

Assessment of MPhil/PhD education scholars in public and private universities in Pakistan

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Abstract: It is a comparative analysis about the Comparison of the MPhil/PhD Scholars Assessment in Public and Private Universities in Pakistan. The primary Data was collected from six (6) University Controller of Examinations and MPhil/PhD Scholars of sessions 2010-2014. The main objectives of the research study were; to know about the best practices in Public and Private Universities Examination Departments; to provide recommendations for the improvement in these universities examination departments. The research questions of the study were: What are the best practices in Public and Private Universities Examination Departments? What recommendations the study suggested for the improvement in examination departments? The population of the study included 25 Universities. The study found that public sector universities showing good results were, examination staff members' numbers, impartial grading system, and provision of physical facilities and incentives to examination staff. The study recommended that centralized marking system should be introduced at MPhil/PhD level.

Key words: *MPhil/PhD; Examination system; Comparison; Public and private universities*

1. Introduction

Higher education is considered one of the majors' skills developing, social, moral and economical development and values promoting with sound intelligence in modern world is considered. The speedy expansion in Higher education sector is witnessed by the manifold increase in the number of universities, enrolment and public spending on higher education. To meet the increasing demand of higher education, not only public sector universities numbers is rapidly increased but at the same pace private sector is being encouraged by the Government of Pakistan. The private sector has responded positively and more than sixty new private universities have been established during the last ten years. This breathtaking increase in the number of HEIs calls for an urgent need of systematic review of the quality and quality assurance mechanisms these HEIs. HEC has taken several steps to boost quality culture and quality assurance in higher education sector. Higher education level started after completing the higher secondary level and corresponds to sixteen plus to twenty two plus years' age cohort of the learners. The DAIs, universities and other such organizations or colleges imparting higher and professional education. The first degree in the traditional education system is Graduation of 02 years (in old system), and in the new system, graduation takes 04 years' time. The professional degrees in medical etc, is of 5 years of time, the time frame of first degree in agriculture and engineering is sometime 04 and

sometime 05 years in different professional universities. Master's degree is mostly, of two years duration. The duration of MPhil is two years and PhD degree requires 03 to 05 years. Higher education is split into undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

At higher education level each department at the university or college develops a curriculum for concerned disciplines. Then, a Board of Studies comprising faculty members, external subject experts and representatives of affiliated institutes discusses it in detail and finalizes it by suggesting additions or changes. After that, at operation level, teacher plans lessons for teaching from the contents. However HEC has developed guidelines for each academic programme to maintain minimum standards for different areas like programme duration, standard and scope of the syllabus and courses, and the ways of its evaluation (www.hec.gov.pk-2016).

University is characterized as an instructive organization intended for giving direction, conduct examination, or both, of understudies in numerous branches of cutting edge learning, giving degrees to the learners in different fields. As per present day idea of instruction, a university is a city of the globe which is principally sanctioned for examination and data for the people and for the general public. In this setting, it remains a store of information and knowledge. In the current age, the fundamental capacity of a university incorporates the advancement of HR and the nature of human improvement which is primarily chartered for research and information for the individuals and for the society. A university involves very great

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investment of community and has obligations to serve it which should be guaranteed to its persons and focus on issues of national interest. University should incorporate the skills of research and teaching, on both intellectual and practical grounds and development of some essential skills. Professional integrity, civility and discourse, these all necessary techniques should be taught and exercised by higher educational institutions accompanied with the modern time tools, equipment's, software's know how and developing the skills of synthesis and analysis in its educators.

1.1. Objectives of the study

The following were the objectives of the study

1. To know about the best practices in Public and Private Universities Examination Departments
2. To know about the weaknesses in Public and Private Universities Examination Departments
3. To provide recommendations for the improvement in these universities examination departments.

1.2. Research questions of the study

The following were the research questions of the study

1. What are the best practices in Public and Private Universities Examination Departments?
2. What are the weaknesses in Public and Private Universities Examination Departments?
3. What recommendations the study suggested for the improvement in these universities examination departments?

2. Literature review

According to Patel (2003) Higher Education all around the world is the main and very important source to fulfill some of the higher expectations of a community. Students' and teachers' of universities everywhere in the world are always motivated to keep alive the values of freedom, individual dignity and brotherhood.

According to Kapur and Crowley (2008) the major role of advanced education in both hypothetical and approach terms need satisfactory experimental learning of what is going on inside colleges and to the understudies, who spend a noteworthy piece of their childhood years in these organizations.

According to Khan, M (2010) twenty-first centuries is the century of changes and rapid development, knowledge explosion, improvements in the areas of Technology and Science, world globalization and exhausting assets have brought each circle of life under enormous weight to react to the evolving situation. Instructive organizations are no exception. This activity has provoked responsibility, productive usage of assets, business sector driven methodology and brisk reaction to

rising needs and prerequisites of the partners in higher instructive establishments. Far and wide, advanced education is being shaken by significant changes. Increased registrations in the course of the most recent decade are putting serious money related strains on higher learning framework. In the meantime, computer and web has permitted impossible types of worldwide learning exchange. Universities are opening so as to make worldwide associations scholastic projects and expanding its branches in different nations which never happened before.

Pakistan has acquired an extremely frail and poor base of Higher Education. At the point when the then India was subdivided into India and Pakistan, just two out of the twenty one DAIs were on the Pakistan side of the fringe, one was University of the Punjab, Lahore, set up in 1882 and the other was in Dhaka, While Sindh University got acknowledgment in 1947 (Isani and Virk, 2005).

Saeed (2007) stated that advanced level of education in Pakistan started after passing 12th examination and corresponds to sixteen plus to twenty two plus year's age cohort of the learners and pupils. The DAIs, HEIs, universities and other professional organizations provide higher and professional education to the learners. The 1st degree according to the old system is Graduation which is of two years, but as per new structure Bachelor Programme (BS Honor's) is of 4 years. The degree programmes in medicine and engineering and pharmacy etc., is of 5 years in various colleges and institutions. Master degree is of two years in old system and MS is either one or two years programmes and the length of time of PhD is no less than three years and for the most part steered through MPhil (two years) in the significant control.

HEC (2015) Higher Education of Pakistan involves Universities, DAIs and affiliated institutions. These institutions are under the umbrella of Higher Education Commission (HEC). The Higher Education Commission is a peak and self-ruling body that distributes public budget to the government sector universities, Degree Awarding Institutes authorize their degree programmes. The affiliated colleges must adopt the curriculum approved by the HEC funded universities/DAIs they have affiliation; however, they are funded and controlled by the provincial governments. HEC also funds the private sector universities to some extent for research and infrastructure development and monitor them for maintaining standards and good quality. In Pakistan, higher level education is dominated by public universities and DAIs; though, an extraordinary increase in the quantity of private advanced education organizations has occurred in the near past years.

According to Rahman (2013) Pakistan has a tremendous growth in higher education in the recent past. It is supported by an increase in university enrolment from 276,000 in the year 2002 to over one million by the year 2012 and the number of universities reached from 71 in 2003 to 146 by

2011. Similarly there was marked increase in the number of PhD output from the total 3281 during 1947-2002 to about 5,000 during the period 2003-2012. International research publications also increased from 600 annually in the year 2,000 to about 8,142, in the year 2013.

Phillips & Pugh (2005) stated that PhD qualification or degree is much attractive to many students' and general peoples but a PhD degree is awarded after an intensive research work. The study further stated that Albert Einstein and Karl Marx both were PhDs but Einstein's PhD research was not about relativity nor was Marx's research thesis about capital. However, the existing PhD degree must have an original research activity or thesis. The thesis must be an original work the will be supported with solid and new data.

According to Green and Powell (2005) supervisors could help the researchers to avoid problems faced by them but they did not always succeed in overcoming it. Another reason of not getting a PhD degree is the lack of supervisor of choice, who knew well about all the basics of research writing but also ensured that the research scholar should know what a PhD required. One of the reasons of researchers' failure as identified by a panel of international experts was that the research scholar and supervisor fail in choosing a realistic and manageable topics to be completed.

According to Perveen et al. (2011) Pakistan's existing education system is very weak at all levels and facing many problems. The problems of cheating, corruption and violation of merit, made the situation grimmer. The universities do not address modern trends like, globalization, corporate citizenship, adaptation of new technologies and linkage between universities and industries. The study made the following recommendations: restructuring the existing master degree programmes, proper and effective utilization of the available resources, induction of qualified and deserving staff members in government and private DAIs, promotion quality higher education, and giving full attention to research work and research supervisors should be encouraged to produced good researchers.

Advance Education in Developing Nations, Perils and Promise (2002) reported that developing nations of the world contain 80% of the world's total population, but only 40% of its youth can get government sponsored higher education facility and a very small number of those 40% learners, get access to quality education.

The report further highlighted the following four major weaknesses on the higher education of developing countries: lack of vision, absence of political will, lack of financial assistance and conditions of initial disadvantage. In developing countries, Higher education is severely disadvantaged by its poor baseline and the disruptions of globalization. The report offered suggestions for increasing higher education's contribution to community, which included,

infrastructure improvement, access to internet facility, technological laboratories and accessories, standardized libraries, availability of classrooms, refreshing and cultural facilities; modern curriculum, modern pedagogical practices and academic programmes, well trained faculty; research oriented courses. Institutions also take the lead in improving the quality of existing programmes to overcome their academic deficits.

Mohammad (2013) conducted his doctoral thesis under the title: comparative analysis of PhD dissertations in Pakistan. The objectives included were; to examine the standard of researches, to make a comparison of the researches held during HEC and UGC & to develop a tool for a research thesis assessment. Data was obtained by using twenty point's tool and five point's categorical scale. In the study each and every thesis the same tool and scale was used. The number of total theses was 178 in which 131 were from HEC and 47 were from UGC. The study revealed that the performance of HEC was better in the shape of good theses and quality researches production than that of UGC.

Shirazi (2004) conducted his PhD thesis under the title: Analysis of Examination at University Level in Pakistan, in Arid University, Rawalpindi. His objectives were (1) To know about the existing examination system weaknesses and flaws (2) to see the implementation of the merit policy in all universities examinations departments. (3) To observe the qualities of the external and internal examiners and their responsibilities in the sampled universities (4) To study the difference and similarity between the external and internal examiners appointed by the universities for the job of supervision in examination (5) To make a comparison of the semester and annual system. The study found that: the examination system can be further improved if the teachers and examiners take interest in merit based policy implementation. It was concluded that in semester system the course work is covered in all aspects but in annual system the course always left uncovered by the concerned teachers, so semester system should be exercised for effective examination.

The existing curriculum should be made according to the examination requirements of the learners at university level. The examination arrangements like halls, seating facilities and arrangements should be made more facilitative and comfortable for the healthy participation of learners'. External and internal examiners should be experienced and trained in conducting examination and marking procedure.

3. Methodology of the study

The was an evaluative study which attempt to find out a comparative analysis of the examination systems and examinations departments structures of public and private universities in khyberpakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

3.1. Population and sample of the study

The population of the study included all the 25 higher education commission recognized universities in Khyberpakhtunkhwa, Pakistan and all the research scholars graduated and enrolled in sessions from 2010-2014. The sample from these universities was selected purposively and six universities, three from public and three from private sector universities were selected. The sample was further delimited to the Controller of examination of each university and research scholars from 2010-2014.

3.2. Tool of the study

Interview was developed and used as data collection tool for the study from the controller of examination and a questionnaire for research scholars.

3.3. Data analysis

Table 1 stated that all the six sampled universities in both public and private sectors follow semester system at MPhil and PhD education levels. The respondents reported that there are advantages and disadvantages of the semester system but this system suits the purpose and intent of the universities and their staff. It is also comparable to the foreign universities in terms of academic achievements.

Table 1: The type of examination system you follow for MPhil/PhD scholars

Type of University	Total No. of Respondents	Semester system		conventional system	
		Yes	%	No	%
Public Sector	3	3	100	00	00
Private Sector	3	3	100	00	00

Table 2: Existing examination system valid at MPhil/PhD Education levels.

Type of University	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Public Sector	3	3	100	00	00
Private Sector	3	3	100	00	00

Table 2 data indicated that all the respondents of the six sampled universities agreed that the current examination system at both public and private sector universities is valid and transparent. During interview the respondents reported that semester system exams are in two parts i-e mid-term and final semester examinations and they have also some

marks assigned to classroom activities, class participation and assignments work.

Table 3 indicated that all the respondents' agreed that the arrangement universities were satisfactory and the available facilities whether human resources or physical facilities for the examinations were well enough and according to the need and requirements of the existing scholars at both PhD and MPhil levels.

Table 3: Existing examination system arrangement is satisfactory.

Type of University	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Public Sector	3	3	100	00	00
Private Sector	3	3	100	00	00

Table 4: Examination staff number is satisfactory and competent.

Type of University	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Public Sector	3	2	66.6	1	33.3
Private Sector	3	1	33.3	2	66.6

Table 4 data indicated the responses of the sampled universities about the examination departments' staff members. The responses from public sector universities were 66.6% agreed that the staff members in examination departments were satisfactory but 33.3% responses were not agreed with it. On the other hand private sector universities respondents were 33.3% agreed that staff members in examination departments were available for the assistance and conduction of the examinations. While 66.6% respondents were not agreed and according to them there was shortage of staff and they were not satisfied.

Table 5 indicated the responses of the respondents about physical facilities for the conduction of effective examinations. The respondents from public sector universities were 100% agreed that all the needed physical facilities for the effective conduction of examinations were available. The responses from private sector universities were also 100% agreed that the physical facilities were well enough for the effective conduction of examinations in all sampled private sector universities.

Table 6 results show that the respondents were agreed with the statement that the procedures used

for assessing the competencies of the scholars at PhD and MPhil are satisfactory. The data shows that both sectors universities are applying the same

standardized procedures for the evaluation process of their scholars.

Table 5: Physical facilities are adequate for the successful conduct of examination.

Type of University	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Public Sector	3	3	100	00	00
Private Sector	3	3	100	00	00

Table 6: Evaluation procedures of the scholars at MPhil /PhD levels are satisfactory.

Type of University	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Public Sector	3	3	100	00	00
Private Sector	3	3	100	00	00

Table 7: The mechanism of examination’s supervision is standardized.

Type of University	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Public Sector	3	3	100	00	00
Private Sector	3	3	100	00	00

Data of Table 7 showed that the sampled participants of sampled universities about the mechanism of examination supervision were 100% agreed that they followed standard procedures and mechanism for examination supervision system at MPhil & PhD levels. It means that examination supervision system in both sectors universities were satisfactory.

The Table 8 data indicated that the respondents of both sectors universities were 100% agreed with the statement that all sampled public and private universities’ examination at MPhil/PhD levels were free from all sorts of unfair means. It means that both sectors universities respondents were agreed that there were no use of unfair means.

Table 8: Examination at MPhil/PhD levels free from unfair means.

Type of University	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Public Sector	3	3	100	00	00
Private Sector	3	3	100	00	00

Table 9: Examination section follows all norms for maintenance of secrecy.

Type of University	Total No. of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Public Sector	3	3	100	00	00
Private Sector	3	3	100	00	00

Table 9 data show that the respondents replied about examination system norms for the maintenance of secrecy; all the sampled universities of both sectors were agreed with the statement 100% that they follow all the possible norms of secrecy in examinations at higher level i-e MPhil and PhD. The responses showed that the procedure regarding the maintenance of secrecy was well working and that there were proper procedures followed by the sampled universities.

3.4. Research scholars’ responses

Table 10 data showed that public sector universities respondents were: 12 strongly agreed, 15 agreed, 10 undecided, 45 disagreed and 22 strongly disagreed out of total 104 research scholars. The mean score of the data is 2.5 which show that half of the respondents agreed and half is disagreed with the statement.

The responses of the private sector universities are 28 strongly agreed, 69 agreed, 23 undecided, 51 disagreed and 16 strongly disagreed out of total 187

respondents. The mean score value is 3.2 which shows that the ratio of agreed respondents is high than those of disagreed. The given data statistics also showed that the calculated **t** value is **t =4.698** and the significant value is **0.001** with **df =289**. So it means that the value **t** lies in the acceptance region so the majority of the respondents were agreed with the statement.

Table 11 showed that the public sector scholars’ responses were: 10 strongly agreed, 49 agreed, 4 undecided, 32 disagreed and 9 strongly disagreed out of total 104 research scholars of MPhil/PhD. The mean is 3.1 which indicated that majority participants were agreed. The responses of the private sector were: 24 strongly agreed, 111 agreed, 13 undecided, 33 disagreed and 6 strongly disagreed out of total 187 respondents.

The mean score of private sector is 3.6 which showed that majority of the participants were agreed with the statement. The data statistics also showed that the calculated **t** value is **t=2.851** and the significant value is **0.019** with **df =289**. It means

that the value **t** lies in the acceptance region so the responses are agreed with the statement.

Table 12 showed that the public scholars' responses were: strongly agreed 21, agreed 33, undecided 10, disagreed 26 and strongly disagreed were 14. The mean score of public sector is **3.2** and it means that majority participants were agreed with the question item.

The private sector responses were: 50 strongly agreed, 74 disagreed, 17 undecided, 30 disagreed

and 16 were strongly disagreed. The mean is **3.5** and it also supporting the maximum participants' agreements. The statistics of the table showed that the calculated **t** value is **t=4.068** and the significant value is **0.001** with **df= 289**.

As the value **t** lies in the acceptance region so majority of the responses were agreed with the statement that the existing examination system is working well.

Table 10: Examiners' are absolutely fair and impartial in grading.

Public Sector Scholars Data Mean Score						
SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	TOTAL	MEAN
12	15	10	45	22	104	2.5
60	60	30	90	22	262	
Private Sector Scholars Data Mean Score						
28	69	23	51	16	187	3.2
140	276	69	102	16	603	
t. test						
	St- dev	t	df	Sig		
Private	22.006	4.698	289	0.001		
Public	14.274					

Table 11: Lecturers provide proper feed back to scholars on their assignments

Public Sector Scholars Data Mean Score						
SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	TOTAL	MEAN
10	49	4	32	9	104	3.1
50	196	12	64	9	331	
Private Sector Scholars Data Mean Score						
24	111	13	33	6	187	3.6
120	444	39	66	6	675	
t. test						
	St- dev	t	df	Sig		
Private	40.41	2.851	289	0.019		
Public	19.09					

Table 12: The existing examination/ evaluation system is working well.

Public Sector Scholars Data Mean Score						
SA	A	UD	DA	SDA	TOTAL	MEAN
21	33	10	26	14	104	3.2
105	132	30	52	14	333	
Private Sector Scholars Data Mean Score						
50	74	17	30	16	187	3.5
250	296	51	60	16	673	
t.test						
	St- dev	t	df	Sig		
Private	24.63	4.068	289	0.001		
Public	9.20					

4. Findings

1. The responses of both sectors universities show that there was no significant difference between both sectors universities about the assessment and evaluation systems at MPhil & PhD levels.
2. Difference was observed about the scholars' assignment feedback. The responses show that private sector universities lecturers were providing proper feedback to the research scholars as compared to public sector universities.
3. The staff members in public sector examination system is satisfactory and are getting incentives for the examination and inspection duty but in

- private sector universities the staff numbers were not getting any incentive for the conduction of examinations etc.
4. All the sampled universities were supporting semester system at higher level. The sampled universities respondents were agreed that semester system is more appropriate and effective than conventional system.
5. There was a slight difference about the examination staff numbers, physical infrastructure, facilities, and procedures of examinations of both sector universities. The public sector universities were more facilitated as compared to private sector universities.

5. Conclusion

The examination staff members of public sector universities were found more satisfied as compared to those of private sector universities due to a clear and regular system of promotion and of job satisfaction by ensuring their job security. As the staff members of public universities was enjoying good salary packages, more job security assurances and timely promotion process as compared to private sector universities where all these matters were taken place very rarely. Universities in both public and private sectors follow semester system at M.Phil and Ph.D education programmes levels. There are advantages and disadvantages of the semester system but this system suits the purpose and intent of the universities and their staff. It is also comparable to the foreign universities in terms of academic achievements.

6. Recommendations

1. The examination system at higher level should be supervised by the competent authorities in proper manner to maintain standards. Staff members should be increased in private universities examination departments.
2. The available staff should be trained properly in exams related matters. Honest and sincere faculty members should be appointed as supervisory staff. There should be proper incentive policy for examination staff.
3. Faculty members should be given compensation when working as superintendents or invigilators'. Examination items for scholars should be made both subjective and objective types to improve the quality of higher education in the country.
4. There should be effective internal evaluation machinery at university level to upgrade our standard of education. All external examiners should be replaced with internal staff members for effective accountability system.
5. The existing courses at MPhil and PhD levels should be upgraded, modernized and according to the world standards in the light of the present day social, economical, national and international needs. In this process all the stakeholders must be involved.
6. The universities are the centers of higher learning therefore it should be made free from external influences and political interferences by the politicians and influential members of the society. Merit based appointments should be encouraged and there should be no political intervention for the staff and even vice chancellors appointment.
7. Public private partnership at university level should be developed and promoted so that both sectors collectively work for prompting quality education and it will also reduce burden on public sector universities. Therefore, private sector universities should be given financial and technical assistance by the public sector and government.

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