
ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

In Pakistan, all higher education institutions are accredited by the Higher Education Commission and have formed a directorate of quality assurance to accomplish the quality goal and enforce internal quality assurance policies through the quality enhancement cells (QECs). Quality assurance systems within the institutional level that are built in a strong quality culture tend to be more effective in improving the quality of learning experiences and academic achievements compared to externally driven quality assurance. Considering the importance of institutional quality assurance practices, the study was intended to analyze the current status of institutional quality assurance practices in public and private universities of Islamabad, Pakistan. The objectives of the study were to investigate institutional quality assurance practices currently implemented in public and private universities, and to compare institutional quality assurance practices in public and private universities. The sample of the study constituted fifty-eight faculty members, selected through the universal sampling method, and 356 students through the stratified random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) and inferential statistics (independent sample t-test) to identify difference in terms of institutional quality assurance practices between both public and private universities. The findings of the study showed there was no considerable difference in the views of students and faculty members of both sectors regarding quality assurance practices, employed by quality assurance agency by Higher Education Commission. The results of the study showed both public and

private universities maintain their institutional quality assurance practices in terms of academic quality, program evaluations for quality improvement, research development activities and service quality, but they are grappling with common challenges regarding institutional facilities such as number of classrooms, inadequate transportation facilities, scholarship opportunities. Based on the conclusion, the study recommends that the Higher Education Commission and Quality Assurance Agency may work to improve institutional facilities along with academic quality. Further Quality Assurance Agency may develop an effective and structured institutional Quality Assurance scheme to enhance the quality progress of institutions.

KEYWORDS

Quality assurance, institutional quality assurance, public and private universities

INTRODUCTION

The concept of quality has evolved through time, it has been used for years in commerce and industry, and it was introduced to the higher education market at the beginning of the 1980s (Elassy, 2015). In recent decades, there has been considerable global concern about the quality of higher education as Higher Education Institutions produce human capital that can drive socio-economic indicators. As a result, quality assurance approaches have been adopted by most of the higher education systems worldwide (UNESCO, 2021). Quality assurance, in its dual role of internally and externally assessing the performance of educational institutions and programs, has always played a key role in upholding and improving the best aspects of what higher education has accomplished in the past and laying the foundation for the future (Eaton, 2021). There seems to be no doubt about the purpose of quality assurance in general and self-assessment in particular, as a means to enhance quality in higher education in both developed and underdeveloped countries (Nguyen, 2016). The higher education (HE) system is the paramount key in the reconstruction and advancement of a society. The higher education institutes (HEIs), for decades, had an incredible role in educating the key players, who become influential contributors to society by escalating its values and advancing its resources. The importance of HE as an engine to boost socio-economic indicators cannot be overlooked. To promote a knowledge-based economy in the country, a quality education is a dire need of the hour. Similarly, to strengthen the living standards of life and to avail social advantages improvement in higher education is necessary (Ma, 2020).

Similarly, in first and third-world countries, quality assurance practices in institutions have become important to meet the challenges in the globalized world due to the growing expansion, privatization, and diversification of the programs in the arena of HE system (Ahmed, 2016). To respond to effectively and efficiently to the intensified global competition and national educational reforms, Higher education institutions

should make serious efforts to make mechanisms for quality assurance practices effective. Quality assurance practices is crucial in public and private universities to promote, enhance, and assure the international standards of education (Andaleep, 2020). However, in developing countries like Pakistan, the education system is facing major challenges in higher education but struggling hard to improve its educational standards to meet global standards. As education provides the base for socio-economic development, therefore hurdles in the education system should be dealt with first. Similarly, poor education can impact the economic values that Pakistan is facing at present. Robust economic and education policies are mandatory to meet the drastic challenges in third-world countries like Pakistan (Noreen, 2019). The establishment of HEC is the foremost step taken by the government to ensure the quality of education. It was made functional in 2002 with political support to reform the education system and a budget was allocated to it. The HEC has made a Quality Assurance Agency, Quality Assurance Committee, and Quality enhancement cells QECs to meet the demands of international standards (Khan & Kamran, 2017).

The Quality assurance agency checks the efficiency of HEIs in the public and private sectors of Pakistan. It works through quality enhancement cells and accreditation councils. External Quality Assurance is implemented by the Accreditation Council. Similarly, Internal Quality Assurance is a system of self-assessment and is executed by institutions to take actions with aims. QECs implement the policies of Internal Quality Assurance (Haider, 2016). Self-assessment and external review are key parts of a well-developed and effective quality assurance system. Internal quality assurance is a process within the institutions to provide quality that involves periodic self-evaluation, monitoring, good practices, good quality management, and governance (Ayaz & Sharjeel, 2020). Institutional quality assurance is a system of self-assessment that refers to the effectiveness of internal processes within the institutions i.e., teaching and learning processes, institutional facilities, infrastructure, learning environment, etc. (Noreen, 2019).

According to Martin (2018), the biggest challenge is that accountability-oriented external quality assurance systems appear to emphasize specifically on enhancing the management procedures of the institutions rather than transforming the culture of the institution and enhancing teaching and learning practices to raise the quality of students' educational experiences. EQA has no or little effect on improving student learning experiences, the effectiveness of teaching, or the success of the majority of the students. Systems for internal quality within HEIs have a direct influence on students' academic success and their learning experiences. Owing to this, the Directorate of Quality Enhancement has been created under the supervision of HEC and internal quality assurance mechanism to ensure and maintain quality education. The IQA holds meetings to review progress and instructions given by the HEC. The

quality of IQA is measured annually. The IQA implements it polices through QEC in higher education institutes (www.hec.gov.pk-2022).

To create a sustainable framework for upholding quality, establishing a strong internal quality assurance system in educational institutes is regarded as the most critical aspect. The need for an effective operative internal quality assurance requires the establishment of a continuous and long-term quality improvement scheme within the institutional level as well as at different academic disciplines, in contrast to external or extrinsic evaluations, which primarily address issues of accountability. For this purpose, QECs are responsible for controlling the quality assessment process which is known as the Self-Assessment Process. QECs have the responsibility to ensure program assessments to find the quality of each program that follows the Self-Assessment model. It is a part of the Internal Quality Assurance policy. It contains the teaching-learning process, educational institution facilities, computer labs, and outcomes. The result of this process is a Self-Assessment Report (Usmani & Khatoon, 2018).

Numerous studies underscore the importance of merit in various aspects, including student admissions, staff recruitment, faculty development programs, research methodologies, and the enhancement of physical infrastructure such as classrooms, laboratories, and libraries. (Ghulam, 2017). Evaluating the effectiveness of quality assurance measures implemented at the university level is imperative to elevate educational standards in Pakistan. External and internal stakeholders perceive higher education differently, with a focus on program nature, fee structures, and institutional locations. Currently, stakeholders are particularly attentive to educational programs and curricula, emphasizing the need for increased scrutiny of faculty selection, research development activities, and institutional facilities, including scholarships, instructional aids, labs, and counseling services (Batool & Quraishi, 2006). Quality assurance, a relatively novel concept in the higher education sector of Pakistan, holds immense importance but remains largely unexplored. There is a pressing need to investigate quality assurance practices in universities to enhance the quality of education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When Pakistan got its independence, with a population of more than 100 million, the University of the Punjab was the sole operational university in the region which reflected the terrible state of higher education in the early years of the nation. By mandate, provincial governments are in charge of education. Most of the HEIs were created and supported by the corresponding provincial governments. Up until 1957, there were only four HEIs, and in the following ten years, there were only ten. Sixteen HEIs two in each of the following two decades were founded. The number of HEIs

increased from 28 to 43 between 1988 and 1997, a period of comparatively strong expansion. Likewise, the increase in universities from the decade 1998 to 2008, reached 128 was remarkable (Osama, Najam, Kassim, Gilani, & King, 2009). However, in the recent decade, from 2013 to 2023, the count of public and private universities has expanded to 247 i.e. Public Sector: 147 and Private Sector: 100, with 2 million students enrolled in tertiary education (economic survey, 2023). Recently, HEC's top management acknowledged the significant expansion of Higher Education, eligible for public support for research, faculty development, and improvement of academic and research facilities and infrastructure is a significant step in this direction (HEC, 2022). However, in this context, to make Pakistan's education system sustainable and in compliance with global standards, the HEC management has begun to concentrate on the quality criteria by increasing the number of quality parameters in the institutions. This has resulted in a gradual improvement in Pakistan's educational standards. (Urooj et.al, 2020). To improve the performance of HEIs, HEC has taken initial steps by defining the standards for performance evaluation that will be used for the purpose.

In 2020–21, there were 247 universities in the nation with 57,204 thousand teachers working in the public and private sectors. From 2.41 million students overall in HEIs in 2021–2022 to 2.60 million in 2022–2023 is an increase. It is anticipated that enrollment will rise from 2.60 million in 2022–2023 to 2.80 million (or 07 percent) in 2023–2024. Initially, just 2.6% of people had access to higher education; today, that number is up to 10% (Economic Survey, 2022-2023). Both Public and Private higher education sectors in Pakistan are exposed to constant change and transformation due to expansion, privatization, and diversification with time, with in this context, the quality of institutions and their programs are increasingly questioned. The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is struggling hard to maintain quality in its higher education system through QAA-QECs. Ensuring and maintaining sustainable quality in HEIs of Pakistan requires establishing an effective and continuous institutional quality assurance system as it has a direct impact on transforming the culture of the institution and enhancing teaching and learning practices to raise the quality of students' educational experiences and academic success. It is, therefore, pertinent to examine institutional quality assurance practices in public and private universities. In Pakistan, there is a notable trend where public universities often encounter difficulties in fulfilling societal needs due to various shortcomings, while the private sector is rapidly advancing in the realm of higher education. Moreover, the private sector asserts its commitment to delivering quality education. Owing to the scenario, it requires to conduct a comparative study in higher education, considering the contrasting trajectories of public and private institutions

The results of the study help establish a baseline for the Higher Education

Commission, Quality Assurance Agency, and Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) to review and improve their current quality assurance practices guidelines as per expectations of stakeholders. Findings of the study are helpful for QECs to execute their quality related tasks more efficiently and effectively. The students are also beneficiaries of the study as QEC directors and policymakers revise their plans regarding quality according to the needs and requirements of learners, which will increase learners' satisfaction levels. Moreover, the results of the study are helpful for future scholars to examine and look at new aspects of institutional quality assurance processes in higher education.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Investigate institutional quality assurance practices currently implemented in public and private universities.
2. Compare the institutional quality assurance practices adopted by the public and private universities.

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are the institutional quality assurance practices currently implemented in public and private universities?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant difference in institutional quality assurance practices adopted by the public and private universities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative approach was used to conduct this research. This study was descriptive in nature and survey technique was used for research. Population of the study constituted 64 faculty members and 377 BS students (final year) batch 2023, from the Department of Sociology, Psychology, and Education from the Faculty of Social Sciences from (one public and one private) university in Islamabad. The study was delimited to above mentioned three departments as they were common in both sampled universities (public and private). From the targeted population, a Sample of 356 students was selected according to Gay (2005) population table. A stratified random sampling technique was used to identify the students for the study and a sample of 58 faculty members was selected through universal sampling technique. The researcher obtained permission from HODs of the departments of concerned universities before data collection. Two self-developed closed-ended questionnaires (one for faculty members to investigate institutional quality assurance practices in terms of academic quality, institutional facilities, program evaluation for quality improvement, research development activities and service quality contained 30 statements. Second for students to investigate effectiveness of institutional quality

assurance practices in terms of academic quality and institutional facilities contained 24 statements) on a five-point Likert scale were made in the light of objectives of the study, therefore were validated by pilot testing. According to Treece and Treece (1982), 10% sample is used for pilot testing. Therefore, a pilot test was conducted on twenty-one students and six faculty members to ensure that the instruments are appropriate to be administered. Furthermore, to check the reliability of instruments, data gathered from the pilot test was analyzed through SPSS by applying Cronbach Alpha. Cronbach Alpha value of the instrument used for students was .841 and the instrument used for faculty members was .862, which indicates that all the statements of questionnaires are reliable. The reliability of sub-scales was also checked.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Quantitative data obtained from students and faculty members were analyzed through descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) and inferential statistics independent sample t-test to identify the difference between both public and private universities of Islamabad in terms of institutional quality assurance practices.

DATA ANALYSIS OF FACULTY MEMBERS

Table 1: Program evaluation for quality improvement

S. No.	Statements	Public	Private
1	Academic programs are evaluated periodically.	74% agreed	76% agreed
2	Courses are evaluated periodically.	81% agreed	82% Agreed
3	Faculty members' involvement in course review.	77% agreed	76% Agreed
4	Graduating students' involvement in program review.	75% agreed	70% agreed
5	Alumni involvement in program review.	43% agreed	36% agreed
6	Experts are involved in course development/ review.	84% agreed	82% agreed
7.	QEC visits department semester wise to monitor quality	61% agreed	73% agreed

Table no. 1 shows responses of faculty members of public and private sector universities about institutional quality assurance practices in terms of program evaluation for quality improvement. The results indicate that both public and private universities do not often involve alumni in program review. However, according to faculty members of both sectors, academic programs and courses are evaluated periodically moreover experts are involved in course development/ review and

graduating students are involved in program review. Further, responses indicate that private university visit departments more often to monitor quality as compare to public sector. Responses also depict QECs in private universities visit more often departments to monitor quality as compare to public universities.

Table 2: Institutional Facilities

S.No	Statements	Public	Private
1	Enough computer labs to conduct research study for students.	52% agreed	76% agreed
3	Internet facilities are available in the campus.	82% agreed	88% agreed
4	There are wide range of opportunities for recreational activities.	40% agreed	72% agreed
5	Scholarship opportunities are available for students.	54% agreed	51% agreed
6	Counselling and advising services are available for students.	62% agreed	61% agreed
7	Electronic admission procedures are available for students i.e. fees, online application forms, registration, etc.	81% agreed	82% agreed

Table no. 2 shows responses of faculty members of public and private sector universities about institutional quality assurance practices in terms of institutional facilities for students. The results indicate that private sector university provides more opportunities for recreational activities, and availability of computer labs to conduct research studies for students as compared to public sector university. However, other facilities such as availability of the internet on campus, and electronic admission procedures are also available for students i.e. online fee vouchers, online application forms, registration, etc. in both public and private sectors. The responses also indicate both public and private universities do not have effective counseling services.

Table 3: Service Quality

S.No	Statements	Public	Private
1	Recruitment criteria for faculty members is well defined.	79% agreed	81% agreed
2	Merit is observed in the appointment of employees.	82% agreed	84% agreed
3	Experienced and highly skilled professionals are hired for educational programs.	81% agreed	82% agreed
4	Faculty members have opportunities for professional development	76% agreed	77% agreed
5	Workload is equally distributed among all faculty	64% agreed	48% agreed

	members	agreed	agreed
6	Assignment of academic activities according to relevant qualification of the individuals.	79%	60%
		agreed	agreed

Table no. 3 shows responses of faculty members of public and private sector universities about institutional quality assurance practices in terms of service quality of faculty members. The results indicate that both public and private sector universities have well-defined recruitment criteria and merit-based appointment of employees, experienced and highly skilled professionals are hired for educational programs and faculty members have opportunities of professional development. There is a contradiction in responses of faculty members of both sector universities regarding workload as faculty members of private university are not satisfied with equal distribution of workload among all faculty members and assigning academic work according to the qualification of individual as compared to public sector university.

Table 4: Research Development Activities

S.No	Statements	Public	Private
1	Faculty members have enough time for research activities	62%	67%
		agreed	agreed
2	Department organizes seminars on research activities.	77%	80%
		agreed	agreed
3	Research journals is published by the departments.	78%	71%
		agreed	agreed
4	Quality papers published in Scientific/ Academic journals.	78%	72%
		agreed	agreed
5	Workshops are organized for students to enhance their research skills.	84%	88%
		agreed	agreed

Table no. 4 shows responses of faculty members of public and private sector universities about institutional quality assurance practices in terms of research development activities. The results depict that faculty members of both public and private sector universities are not satisfied with the availability of time for research activities. Faculty members of both public and private sector universities agreed that seminars and workshops for students to enhance their research skills. Moreover, the papers published in Scientific/ Academic journals are up to the international standards in both public and private universities.

Table 5: Academic Quality

S.No	Statements	Public	Private
1	University atmosphere is conducive for quality education.	75%	74%
		agreed	agreed
2	Instructional facilities are available in classrooms for teaching learning process of students	69%	78%
		agreed	agreed

3	Grading system is well defined.	84%	86%
		agreed	agreed
4	Assessment procedures are fair and transparent.	81%	82%
		agreed	agreed
5	Feedback from students is used to improve teaching.	79%	83%
		agreed	agreed
6	Department has collaboration with international universities /organizations.	73%	72%
		agreed	agreed
7	Quality criteria of HEC are observed in the institution.	75%	74%
		agreed	agreed

Table no. 5 shows responses of faculty members of public and private sector universities about institutional quality assurance practices in terms of academic quality. The results depict that private universities have better instructional facilities in the classrooms for the teaching-learning process as compared to public universities. Further, faculty members of both public and private sector universities agreed on all the statements regarding academic quality which reflects that university atmosphere is conducive for quality education, the grading system is well defined, assessment procedures are fair and transparent, and above all quality criteria of HEC is observed in both public and private sector universities.

DATA ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS

Table 6: Academic Quality

S.No	Statements	Public	Private
1	Departmental learning environment is conducive for quality learning.	74%	77%
		agreed	agreed
2	Classrooms are well equipped with instructional facilities.	67%	83%
		agreed	Agreed
3	Teaching and learning at the classroom is interactive.	76%	76%
		agreed	agreed
4	Teachers provide equal opportunities for learning to every student.	78%	79%
		agreed	Agreed
5	Students are given opportunities to practice their learning through practical work/ projects.	64%	78%
		agreed	agreed
6	Assessment procedures are fair and transparent.	81%	78%
		agreed	Agreed
7	Assignments are aligned to meet the objectives.	77%	77%
		agreed	agreed
8	Time allocation for assignments submission.	82%	84%
		agreed	Agreed
9	Competence of the teachers at university.	85%	84%
		agreed	agreed

10	Teachers are student-friendly and focus on their individual needs.	76% agreed	79% Agreed
11	Students have access to teachers in consultancy hours to discuss their educational problems.	77% agreed	85% agreed
12	University conducts students' evaluations for its quality improvement of teaching.	72% agreed	76% Agreed

Table no. 6 shows the responses of students of public and private sector universities about institutional quality assurance practices in terms of academic quality. The responses indicate that students of both public and private sector universities are satisfied with academic quality. Respondents of both public and private universities agreed that a classroom environment for quality learning. Teaching and learning is interactive at the classroom and teachers provide equal opportunities for learning to every student. Students of both sectors are satisfied with the competence of teachers. Assignments are aligned to meet objectives and assessment procedures are fair and transparent. There is a contradiction in the responses of students of both sector universities regarding the practical implication of their learning, as responses indicate public sector provides fewer opportunities to practice learning through practical work/projects as compared to private sector universities. The responses also depict that classrooms of private sector universities are more well-equipped with instructional facilities as compared to public universities. However, respondents of both sectors agreed that teachers are student-friendly and focus on specific individual needs, as they are also available for students during consultancy hours to discuss educational problems of students. Respondents of both sectors also agreed with the statement that university conducts students' evaluations for its quality improvement of teaching.

Table 7: Institutional facilities

S.No	Statements	Public	Private
1	Building of the university fulfils the instructional requirement of Students.	71% agreed	82% agreed
2	There are a wide range of opportunities for recreational activities.	51% agreed	73% Agreed
3	Number of class rooms are adequate.	52% agreed	54% agreed
4	Library facility is provided to the students with wide range of resources relevant to their studies	77% agreed	78% Agreed
5	Well-equipped IT labs to meet students' needs.	64% agreed	77% agreed
6	Students are satisfied with the transportation facilities provided to the them.	53% agreed	62% Agreed
7	Counselling services are available for problematic students at university.	54% agreed	56% agreed

8	Internet facility are available in the university.	77% agreed	87% Agreed
9	Students' accessibility to administration department for inquiry.	58% agreed	52% agreed
10	Scholarship opportunities for students.	58% agreed	50% agreed
11	Students are advised to maintain code of conduct in the university.	82% agreed	86% agreed
12	Students are updated of all the university relevant news through the university portal.	87% agreed	82% agreed

Table no. 7 shows the responses of students of public and private sector universities about institutional quality assurance practices in terms of institutional facilities. The responses of both public and private sectors depict that there is a shortage of classrooms in universities. Counseling services are also not effective in both sectors. Opportunities for scholarships are also less in both sector universities. They are also not satisfied with transportation facilities. There is a contradiction in responses of students of both sector universities on some statements as students of public sector universities are not satisfied with opportunities for recreational activities, and availability of well-equipped IT labs as compared to private sector universities. It is also evident from the responses that students of public and private universities face difficulty in having access to the administration department for inquiry purposes. However, respondents of both the public and private sectors are satisfied with facilities such as internet on campus and the library facility is also provided to the students with a wide range of resources relevant to their studies moreover students are updated on all the university-relevant news through the university portal. Respondents from both sectors also agreed that a code of conduct is maintained in university.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in institutional quality assurance practices adopted by the public and private universities.

Table 8

Sector	N	Mean	t-value	Df	P
Public	180	86.7722	3.573	354	.321
Private	176	90.5682			

Table no.8 shows the above difference in the effectiveness of institutional quality assurance practices of public and private universities. t-value is 3.573 and *p-value* (.321), which shows differences between institutional quality assurance practices of public and private universities are not significant, although there is a difference in mean values of both groups that is in favor of private universities. The mean value of

institutional quality assurance practices of private university (90.56) is greater than public university (86.77).

DISCUSSION

The substantial growth in the number of universities, student enrollments, and government investments in higher education underscores the rapid expansion of the sector. The Government of Pakistan is actively encouraging the private sector to expand in the same pace as public sector universities to meet the escalating demand for higher education. Over the past decade, there has been a startling rate of growth in the private sector's involvement in Pakistan's higher education. The private institutions have emerged in response to the robust engagement of the private sector. Given this remarkable expansion, there is an urgent need for a systematic examination of the quality and quality assurance processes employed by these Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has taken several measures to promote quality assurance and cultivate a culture of quality in the higher education sector, and these initiatives have been recognized by numerous researchers. The present research was aimed to investigate and compare institutional quality assurance practices in public and private sector universities.

The practical implication of learning is more effective than theoretical learning as it bridges the gap between knowledge acquisition and application, enhancing career readiness and fostering innovation. The findings of the study, results indicate that public sector university provide fewer opportunities to students to practice their learning through practical work/ projects as compared to private sector universities. The finding is consistent with the findings of the study conducted by Saleem (2016) that public universities emphasize more in theoretical learning rather than the practical implications of learning through different projects and practical works. This result is also supported by Andaleep (2020) who revealed in her studies that most universities in Pakistan focused in theoretical knowledge rather than practical implication learning.

The findings reveal that both sectors public and private lack in providing efficient counselling services. The results are supported by Ali and Ashraf (2014), who also indicate in his study that the lack of provision of guidance and counseling centers is a major problem in universities. A study conducted by Rasool (2009) also concluded that an operational student counseling process and a mechanism for monitoring teachers' conduct during academic activities is necessary. To fulfill this need, universities can consider establishing a student guidance and counseling department.

The findings reveal that public universities are facing hurdles in maintaining quality like well-equipped IT labs, and scholarship opportunities in institutions due to lack of resources. The findings are persistent with the results supported by khan (2010) who

conclude that government in Pakistan spends more on defense than in education sector. Pakistan allocated GDP for education sector is 1.7% which is minimum than other developing countries.

Program evaluation is of paramount importance in institutional quality assurance practices within HEIs as it plays a critical role in ensuring that academic programs are effective, efficient, and aligned with the institution's goals and standards. The findings of the study reveals that both public and private universities do not often involve graduating students and alumni in program review. The findings of the study are supported by Rasool (2009) who concluded that according to his findings the percentage of involvement of graduating students in the program evaluation and review process is very low, universities should involve students in the program review process to modify and update program according to the needs of students.

The results reveal that quality enhancement cells QECs of public sector universities do not visit departments regularly. The findings of the study are supported by Sobia (2019) who concluded that QECs do not often visit departments in public universities. The findings reveal that faculty members of both public and private sector universities don't have enough time for research activities due to workload. As they feel work is not distributed equally among all faculty members and according to the ability of specific individuals. The findings of the study are supported by Shaikh, Memon, and Shah (2017), who argued that there is an unequal distribution of work hours among professionals in Pakistan, as some work for long hours while others leave early, Aslam (2016) also concluded in his study that a significant number of educational institutions in Pakistan face substantial challenges related to the distribution of workload, teachers' low motivation and excessive interference.

The results of the study reveal that there is no significant difference in institutional quality assurance practices in public and private sector universities. The findings of the study are supported by Ayaz and Muhammad (2020) who conducted a comparative study of quality assurance measures applied in public and private universities of Karachi, he concluded that there is no significant difference in the public and the private sectors regarding student opinions on the progression of quality standards in HEIs by using a quality assurance scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results indicate that students of public sector university are provided fewer opportunities to practice their learning through practical work/ projects as compared to private sector universities. It is recommended that while designing courses, departments may consider the practical implications of the course as well, by designing some relevant projects rather than just relying on theories.

Both public and private sector universities do not have adequate number of

classrooms, as there is shortage of number of classrooms in campuses. It is recommended that administration may consider their accommodation level and availability of classrooms for students while enrolling new admissions or they may construct new classrooms for students if there is enough space on campuses.

Opportunities for scholarships are less in both sector universities. It is recommended that the university may provide more scholarship opportunities for bright students to encourage them and attract them to the institution.

From the responses, it was also found that both public and private universities do not have effective counseling services. It is recommended that there may be a functional process of counseling for problematic students to resolve their studies-related issues.

IT labs in public sector universities are not well-equipped as compared to private sector universities. It is recommended that the administration may update their IT labs with the latest technological devices, providing free access to all teachers and students. The results depict that private university have better instructional facilities in the classrooms for the teaching-learning process as compared to public universities. It is recommended that public university may provide better instructional facilities in classrooms to make teaching teaching-learning process more effective.

Students of public and private universities face difficulty in having access to the administration department for inquiry purposes. It is recommended that administration staff may update their procedures and cooperate with students, so it might be convenient for them to visit the administration department for inquiry.

Both public and private universities do not often involve alumni in program reviews. It is recommended that departments may involve alumni in program review as it may help them to analyze weak areas of programs and modify and update programs accordingly.

There was a contradiction in the responses of faculty members of both sector universities regarding workload as faculty members of the private university were not satisfied with the distribution of workload among all faculty members and assigning academic work according to the qualification of the individual as compared to public sector university. It is recommended that departments may assign academic activities to faculty members according to individuals' capabilities and relevant qualifications.

QECs in public sector universities do not visit regularly departments to monitor the quality progress of respective departments as compared to private sector universities. It is recommended QEC may visit regularly for monitoring and keep check and balance to improve the quality of education.

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