission, unmotivated learners, lack of trained teachers, imbalanced teachers' and students' ratio, lack of

advanced curriculum, lack of research culture and inadequate system of assessment system are major hurdles to achieve the international goals (Malik, 2002).

Quality is the name of perfection, excellence, and value for money, fitness for purpose and transformation (Harvey & Green, 2013). According to Ashcroft and Forman-Peck (2015) quality means, "perfection implies faultlessness for zero errors". Biggs (2003) explained about quality as best use of money to meet the standards of living and its accountability. Kantio (2008) defined the quality assurance meaning, it is a procedure, processes and system to implement the plan and policy in manufacturing the products. Quality assurance is an organized and permanent attention in terms of quality preservation and quality enhancement (Vreijenstijn, 2009).

Good researchers develop themselves through the process of self-study, experience, education and training as it is a never-ending process. The research leaders generally have the skill to direct research groups and to pressure team members and the movement of important research. They are noticeable, answerable to the research staff or team and have a vow to more the goals and purpose of research. For the moment, an innovative leader has the creative followers and skills to produce new goods, services or processes. in brief, good and inventive research leaders should be creative, imaginative, visionary, inspirational, insightful, intuitional and foresighted in leading their researchers. It is not sufficient being inventive, research leaders must be rising leaders too (Carucci, 2007).

Increasing the research culture needs competent research leader. He/she has to be able to stimulate educational staff and to guide them through change (Blanchard & Miller, 2007). It is a requirement as such an idea helps academicians to be pioneering

in doing research process that ultimately leads to research services and products. Research leader keeps ways of working artistically as research setting is always changing, mainly in the challenging and new institute of higher education policy.

Statement of the Problem

Quality requires new development in ideas and resources to increase the level of any continuous condition of the phenomena. This is the case with research culture in higher education as well as concerned with Pakistani universities. There is shortage of universities according to the growth level of population. But if we arrange about higher education for our graduates then there is need to view current need of the era. If a country spent some more over their research culture system then the achievement level will be higher. The aim of this study was to know about "Humanizing Research Culture System through Quality assurance Practices in the Universities of Pakistan".

Research Questions of the Study

Research questions were also designed to observe the views of students, teachers and Directors of QECs related to Improving Research Culture System through Quality Assurance Practices in the Universities of Pakistan: what were the perceptions of students, teachers and Directors of Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) related to research culture system in the universities, to implement Quality Assurance Practices in the Universities of Pakistan? What were the differences along with the perceptions of students, teachers and Directors of Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) about research culture system located by the universities to implement Quality Assurance Practices in the universities of Pakistan?

Methodology

To gather the information, descriptive and survey method was used to see the research culture in the universities. Procedure of this study is described as under:

Population of the Study

All universities students of master programs, teachers and the Directors of QECs were the population of this study.

Sample of the study

Twenty-eight (15 public and 13 private sector) universities were selected with multi-stage sampling techniques from Pakistan. Nine hundred and eighty teachers were chosen with the help of convenient sampling. Two thousand and one hundred students were chosen with the help of convenient sampling. Twenty-eight Directors of QECs from all selected universities were taken with the help of purposive sampling technique. Some universities in Pakistan had no Directors of QECs, so all these subjects were taken because they had the relevant informations' for this purpose (study).

Development of Instruments

Quantitative as well as qualitative data were taken in use for students and teaching faculty with the help of questionnaires from their respective universities about research culture system (research projects, seminars , provision of funds and research journals) on five point (Strongly Disagree (SDA) =1, Disagree (DA) = 2, Undecided (UD) = 3, Agree (A) = 4, Strongly Agree (SA) = 5) Likert scale, as well as some open ended questions were also included to qualitative answer. For support quantitative part,

interview protocols for Directors of the QECs for the twenty-eight public and private sector universities of Pakistan were also included for this study.

Data Collection

All questionnaires were circulated to the participants (students and teachers) with instructions by the researcher and interview protocols were conducted personally by the researcher from the Directors of the QECs of the selected universities. The researcher approached registrar office and requested for data collection through their responsible workers. They helped the researcher accordingly.

Results

Teachers' Views

- 1) The perceptions of university teachers regarding research culture about the mean response value ($M=3.70$, $SD= 1.27$) reflects that research project was compulsory for every student.
- 2) The mean response value ($M=3.84$, $SD= 1.11$) showed that encouragement system existed for participation into the seminars.
- 3) Mean response value ($M=3.68$, $SD= 0.96$) found that research supervisors were given proper time to research projects.
- 4) The mean response value ($M=2.46$, $SD=1.05$) showed that your departments had not collaboration for research culture with other departments of the university.
- 5) The mean response value ($M=3.75$, $SD= 1.03$) expressed that students were encouraged to write research articles.

- 6) The mean response value ($M=2.41$, $SD= 1.20$) described that seminars were not being held for promoting research culture at International level.
- 7) The mean response value ($M=3.76$, $SD= 4.04$) denoted that seminars were being held for promoting research culture at National level.
- 8) The mean response value ($M=3.84$, $SD= 2.98$) showed the provision of renowned educationists by the university for seminars.
- 9) Mean response value ($M=2.06$, $SD= 1.22$) depicted that provision of funds for International level seminars were not provided.
- 10) Mean response value ($M=2.15$, $SD= 1.17$) showed that funds for National level seminars were not provided.
- 11) Mean response value ($M=2.38$, $SD= 1.18$) accepted that HEC on line research journals were not available.
- 12) The mean response value ($M=2.87$, $SD= 1.25$) showed that department had their own research journal were being published in the university.
- 13) The mean response value ($M=2.78$, $SD= 1.23$) revealed that research journals being published in the departments were having impact factor.

Students' views

- 1) The mean responses value ($M=4.03$, $SD= 1.14$) showed that research project was compulsory for every student.
- 2) The mean responses value ($M=3.92$, $SD= 1.03$) signified the encouragement system of participation for students in seminars.
- 3) Mean observation value ($M=3.64$, $SD= 1.10$) showed the system of time utilization by the supervisors for research projects.
- 4) Mean observation responses value ($M=2.42$, $SD= 1.10$) signified the system of association for research culture among the higher education institutions was not available.

- 5) Mean observation value ($M=3.63$, $SD= 1.14$) showed that students were encouraged to write research articles.
- 6) The mean responses value ($M=2.43$, $SD= 1.27$) described that seminars were not held for research culture at International level.
- 7) The mean responses value ($M=3.59$, $SD= 1.12$) exposed that seminars were held for research culture at National level.
- 8) The mean responses value ($M=3.67$, $SD= 1.15$) showed that university invite eminent scholars for seminars.
- 9) Mean observation value ($M=2.16$, $SD= 1.19$) stated that system as concerned allocation of funds for global seminars was not available.
- 10) The mean responses value ($M=2.26$, $SD= 1.16$) represented the system as concerned allocation of funds for national level seminars was not available.
- 11) Mean observation value ($M=2.47$, $SD= 1.07$) revealed that HEC approved on - line journals were not available.
- 12) The mean responses value ($M=2.37$, $SD= 1.13$) indicated that research journal were not available in the departments.
- 13) Mean observation value ($M=2.37$, $SD= 1.13$) described that impact factor research journals in the university was not available.

Recommendations

In the light of these findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of quality assurance practices in the universities of Pakistan:

- 1) Provision of resources for quality assurance practices, arrangement of professional development should be given at top priority.
- 2) There should be must given awareness of latest research journals.

- 3) A variety of latest research journals and new version of books may added frequently for the use of teachers and students in the libraries of the universities.
- 4) Latest software for computer labs. and latest equipments for science labs may also incorporated to achieve the national and international goals.
- 5) The establishment of guidance and counseling centres in the universities is very important to meet the current need of academics.
- 6) There should be uniformity in course designing in the universities.
- 7) There should be co-ordination between students and teachers for teaching and learning process.
- 8) Strengthen the feedback system for positive changes/reforms.
- 9) There should be on-line system of all universities activities, so that the people of university may share or learn from other experiences.
- 10) In all universities, sufficient number of scholarships for needy students should be granted.
- 11) Future planning for higher education institutes i.e., universities through research seminars and conferences should be made convenient.
- 12) Establishment of QEC and quality assurance mechanism should be made mandatory for all the universities.

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