**Analyzing Perceived Issues and Challenges to Professional Development of Faculty Members in Tertiary Academic Institutions: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Universities of Punjab (Pakistan)**

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**ABSTRACT: Purpose:** The purpose of this paper is to explore and analyze various issues and challenges to professional development of faculty members in both public and private universities of Pakistan and to recommend suggestive actions to overcome the problems discussed by respondents. Several studies have been conducted previously on professional development of faculty members but authors have tried to make unique contribution in literature by conducting this research in both public and private universities of Pakistan and then comparing results accordingly. **Methodology:** Authors have deeply searched previous studies of researchers and through scores of secondary information variables have been extracted to view the concepts clearly. The target population for this research is faculty members of four universities from which two universities are public and two are private. Authors have sampled down the population by using stratified and convenient sampling so that data collection can be made easier. Then primary data has been collected through both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Authors have used questionnaire and have conducted in-depth interviews of the respondents. **Findings:** Authors have analyzed data by using simple means and standard deviations and have used t-scores for comparing results of public and private universities. It is revealed through results that the issue that has got lowest mean score for public university is perceived level of satisfaction with professional development activities this shows that most of the respondents of public university are not satisfied with the level of professional development at their institutes. However, respondents of private university revealed that they are provided with inadequate rewards and incentives for receiving training and for applying that training on the job. On the other hand, the issue that is least alarming in eyes of respondents of public universities is perceived impact of professional development activities on job performance and according to respondents of private universities they are happy and satisfied with the duration and timings of training courses that are provided to them. **Contribution:** This study can be proved fruitful for policy makers and strategists of academic institutes. Moreover, management can learn through the suggestions and can improve on flaws in planning, designing, implementing and evaluating training of faculty members. The major beneficiaries are faculty members who are key personnel of academic institutes and students who are their major products.
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is an important factor for human and economic development of every country. It is also one of the major factors in poverty alleviation. Proper education to all citizens of a country is extremely necessary to make their lives better and to develop them effectively. But unfortunately being an underdeveloped country Pakistan's public sector spending on education is far less than many other countries as Bangladesh, China, India, and Malaysia

(Economic Survey, 2009-10). According to latest findings by World Bank and Ministry of Education, Pakistan spends only 2.1% of its GDP on education therefore its literacy rate is only 5.7% according to statistics of 2009-10 (Economic Survey, 2009-10). The reason behind this low investment is because of huge economic slump experienced in last decade. As the importance of primary and secondary education cannot be ignored, tertiary education is equally important for developing nations. Therefore, there is

acute need of well developed system of higher education in Pakistan.

Higher education system of every country is like brain and blood for its nation. Well organized and well built higher education system is remarkably essential for development and growth of a society. Although, primary and secondary education are critical for nurturing individuals, but a sound tertiary system of education is equally fundamental for catering various problems as to minimize poverty, unemployment and to better poor economic conditions of a country. As according to Ministry of Higher Education Strategic Development Plan March 2005, higher education must be made accessible for every individual of country who could be a leader, a scholar, a scientist, or professional of tomorrow (MoHE_Strategic_plan, 2005).

As, Naqvi (2005) has described in his paper that Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has been working from decades to move country towards new era of knowledge based economy and is trying hard to bring innovation and creativity in higher education system so that institutes might become able to meet international standards of education and to withstand global challenges. Higher Education Commission has taken various measures as introducing foreign and national scholarships programs for teachers and students, short and long term training courses and events that can advance and revitalize existing knowledge, skills, abilities and capabilities of faculty members (Economic Survey, 2009-10). Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is also trying to improve quality of education, imparting research and escalating relevance with socio-economic development needs of country. From past few years, most of the budget was allocated to primary level of education only but now budget has been allocated to universities as well, which is an optimistic act indeed. A lot of contribution in this regard has been made by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (Naqvi, 2005).

## 1.1. Definition of Professional Development

In general terms Villegas-Reimers (2003) has described professional development as professional grooming of a person in his career. However specifically, Glatthorn (1995) has defined professional development of teachers as professional development is actually growth of teachers that is systematically achieved through their teaching experiences and through learning that is acquired by examining their own teaching style. On the other hand, Ganser (2000) has described professional development as series of formal and informal experiences. In which formal experiences means attending workshops, seminars, mentoring, etc, however, informal experiences includes reading professional publications, etc

(Ganser, 2000). Similarly, Avalos (n.d.) has described professional development as the way in which teachers learn, learn how to learn effectively and transform their knowledge into practice for the benefit of their students. Author further highlighted that this professional learning takes place through various means as through formal and informal ways. Formally by attending courses, workshops, seminars conferences, teachers can enhance their learning and informally teachers can learn through designing strategies for students, setting curriculum for students, and by performing routine academic tasks. In the same way, Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) has defined it as those activities that are designed to provide professional growth in teachers' career. However, Fullan (1991) has described it as set of formal and informal learning experiences that run through entire length of service of a teacher. Similarly, Grant (n.d.) has defined it as means of grooming and developing teachers by which teachers not only learn on new skills but also broaden their vision and learn through their real life experiences.

## 1.2. Importance Of Professional Development

According to Harwell (2003) professional development of faculty members is very crucial as if teachers are professionally groomed and developed then their teaching skills can be improved and classroom learning of students can be enhanced greatly. Teachers' behavior can be improved that can further lead to better students' performance (Harwell, 2003). Similarly, Davies (2011) has pondered light on importance of professional development by saying that as information, teaching techniques and aids and teaching methodology are changing every time therefore just education cannot help teachers to contend with it. Therefore, professional development of faculty members is important to renew knowledge and skills of faculty members. Similarly, Aslam (2011) has described that professional development of faculty members is an essential element to improve quality of education delivered to students. He further stated that professional development in general refers to development of an individual in his academic career and professional role. By the use of professional development activities teachers knowledge, skills and teaching capabilities could be enhanced and the immediate beneficiaries could be students and society in general (Aslam, 2011).

## 1.3. Higher Education in Pakistan

As Tariq (2007) described that Higher Education in Pakistan is going through very critical phase of reformation and evolution. Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has taken up challenge to elevate professional capabilities of faculty members and is trying every possible way to improve quality of education and to elevate standards of educational

institutes of Pakistan. Although professional development is an emerging concept in higher education institutes of developing countries, however, it has gained momentum in developed nations (Memon, 2007). As Elton (1977) and the World Bank Report (2000) described that staff development in higher education still needs new directions and academic institutes of developing nations needs clear, well formed academic programs and mission.

According to Qureshi (2007) Higher Education Commission and Learning Innovation Division are devoting their utmost efforts to professionally develop the faculty members of universities across Pakistan. Both of them are trying to improve on quality of higher education through various creative development programs, inducing technology and by providing advanced facilities in universities of Pakistan. Higher Education Commission is taking every possible step to facilitate learning, innovation and development of faculty members. Several professional development programs have been launched to bring novelty, collegiality, motivation, excitement and intellectual stimulation in teaching for the faculty members (Qureshi, 2007).

Similarly, Malik (2007) has emphasized that quality enhancement and improvement in higher education system is directly related to the quality of teachers. But unfortunately, the pre-service and in-service orientation of faculty members is perhaps most challenging issue. As compare to developed countries, Pakistan is far behind to accept and properly implement the professional development phenomenon. Similarly, Memon (2007) described that Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has launched various programs ranging from long to short term period. Malik (2007) further added that now this dream is near to be realized because of efforts being made by Higher Education Commission, Learning Innovation Division and NAHE from last few years. NAHE and Learning Innovation Division programs are trying to contribute a lot to provide continuous in-service professional development of faculty members. Higher Education Commission is struggling hard to train and develop the faculty members and the programs that they have aimed not only to enhance their teaching and learning capabilities but also to properly manage their departmental activities (Awan, 2007).

### 1.4. Professional Development Programs in Pakistan

Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has taken solid steps to provoke training and development at tertiary level. For this, it has started staff development program in 2004 which named as NAHE (National Academy of Higher Education) (Sajjad, 2007). The first program was a three month long program. The main objective of this program was to develop competent and skilled teachers for higher education system of Pakistan. Seven batches have completed their training successfully up till now. After that, another program named as Staff Development Program (SDP) comprising of three weeks period was run by various authorities set up by Higher Education Commission namely; Dow University of Health Sciences And Medicine Karachi and University Of Karachi in 2005 (Sajjad, 2007). Still, such activities are not enough to meet the required goals. There is an acute need of many effective and high quality professional development programs that should be linked with improvement of professional learning, professional knowledge and professional status of teachers (Memon, 2007).

Moreover, Ali (2007) has elaborated that there are two approaches that are used to develop teachers of universities as;

- Pre-Service Education,
- In-Service Education.

Pre-service education means that when teachers are getting professional education at that time faculty members must transfer right concept, updated knowledge and information and let their students practically implement knowledge so they can understand relevance of knowledge in market. Student of today can be teacher of tomorrow so if the foundations will not be made stronger today then how concrete architecture can be build for tomorrow. Other than bookish knowledge teachers must try to share their personal experiences with students that will definitely help them to think intuitively and make relevance of the content with reality. Universities must polish their students' abilities, skills and knowledge by not just effectively designing the courses and teaching techniques but must also work to develop students personally, professionally and academically. In universities besides classroom teaching, various seminars, workshops and internship programs must be organized for students that can act as first step towards their professional development (Ali, 2007).

According to Higher Education Commission Report (2002-08) Pakistan is taking three sets of faculty development measures as *Short Term Measures, Long Term Measures, And Incentive Schemes*. Short Term Measures include faculty hiring programs, faculty exchange programs, visiting scholar program and finally faculty professional and pedagogical skills development programs. The Long Term Measures include overseas scholarships, indigenous scholarships, PhD fellowship public sector universities and post doctoral fellowships. Finally, the Incentive Scheme includes upward revision of pay scales of the HEI faculty, tenure track system, placement of fresh PhDs at HEIs, distinguished

national professor program and best university teacher awards.

## 1.5. Issues and Challenges to Professional Development

As, Henard and Leprince-Ringuet (2009) has described that education of today is facing a lot of changes as increasing national and international competition, increasing number of diversified students, hiking expectations of stakeholders, globalization and revolution in information technology and changing teaching methodology. In the same way, Hoodbhoy (1998) explains that higher education system of today is not working satisfactorily. Various problems in Teaching-Learning process in higher education institutions have been identified by several researchers as Siddiqui (2006) describes that learning is mostly book oriented. Students rely on memorizing subject matter that is provided to them in classes. Similarly, Hoodbhoy (1998); Khawaja (1994); Ahmed (1992); and Ali (2005) explain that the main problem faced by teaching system of higher education is outdated methodology of teaching and delivering lectures that is ineffective to impart learning in students. Similarly Tariq et al. (2012a) and Siddique et al. (2011) have highlighted the issue for importance of management support and employees' collaboration during work and trust building as a major ingredient of smooth and effective working of employees. Moreover in another paper Tariq et al. (2012b) has focused its light upon importance of work life balance as a major tool for effective working of employees. In the same way Siddiqui et al. (2011a) has highlighted many perceived issues and challenges to professional development of faculty members. However in another paper Siddiqui et al. (2011b) has given various ways to minimize potential problems to professional development of faculty members.

Similarly, Ali (2007) reveals that situation of professional development of faculty members in Pakistan is highly disappointing. Participants don't have required basic skills and knowledge to acquire training. Teaching curriculum is outdated, teaching styles have gone obsolete, lack of proper teacher's training programs and poor implementation and planning of teacher's development process are raising problems of today. Participants are less motivated to acquire training and do not know the importance of training. Moreover, Aslam (2011) has identified various issues and challenges to professional development of faculty members in universities of Pakistan as; lack of in-house training opportunities in field of research and teaching; lack of national and international liaising among universities in verge of arranging training opportunities for staff development; lack of availability of incentives and rewards to

teachers who gain training and transfer it to their job; rising communication gap in between junior and senior faculty members that further buds up into lack of growth and advancement of faculty members.

Similarly, Sajjad (2007) elaborates few issues and challenges regarding professional development of faculty members as:

- Inadequate duration and daily timings of training course;
- Unsuitable training program schedule;
- Ineffective and useless content of training course;
- Incompetent facilitators or trainers;
- Inadequate facilities provided to participants and resource person;
- Improper design of modules;
- Overlapped and deficient modules.

As far as challenges are concerned researcher elaborated three major challenges that are:

- Faculty development should be considered as an ongoing process and should not be restricted to junior faculty members only;
- Strong culture of professional development should be made and participants should be rewarded and valued;
- Professional development should be synchronized well with teaching and research (Sajjad, 2007).

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Authors have taken four universities of Pakistan from which two universities are private and two universities are public. The target population includes all faculty members of case study universities from which authors have taken out sample. Both questionnaires and interviews are conducted from the respondents. The data is then analyzed by using SPSS software and by applying simple means, standard deviations and t-scores for comparative analysis of results. In order to measure the results, various variables and issues and challenges have been identified by the prior studies. 5-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) has been developed to explore the responses of faculty members. The level of significance "$\alpha$" used for the analysis of data is 5 % (.05). The respondents are asked to tell their views regarding what issues and challenges they have faced while experiencing professional development activities at their institutes. Various issues and challenges are discussed below and the corresponding values of means and standard deviations are also mentioned in the subsequent tables.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
## 3.1. Perceived Impact of Professional Development on Job Performance

Table 1.

| Perceived Issues and challenges faced by faculty members | Types of institutes | | | | *t* | Sig. (2 tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public Universities | | Private Universities | | | |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean | Std. Deviation | | |
| Perceived impact of PD on job performance | 3.36 | .963 | 3.41 | 1.132 | -.232 | .817 |

As the results indicate that the mean score for public universities is 3.36 and for private universities is 3.41 and the standard deviation is .963 and 1.132 respectively. The t-score for equality of means that is -.232 with p-value .817. These results indicate that there is no significant difference between the two mean scores. The mean scores also indicate that respondents of both public and private universities somehow agree with the statement that there is significant impact of professional development activities on job performance of teachers. As respondents of public universities reveal in their interviews that although professional development activities can affect their performance positively but there are several problems that are causing hindrances as lack of resources such as inadequate number of libraries, internet facilities, lack of funds and lack of electricity are continuously hampering smooth working of teachers. Moreover, respondents of both public and private universities give their view point that they often find working environment as unfriendly and non cooperative that de-motivates them to apply training on the job.

### 3.2. Commitment of Management

Table 2.

| Perceived Issues and challenges faced by faculty members | Types of institutes | | | | *t* | Sig. (2 tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public Universities | | Private Universities | | | |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean | Std. Deviation | | |
| Commitment of management | 2.97 | 1.267 | 3.50 | 1.010 | 2.330 | .022 |

The mean score for public universities is 2.97 and for private universities is 3.50 and the standard deviation is 1.267 and 1.010 respectively. The t-score for equality of means is 2.330 with p-value .022. These results indicate that there is significant difference between the two mean scores. This shows that the respondents of private universities consider that their management is more committed to impart professional development activities at their institutes as compare to respondents of public universities. One of the reasons is lack of funds that hinders management to organize training and development activities for teachers' at large scale. Although, Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is organizing various professional development programs to develop faculty members of universities but the responsibility also falls on management of every individual academic institute. Respondents of public universities reveal that they usually work in hostile working environment in which organizational politics, stereotyping and biasness is common. They further revealed that equal opportunities for advancement and training are not provided equally to faculty members. This shows that proper support from management, supervisors and peers is necessary for successful application of training on the job.

### 3.3. Relevance and Effectiveness of Training Module and Content

Table 3.

| Perceived Issues and challenges faced by faculty members | Types of institutes | | | | *t* | Sig. (2 tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public Universities | | Private Universities | | | |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean | Std. Deviation | | |
| Relevance and effectiveness of training module and content | 3.22 | .872 | 3.42 | 1.025 | -1.013 | .313 |

The mean score for public universities is 3.22 and for private universities is 3.42 and the standard deviation is .872 and 1.025 respectively. The t-score for equality of means is -1.013 with p-value .313. These results indicate that there is no significant difference between the two mean scores. Most of the respondents of both public and private universities state that few training programs that they have attended were not much useful as training content was irrelevant and most of the material was already known to them. The underlying reason behind this problem could be lack of proper need assessment before delivering training to trainees. No proper need assessment of trainees is conducted before training. Trainers don't known about individual differences of trainees on the basis of their primary knowledge, post and experience. Therefore, sometimes same content is used to train all participants. This largely reduces effectiveness and usefulness of training.

### 3.4. Adequate Duration and Timing of Training Course

Table 4.

| Perceived Issues and challenges faced by faculty members | Types of institutes | | | | *t* | Sig. (2 tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public Universities | | Private Universities | | | |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean | Std. Deviation | | |
| Adequate duration and timing of training course | 3.1014 | .90983 | 3.6897 | .95818 | -2.876 | .005 |

Results indicate that the mean score for public universities is 3.1014 and for private universities is 3.6897 and the standard deviation is .90983 and .95818 respectively. The t-score for equality of means is -2.876 with p-value .005. These results indicate that there is significant difference between the two mean scores. This shows that the respondents of private universities agree that they are provided with adequately scheduled training courses as compare to respondents of public universities. The reason that the respondents of public universities revealed in their interviews is increased work load and short deadlines that make it difficult to properly attend to training. Respondents further discussed that few short term training programs are arranged during weekends or during summer vocations which is their leisure time that they want to spent with their families, due to which their interest and urge to attend training declines badly. They argued that it is somehow difficult to maintain work life balance and to manage with work overloads. This shows that training courses must be scheduled adequately and with proper consent of the participants so that they could properly take part in it and could get ample time to learn and transfer to training.

### 3.5. Competency of Trainers

Table 5.

| Perceived Issues and challenges faced by faculty members | Types of institutes | | | | *t* | Sig. (2 tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public Universities | | Private Universities | | | |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean | Std. Deviation | | |
| Competency of trainers | 3.27 | .904 | 3.14 | 1.432 | .555 | .580 |

The mean score for public universities is 3.27 and for private universities is 3.14 and the standard deviation is .904 and 1.432 respectively that shows large differences in responses. The t-score for equality of means is .555 with p-value .580. These results indicate that there is no significant difference between the two mean scores. The mean scores reveal that respondents of both public and private universities do not fully agree with the statement that trainers who deliver training are merely skillful, competent and knowledgeable. The reason is lack of proper planning of training program. Most of the respondents of both public and private universities argued that the trainers who are usually outsourced are completely ignorant about organizational specific needs and trainees' specific needs. They further added that few trainers are knowledgeable and competent but lack training skills. They are ignorant about how to effectively impart training to the trainees.

### 3.6. Provision of Facilities during Training

Table 6.

| Perceived Issues and challenges faced by faculty members | Types of institutes | | | | t | Sig. (2 tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public Universities | | Private Universities | | | |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean | Std. Deviation | | |
| Provision of facilities during training | 3.07 | .990 | 3.38 | 1.049 | -1.376 | .172 |

The mean score for public universities is 3.07 and for private universities 3.38 and the standard deviation is .990 and 1.049 respectively. The t-score for equality of means is -1.376 with p-value .172. These results indicate that there is no significant difference between the two mean scores. The reason for this perceived issue is lack of funds. As most of respondents of public universities revealed that provision of proper facilities during training as handouts, lodging facilities, dining and transportation facilities are necessary and can induce more learning to trainees and can motivate them as well. Most of the faculty members of private universities are satisfied with provision of facilities as their institutes are generating large revenues by taking exceptional dues and fesses from students and to better their image they have to facilitate their institute with every possible resource and requirement. As public universities are wholly depended on government grants and funds and their fee structure is also low so to accommodate every class of students, therefore these institutes are unable to provide adequate facilities and resources to their teachers and students.

### 3.7. Perceived Level of Satisfaction to Professional Development Activities

Table 7.

| Perceived Issues and challenges faced by faculty members | Types of institutes | | | | t | Sig. (2 tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public Universities | | Private Universities | | | |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean | Std. Deviation | | |
| Perceived Level of satisfaction to PD activities | 2.80 | .860 | 3.22 | 1.184 | -2.058 | .042 |

As the results indicate that the mean score for public universities is 2.80 and for private universities is 3.22 and the standard deviation is .860 and 1.184 respectively. The t-score for equality of means is -2.058 with p-value .042. These results indicate that there is significant difference between the two mean scores. The results reveal that the respondents of private universities are more satisfied with the professional development programs that they receive at their institute as compare to respondents of public universities. The reason revealed by the respondents of public universities in their interviews is lack proper planning, lack of need assessment, lack of funds, lack of commitment of supervisors, lack of support from peers and lack of adequate resources.

### 3.8. Granting Rewards and Incentives

Table 8.

| Perceived Issues and challenges faced by faculty members | Types of institutes | | | | t | Sig. (2 tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public Universities | | Private Universities | | | |
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean | Std. Deviation | | |
| Grating rewards and incentives | 3.00 | .965 | 2.68 | 1.512 | 1.342 | .182 |

Results indicate that the mean score for public universities is 3.00 and for private universities is 2.68 and the standard deviation is .965 and 1.512 respectively. The t-score for equality of means is 1.342 with p-value .182. These results indicate that there is no significant difference between the two mean scores. The mean scores indicate that respondents of both public and private universities are

not given proper rewards and incentives after receiving training and very few monetary and non monetary benefits are given to those teachers who apply training on the job in the form of promotions, salary increase, appreciation, recognition, etc. The reason behind this is poor performance management system. Teachers' performance is not checked and appraised on continuous basis. Proper feedback is not delivered to them due to which it cannot be evaluated whether training objectives have been met or not after receiving training. Due to this proper rewards are not allocated on outstanding performance of individuals.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

After analyzing results authors have recommended following measures and suggestive actions.

- It is suggested that management must support training and development of faculty members and must try to create healthy and friendly working environment where learning of training and its transfer on the job can be made easier.
- Management of institutes and government must join hands together to fully facilitate professional development activities at universities. Various problems as lack of resources, lack of funds and lack of technology should be overcome to facilitate proper and smooth working of teachers.
- Equal training and development opportunities must be provided to faculty members on the basis of merit and performance not on the basis of favoritism and referrals.
- It is highly recommended that before arranging training programs for individuals proper need assessment must be conducted. Firstly, every individual training need must be assessed and then training program and content must be decided. This process is however difficult and time taken but it can largely increase training effectiveness.
- It is suggested that training must be scheduled properly and this process must be planned properly with the consent of trainees. Management must discuss training schedule with trainees so that they can easily attend to training and can manage their personal and work life together.
- It is suggested that trainers must be knowledgeable and skillful. They must be first of all trained about how to train trainees and deliver training to trainees in effective manner which means that train the trainer (TOT) is essential.

- Teachers must be motivated to receive training and to apply that training on the job. If teachers are positively motivated and they are made aware about the importance and effectiveness of receiving training and applying that training on the job then favorable results can be achieved.
- There is need of proper performance management system at hand. Teachers' performance must be evaluated and appraised on regular basis and effective feedback must be delivered on the spot so that performance gaps could be identified and training needs and effectiveness can be analyzed.

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