Academic Planning for Quality of Higher Education: A Perspective of University Teachers

Shazia Nasrullah
PhD Scholar, Faculty of Education, The Islamia University Bahawalpur, Pakistan
shazianasrullah@gmail.com

Dr. Irshad Hussain
Department of Education, The Islamia University Bahawalpur, Pakistan
irshad.hussain@iub.edu.pk

Abstract

This study was designed to ascertain the perspective of university teachers regarding academic planning for quality of higher education in Pakistan. Descriptive research design was adopted to conduct the study. All public sector universities in Punjab were the population of the study in which teachers were the target population of the study. The total numbers of (n = 300) respondents were taken as sample of the study through simple random, stratified and disproportionate sampling techniques. Data were collected through self-developed questionnaire. Through administered tool 289 responses were complete and considered for analysis. The study was delimited to only six public sector universities in Punjab where access was possible and easy. The collected data were statistically analyzed through SPSS by using Descriptive statistics (Frequency, Percentage, Mean). Findings, results and conclusions were drawn by revealing that academic planning has an effective role to promote the quality of higher education in all HEIs of Pakistan. Without effective academic planning, no Higher Education Institution can improve its educational system in the modern world. Some recommendations were suggested in the light of the results and objectives of the study that government of the time, HEC and HED, policy makers, educationists, philosophers, scholars, university employees and students play a collaborate role in promoting and develop higher education under the umbrella of effective academic planning.

Keywords: *Academic Planning, Effectiveness, Quality of Higher Education, University Teachers*

Introduction

Different terms are used synonymy to demonstrate [the meaning of] academic planning. The term "Education Master Planning" or "Academic Master Planning" is used for "Academic Planning" by identifying both long- and short-term objectives meeting the institutional mission with the learners needs (Zaman, 2021). Similarly, Stern (2001) regarded academic planning to be necessary to assemble the team planning or the committee guiding the process. It reviews data regarding the performance of academic programs, scanning of external environment, teaching and learning activities, assessment and evaluation, and suggests necessary changes in academic plans, and implementation of academic policies, rules and procedure etc.; so that can all be focused and run on priority basis focusing on the academic perspective. Dean (2007) found that "academic roadmap" can be created only through academic planning in which tests, exams, assignments, presentations and courses are polished, positively incorporated and improved.

Review of Literature

Academic planning seems one of the essential steps towards quality of higher education. It is a systematic process of embedding all academic activities in a sequence according to the academic calendar of a university. It ensures the academic activities to happen or to be conducted as were or have been planned. Giroux et al., (2019) regarded academic planning as a mandatory step taken by the university administration for the enhancement of quality of higher education in terms of the product i.e. the graduates of the university. Similarly, García-Peñalvo, Corell, Abella-García, and Grande-de-Prado (2021) affirmed its significance by asserting that the "quality of higher education [system] isn't possible without academic planning". The demand of higher education is increasing in all spheres of life as it produces professionals and specialized experts in different areas/ aspects; and academic planning makes it easy achievable. Galabawa and Senkoro (2010) mentioned that academic planning identifies the way to the institutional goals and targets to achieve at higher education level. According to Dare (2019) academic planning makes it possible to achieve all curricular and educational objectives within the university; which otherwise would be difficult to achieve. Academic planning is important at all levels of education; but at higher education level its significance becomes more evident as Agasisti and Soncin (2021) found that no higher educational institution can finalize its administrative decision(s) without academic planning.

It is the prime responsibility of universities to fulfill the academic needs of the students. In this perspective, Nutt (2008) viewed academic planning as one of the key sources or factors through which one's academic needs can be fulfilled. Academic planning can save time and resources of the universities. Akpan (2014) stated that strict observance of academic planning saves resource exploitation and eliminates waste and imbalances. Imrie (2016) viewed academic planning in accordance with high quality of education along with strong economy. According to Dare (2019) one of the major functions of academic planning is to decrease unnecessary academic demands, identifies problems, and ensures time management by providing proper guidelines and instructions regarding higher education institutions.

Pratt, Mackay, Green, Woodhouse, and Marriott-Statham (2019) acknowledged that quality of higher education can be demonstrated through the promotion and practice of values [and value system] and it is ensured by academic planning and its implementation. According to Mosha (2018) academic planning and its implementation improves the quality of higher education and helps in realizing its vision and mission. It (academic planning) plays a major role in educational experiences to achieve the desired objectives by arranging academic plan, guidelines, regulations, educational activities, training, programs, project and arrangement of other institutional activities associated with academics in especial and with institutional in general (Mbagwu &Okeke, 2021). Leal-Filho et al., (2018) suggested sessional, monthly and annual planning to be highly focused to ensure the academic success.

Academic planning and academicians are interdependent; therefore, successful and experienced academicians give special importance and priority to better academic administration, assessment, and monitoring to promote the quality of higher education (Josiah & Jacob, 2021). Imrie (2016) regarded academic planning to be the basis of academic foundations. According to Harris (2018) quality academic planning ensures the teaching learning process, academic progress and experiences at higher education institutions. Students' counseling services and research play an important role in improving the quality of higher education at university level.

However, effective academic planning results in students' success in terms of award of "certificates and degrees", adding or starting "new programs", formulating and executing academic policies and structures, setting priorities, conducting assessment, envisioning departmental goals and institutional learning outcomes (Haider, 2008). Saeed (2007) said that Director Academics of all Higher Education Institutions are in pursuit of accreditation of new programs and needs of labor

market along with effective and advanced strategic planning. Nazimuddin (2015) pointed out that quality academic planning saves time and helps in the achievement of desired goals. Academic planning is comprised of basic components like priorities, strategic action plan of faculty, and confirmation of integrated academic plan, feedback and monitoring.

Objectives of the Study

This study was designed to ascertain the perspective of university teachers regarding academic planning for quality of higher education in Pakistan

Delimitations of the Study

Due to limited time and resources, the study was delimited to the six Public Sector General Universities in Punjab Province of Pakistan. These universities included the Islamia University Bahawalpur, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, University of Sargodha, Government College University Faisalabad, University of Sialkot, University of Gujrat.

Research Methodology

Descriptive design was used to support the day to day situations for which survey technique was used to collect data from respondents via self-developed questionnaire by taking responses of the respondents (university teachers) to explore their perspective on academic planning in promoting quality of higher education in Pakistan. Pilot testing was done; and tool was finalized. Data was collected by the researchers and statistically analyzed through Descriptive Analysis (Frequency, Percentage, Mean score).

The population of the study included teachers of the public sector general universities in Punjab, Pakistan in which (N = 2918 teachers) were the target population of the study taken from the Islamia University Bahawalpur, Bahauddin Zakariya University, University of Sargodha, Government College University Faisalabad, University of Sialkot, and University of Gujrat. In which the total numbers of (n = 300 students) as sample of the study through simple random, stratified and disproportionate sampling techniques by applying John Curry (1984) sample size rule of thumb. A questionnaire was developed and finalized after piloting for the university teachers. Simple random sampling technique was preferred for the sample. The questionnaire was administered on 300 university teachers out of which 289 responses were collected back complete in all respects. The detail of data is shown in table 1 below:

Table 1
Sample of the Study

Name of University	No. of Teachers
Islamia University Bahawalpur	50
Baha Ud Din Zakariya University	50
University of Sargodha	50
University of Faisalabad	50
University of Sialkot	50
University of Gujrat	50
Total	300

The questionnaire was distributed among 300 university teachers who were willing to record their responses on volunteer basis. Out of 300 university teachers; 289 responses were received back which were complete in all respects. The analysis of which is given below

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Teachers data

Factor	Strongly Disagreed		Disagreed		Slightly Disagreed		Slightly Agreed		Agreed		Strongly Agreed		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Academic Planning for Admissions	65	22.5	39	13.5	29	10.0	42	14.5	61	21.1	53	18.3	3.6
Academic planning for Institutional Profile	53	18.3	44	15.2	22	7.6	25	8.7	90	31.1	55	19.0	4.1
Academic Planning for Curriculum Development	51	17.0	48	16.3	21	7.3	39	12.4	83	28.3	54	18.6	3.9
Academic Planning for Teaching - Learning Process	53	18.0	50	17.3	23	8.3	35	11.4	80	27.3	51	17.6	4.2
Academic Planning for Research & Collaboration	44	15.2	52	18.0	29	10.0	30	10.4	82	28.4	52	18.0	4.78
Faculty Development /Planning for	57	19.7	44	15.2	36	12.8	32	11.1	67	23.2	52	18.0	4.1

Counseling and Training													
Planning for Assessment and Quality Assurance	51	17.0	56	19.4	25	8.7	44	15.2	58	20.1	56	19.7	4.7
Competencies	19	19.0	50	17.4	22	7.7	47	16.2	61	21.1	60	20.7	4.2

Total No. of Teachers 289

Table above shows the percentage of responses obtained from teachers. Responses of the teachers reveal that academic planning for admissions 53.9 percent, academic planning for curriculum development 59.3 percent, academic planning for institutional profile percent 58.8 percent, academic planning for teaching learning process 56.3 percent, Academic planning for research and collaboration 56.8 percent, faculty development/planning for counseling and Teaching 52.3 percent, Planning for assessment and quality assurance 55 percent and competencies 58 percent were agree about effectiveness of academic planning in promoting quality of Higher Education in Pakistan

Figure 1

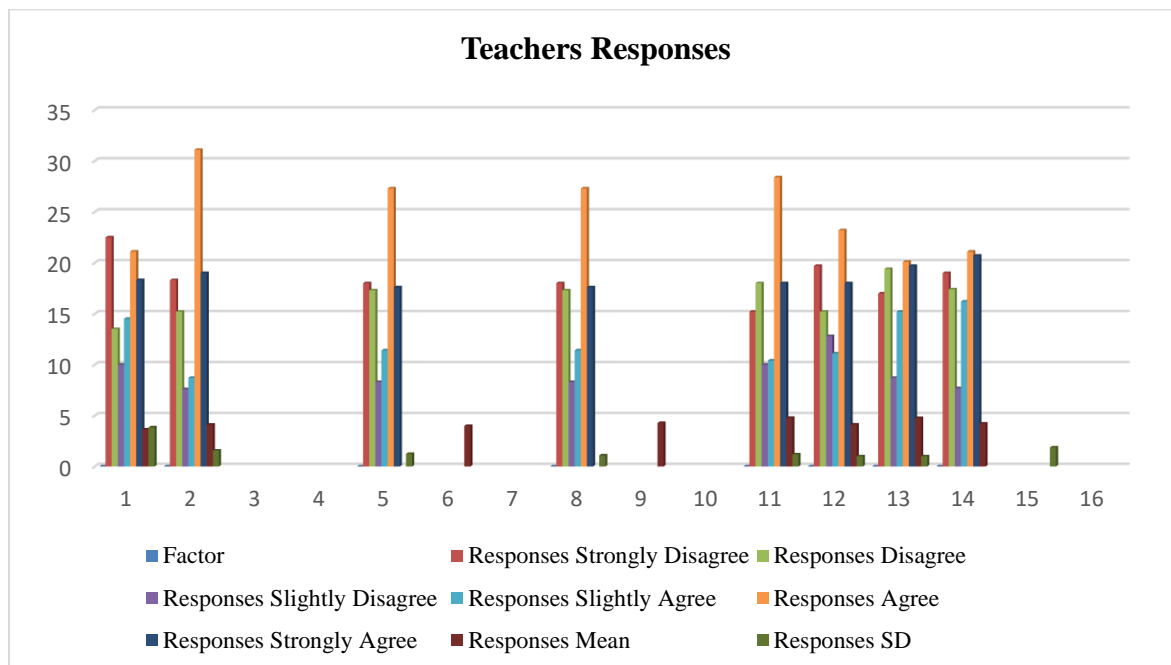
Fig. 1: shows the responses of teachers which reveal effectiveness of academic for promoting the academic planning at university level.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The results of the current study revealed that all respondents (teachers) were of the view that academic planning is very important and effective in promoting quality of higher education in Pakistan. They agreed that effectiveness of academic planning in promoting quality of higher education in Pakistan. In the light of the previous studies by Kellera and Mbewea (1991) asserted that academic planning plays a pivotal role in students' enrollment, students' services libraries, career services, and ICT to promote and enhance the quality of higher education. Shah (2005) cited that academic section of the university or nay other higher educational institution always focus on academic developmental plan and remain in contact with faculty members, deans, provost, students, department chairs, and vice president to resolve the academic affairs and effectively handle it.

Conclusions

The researcher concluded in the light of objectives and results of the study that academic planning is very important and effective in promoting higher education in Pakistan. The researcher drew a conclusion that training and innovation at college level education are very essential for the quality and effective changes in higher education. Academic planning plays a significant role in the academic development, for which the strategic direction of the university can be considered, culture of university, and characteristics of students can be known; faculty members can be encouraged, technological innovations can be considered and infrastructure of the University for establishing feasibility can be investigated. The researchers recommended that by promoting the culture of planning and support of senior management at the university. The academic plans should not be kept in offices drawers when they are developed and implemented, making it possible to develop educational programs according to the need of the local labor market and regional levels.

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