

Performance Evaluations Systems in Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan: Faculty Perceptions and Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

At higher education institutions, faculty members are considered significant, as their roles suggest direct influence on the economy, student output as well as industry. This is the reason that institutes at tertiary level have continuously been pressurized for quality assurance and governance structures for performance evaluations. In this respect, faculty evaluation become both need of the time as well as integral to bring in necessary changes. Although teacher evaluations have been in practice since long, its influence and use at higher education sector is not without challenges. In Pakistan, institutes of higher education have come a long way and there has been evidences of mandatory practices that are directed by higher education commission to standardized teacher professional standard and overall institutional performance. In this respect, various tools and sources of input are in place at HEIs. For this study, faculty perceptions and perspectives regarding faculty performance evaluation practices within HEIs in Pakistan were analysed using input from faculty themselves, heads of departments, quality assurance representatives and content analysis of policy documents. It was found that multiple sources for faculty performance are being used within HEIs in Pakistan with relatively positive attitude towards implementation of practices and the overall implication of the process. In addition, there were some reflections with respect to institutional goal alignment and limited resources. It was suggested, therefore, to have flexible, comprehensive as well as more inclusive evaluation process rather than rigid and a mere formal exercise within institutes. The study was a small-scale effort to identify core tools and sources of input being practiced within HEIs in terms of faculty evaluations and recommendations are hoped to support academic, management as well as quality assurance decisions.

Keywords: *Performance Evaluation System, Higher Education Institutes, Faculty Performance, Faculty perceptions, Faculty evaluation and tools*

Introduction

Performance evaluation is widely recognized as a systematic process to assess employee performance against predefined standards or prior achievements (Erdogan, 2002; Huynh & Sajjad, 2018). It remains a critical tool for measuring employee productivity, competencies, and supporting managerial decision-making (Mirza & Sherjeel, 2018). In higher education institutions, particularly universities, performance evaluation plays a vital role in guiding faculty development, institutional planning, and allocation of academic resources (Shagrir, 2012; Goe et al., 2012).

In the Pakistani higher education context, performance evaluation has become increasingly structured due to the regulatory role of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), which has introduced formal quality assurance mechanisms such as Institutional Performance Evaluation (IPE) and Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) to ensure accountability and continuous improvement (Higher Education Commission [HEC], 2023). Recent policy reforms, including the Undergraduate Education Policy 2023 and ongoing digital transformation initiatives, highlight the growing emphasis on measurable academic outcomes and institutional ranking systems (HEC, 2023; Khan et al., 2024). However, empirical studies (2024–2025) indicate that performance evaluation practices in Pakistani universities still face significant challenges. These include over-reliance on quantitative indicators such as publications and impact factors, limited consideration of teaching quality and community engagement, and concerns regarding procedural transparency (Ahmed & Raza, 2024; Khan et al., 2024). Furthermore, issues related to governance, inconsistent implementation of evaluation criteria, and lack of standardized feedback mechanisms reduce the effectiveness and credibility of appraisal systems (Ali et al., 2023).

Despite its importance, effective implementation of performance evaluation requires transparency, fairness, and employee trust (Cokins, 2004). In practice, many university appraisal systems remain confidential, with insufficient feedback provided to faculty members, leading to perceptions of bias and limited developmental impact (Huynh & Sajjad,

2018; Ali et al., 2023). Additionally, performance evaluations are often conducted as annual, summative exercises, which restrict opportunities for continuous professional growth (Alboushra et al., 2015). Contemporary research therefore emphasizes the need for more formative, participatory, and continuous evaluation approaches to enhance faculty performance and institutional quality in Pakistan's evolving higher education landscape.

Like any other organizations, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are responsible for effective implementation of management processes, student development as well as quality academic practices (Abro & Rashidi, 2012). In this respect, role and performance of faculty members are significant (Shakir & Adeeb, 2014). There is an increasing focus on teacher evaluation and rewarding them based on their performance (Khan et al, 2017). However, according to the World Bank Group, evaluation of teaching and learning is weak (IEG, 2017; Akram & Zepeda, 2013). In Pakistan, National Educational Policy, 2010 was initiated to improve the quality of teacher education, both in terms of teacher education institution as well programs (Shakir & Adeeb, 2014). However, activities performed by faculty at higher education level include complex tasks which may be difficult to quantify and therefore, evaluation pro-

The evaluation processes for faculty performance should not be oversimplified (Harrison, 2002; Hounsell, 2009; Little et al., 2009). This suggests that involving faculty in defining the evaluation process can foster a sense of ownership and enhance institutional quality (Khan et al., 2017; Alexander, 2000).

While individual faculty evaluation practices can significantly influence a university's overall performance, funding opportunities, and the perceived quality of education offered (Luskova & Hudakova, 2013), these evaluation systems are often not taken seriously, inadequately communicated to faculty members, and consequently become futile exercises within institutions (Aslam, 2013). Furthermore, academic evaluation practices in Pakistan are viewed as unstructured and disorganized, with notable disparities between public and private institutions (Hyun & Sajjad, 2018; Al-Ashqar, 2017).

This study aims to analyze perceptions regarding faculty performance evaluation processes in higher education institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan. Building upon existing contributions, this research seeks to amplify the voices of faculty members (Abro & Rashidi, 2012) at HEIs in determining effective performance management mechanisms. The findings may inform the development of integrated performance evaluation systems based on the critical areas identified by faculty, departmental heads, and quality assurance representatives as key stakeholders in the process.

The overall objectives of the study are as follows:

To explore faculty awareness of the performance evaluation practices implemented at HEIs.

To identify the current sources or criteria utilized for faculty evaluations at their respective HEIs.

To analyze perceptions regarding faculty performance evaluation practices and their implications within HEIs in Pakistan.

- To identify sources or criteria for input that faculty members suggest to be included in the performance evaluation processes at HEIs.

LITERATURE REVIEW Faculty performance evaluation at Higher Education institutions in Pakistan

Pakistan's higher education sector has expanded considerably in recent years. According to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, the country currently has more than 240 recognized universities and degree-awarding institutions, including around 150 public-sector and 90 private-sector institutions. These institutions accommodate over 2.1 million students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with approximately 70,000 faculty members contributing to teaching and research activities (HEC, 2025). With education institutes as major contributors in economic growth of the country, it has been a pressure on the government and civil society to bring in equality as well as access to higher education through institutes which fulfil benchmark of quality and international reputation (Stengos & Aurangzeb, 2008; Khushik & Diemer, 2010). For this purpose, Pakistan's education system has adopted national policy for quality assurance as well as teacher educa-

tion (professional) standards (Shakir & Adeeb, 2014). HEC defines and governs roles and criteria for institutional performance evaluation and Quality assurance. The initiative requires performance evaluation for institutions, programs as well as faculty (Hyun & Sajjad, 2018).

Since, competent teachers are backbone for quality education, a national level guidance for teacher assessment is also a key to promote accountability (Fancy & Razzaq, 2017). Within this initiative, faculty evaluation is significant (Shakir & Adeeb, 2014). Faculty evaluation by student, peers as well as courses are inbuilt in self-assessment manuals as well as external evaluation manuals provided by HEC's QA guidance (HEC, 2019). This reflects importance the commission holds for the faculty evaluation within broader institutional performance (ibid) and for this reasons, quality Enhancement Cells have been established for effective implementation of quality assurance and evaluation policies at respective universities (Hina & Ajmal, 2016).

At HEIs, evaluations of course, faculty, program as well as overall institution are implemented at priority basis through various internal and external mechanisms (Usmani & Khatoon, 2013; Alboushra et al, 2015). Each institute practices may be different, however, there are concerns over triangulation of results for process and quality enhancement as well as its implementation structure and organization (Usmani & Khatoon, 2013). Most of the time, the process is top down and implemented at a limited extend within institutes (ibid). According to Hina and Ajmal (2016), faculty members are seldom aware of quality assurance policy and framework. Overall, its implementation is often claimed to be difficult to obtain and practiced to a certain extend amongst public sector institutes in Pakistan (Usmani & Khatoon, 2013; Usmani et al, 2012). Even more so, since the practice is relatively new to the system, its acceptance and usage for continuous improvement is yet to be observed (Islam, 2011 in Al-Ashqar, 2017). This means that, establishment of QECs for the core purpose of evaluation and feedback has a long way to go and would require structured implementation and institutional ownership.

According to HEC's Self-Assessment Manual, faculty members are to be evaluated by students for integrating students voice in the improve-

ment of teaching and learning processes within the institutes in Pakistan as part of the guidelines (HEC, 2019; Sarwar et al, 2017). Evaluation of teacher by their students may claim to be biased and related to student achievement (Akram & Zepeda, 2013; Akram, 2012). For example, Sarwar et al (2017) concluded that those students who achieve greater marks in subjects tend to rate their faculty higher in their respective faculty evaluations survey. Furthermore, faculty members have no opportunity to share their concerns, attain feedback and communicate their opinion in the process (Ali & Hussain, 2018). This makes the process relatively less accommodative and procedural.

Apart from student input for faculty evaluations, in Pakistan other forms of evaluations include input from peer, teacher portfolios and evaluation by heads. According to Ali & Hussain in the figure given in Ali and Hussain (2018, p. 453), although such practices are in place, document analysis of the universities in Pakistan shows that most of the institute still lack clear guidelines and criteria for evaluation. Moreover, teacher evaluation by peers and heads are used as criteria for best teacher award nominations by HEC. This means that the evaluation of such kind are not regular, continuous and applied to all university teachers but those fulfilling the eligibility criteria (Ali & Hussain, 2018). Even more so, teacher portfolios are used just by two universities that too as an internal tool for teacher evaluation because HEC's guidelines are not mandatory in this respect (ibid). In addition, self-evaluation and assessment of Teaching and learning were found to be absent from the system (ibid).

The concerns and criteria for teacher evaluations points towards purposes for evaluation. Most of the time, teacher evaluations are being implemented within HEIs in the country as a requirement of HEC's QA guidelines or best teacher award and its implementation and use just limits to the reporting and ranking (Ali & Hussain, 2018). Only few examples are evident of use of teacher evaluations for developmental, performance improvements and continuous professional growth (ibid). Although its use for appraisal, recruitment and promotion decisions may be observed, the very purpose for process improvement is in limited scope. It may be said that acceptance of performance evaluation is not a trend

amongst Pakistan HEIs (Abbas & Ahmed, 2012). Moreover, there are various concerns regarding evaluation systems being a routine exercise that is devoid of proper measurement of success or failure towards achievement of the desired goals and maintenance of status quo is the congruent factor of this phenomenon (Khan, 2009).

According to Aslam(a) (2013), there is lack of communication between faculty and administration for their evaluations. Moreover, faculty input is seldom encouraged. Even when performance evaluations are in practice at institutes in Pakistan, faculty members are seldom informed or provided feedback (Aslam(a), 2013; Armstrong, 2006). This holds true for both public and private institutes (Islam, 2011 in Al-Ashqar, 2017). In addition, there is lack of diversity in such practices (Ali & Hussain, 2018; HEC, 2019). Most of the universities implement faculty evaluations as a result of these QA guidelines.

Research Methodology

For this particular study, a mixed approach was used that involved both qualitative as well as quantitative input. A mixed research design assists researcher in triangulating collected data through both qualitative and quantitative methods (Denscombe, 2007; Silva, 2017). In analyzing perceptions and perspectives for faculty performance evaluation at higher education institutes in Pakistan, mixed approach proved to be helpful in identifying perspectives as well as perceptions towards faculty evaluation practices (Cottrell & McKenzie, 2011).

Data Collection Tools

Survey research technique helped in descriptive analysis of both qualitative as well as quantitative data. The data collection tools included questionnaires, structured interviews and document/content analysis.

Overall process of data collection involved following steps:

1. Initial content analysis of the existing frameworks of faculty evaluation as outlined by HEC as regulatory body for Higher Education.

2. Secondary research about performance evaluation processes at higher education institutes.
3. Online questionnaire and structured interview tool developed for input.
4. Using snowball referencing, the questionnaire was distributed to referee faculty members and the same were asked to forward it within their institutes for appropriate number of responses.
5. Data compilation and analysis for findings and discussion

Table 1

Reliability Statistics for the Survey Instrument

Statistic	Value
Cronbach's alpha	.909
Cronbach's alpha based on standardised items	.913
Number of items	12

Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of data collected through questionnaire that is for quantitative data. The coefficient is a measure of internal consistency and for the said study the Cronbach alpha was calculated to be 0.909.

Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Most common ethical consideration for the research is sharing the results as they are (Robson, 2002). First, Respondents were informed about the purpose and nature of information required (ibid). Then it was ensured that tools developed were not leading and uniform across the region. For the study, centralized link for the relevant questionnaire and structured interview questionnaire was used and managed independently. Additionally, to avoid researcher's bias and opinion that may cloud the actual responses participation was voluntary. Since the study involved faculty members who are subject to evaluation themselves to share their perceptions about the same, it was a fear that many might not participate as expected. In this respect, the research study was completely

anonymous and confidentiality of the HEIs and the person is maintained. Pseudonyms or generalized terms for quotation marks for respondents' views would be used to avoid any conflict of interest.

Results

The key purpose of the study was to analyze perceptions and perspectives for faculty performance evaluation practices being implemented at Higher Education Institutes in Pakistan. In this respect, efforts were made to collect representative sample response from faculty members, heads of the departments as well as QEC staff members through survey and interview questionnaires circulated on-line. The study also analyzed HEC QA mechanism and assessment manual to integrate current practices with faculty responses. Brief summary of respondents' demographic diversity together with the perceptions compared with QA mechanism is given below. These responses are summarized into following sections

1. Respondent's summary
2. Awareness of performance evaluation processes at their HEIs
3. Input criteria and sources currently being used for faculty evaluations
4. Faculty perceptions about purposes and implications for teacher evaluation practices at HEIs
5. Suggested teacher evaluation sources and input criteria (as perceived by faculty members)

Summary of Respondents

For questionnaire, 247 responses were gathered through an online survey. Out of which 177 were male and 68 female respondents making the response ratio based on gender to be approximately 3:1. When summarizing response summary based on university status, majority of the respondent belong to public sector university, comprising of more than 56%. Around 70% of the responded had qualification MS/MPhil or PhD and 41% have worked more than 5 years at their current institute. Ta-

ble 2 below summarises the respondents' profile based on gender, status of university, designation, experience and employment status of faculty member. It also summarizes department-wise break up as well as teaching level, faculty members are teaching at.

Table 2

Profile of Survey Respondents (N = 247)

Qualification	<i>n</i>	%
Bachelors	11	4.5
Masters	62	25.1
MS/MPhil	89	36.0
PhD	85	34.4
Gender		
Male	177	71.7
Female	68	27.5
Prefer not to share	2	0.8
Current experience		
Less than 1 year	23	9.3
2–5 years	123	49.8
6–10 years	59	23.9
11–15 years	29	11.7
16–20 years	7	2.8
More than 20 years	6	2.4
University status		
Public	140	56.7
Private	92	37.2
Semi-govt.	5	2.0
Other	9	3.6
Age		
Under 30 years	73	29.6
30–45 years	139	56.3
45–60 years	33	13.4
Over 60 years	5	2.0
Designation		
Lecturer	89	36.0
Assistant Professor	94	38.1
Associate Professor	10	4.0
Professor	15	6.1
Visiting faculty	26	10.5
Other	13	5.3

Department	<i>n</i>	%	Level of teaching	<i>n</i>	%
Business, management, accounting and finance	70	28.3	Graduate and postgraduate	9	3.6
Computer science, IT and software	38	15.4	Graduate level	30	12.1
Language, education, humanities and social sciences	36	14.6	Leave for study	2	0.8
Mathematics, engineering and manufacturing	61	24.7	Postgraduate level	2	0.8
Media, art, architecture, design and communication	19	7.7	Undergraduate level	106	42.9
Medicine, dentistry and pharmacy	18	7.3	Undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate	23	9.3
Other	5	2.0	Undergraduate and postgraduate	5	2.0
			Undergraduate and graduate	70	28.3

Note. Percentages are of the 247 survey respondents. Category counts for university status and age do not sum exactly to 247 in the original data.

In addition, interview questionnaires were circulated amongst university chairpersons, heads of the department and representatives from Quality Enhancement Cell. Out of these representatives, responses received were from fourteen representatives (seven each). Although willing-

ness for participation was lower, gathered responses gave insight into their perspective about faculty evaluations.

Table 3

Profile of Interview Respondents (N = 14)

Qualification	<i>n</i>	%	University status	<i>n</i>	%
MS/MPhil	7	50.0	Public	12	85.7
PhD	7	50.0	Private	2	14.3
Gender			Age		
Male	11	78.6	30–45 years	11	78.6
Female	2	14.3	45–60 years	2	14.3
Prefer not to share	1	7.1	Over 60 years	1	7.1
Current experience					
	<i>n</i>	%			
Less than 1 year	1	7.1			
2–5 years	2	14.3			
6–10 years	6	42.9			
11–15 years	2	14.3			
16–20 years	1	7.1			
More than 20 years	2	14.3			

Awareness of performance evaluation processes at their HEIs

When survey inquired about whether faculty members are aware of performance evaluation system being implemented at their HEIs, around 62% faculty members were found to be aware of it and around 38% were either not sure about any such process being implemented or were not aware of the same at all. Table 4 provides an overall awareness summary:

Table 4

Awareness of Faculty Performance Evaluation Processes (N = 247)

Response	No	Not sure	Yes	Total
Count	52	41	154	247
Percentage	21.1	16.6	62.3	100.0

For this study, being aware of the evaluation practices is considered as the first step towards effective implementation of such practices within HEIs in Pakistan. Awareness of the performance benchmark and indica-

tors are said to be helpful preparing faculty members to measure their own performance (Armstrong, 2006). It also helps them to set goals for their individual development and align teaching and research goals with that of institutional vision (Kyeremeh & Pimpong, 2018). In this respect, a little more than half of the sample respondents from Pakistani HEIs were found to be aware of the practices within HEIs. Furthermore, associations between designation, years of experience at current institute and university status were analyzed with awareness of performance evaluation practices within their respective institutions. Other demographic information (for e.g. qualification, gender, teaching level, department, and age), were not analyzed for this study and may be further studied in order to identify dynamics and awareness about performance evaluation procedures at HEIs.

Table 5 provides a summary of the three variables and awareness counts:

Table 5

Awareness of Evaluation Processes by Designation (N = 247)

Designation	No	Not sure	Yes	Total
Lecturer	19 (.21)	24 (.27)	46 (.52)	89
Assistant Professor	25 (.27)	11 (.12)	58 (.62)	94
Associate Professor	3 (.30)	1 (.10)	6 (.60)	10
Professor	1 (.07)	1 (.07)	13 (.87)	15
Visiting faculty	1 (.04)	1 (.04)	24 (.92)	26
Other	3 (.23)	3 (.23)	7 (.54)	13
Total	52	41	154	247

Note. Row proportions in parentheses.

Table 6

Awareness of Evaluation Processes by Years of Experience and University Status
(N = 247)

Years of experience	No	Not sure	Yes	Total
Less than 1 year	2 (.09)	4 (.17)	17 (.74)	23
1–5 years	25 (.20)	22 (.18)	76 (.62)	123
6–10 years	16 (.27)	6 (.10)	37 (.63)	59
11–15 years	8 (.28)	4 (.14)	17 (.59)	29
15–20 years	1 (.14)	3 (.43)	3 (.43)	7
More than 20 years	0 (.00)	2 (.33)	4 (.67)	6
Total	52	41	154	247

University status	No	Not sure	Yes	Total
Public sector	32 (.23)	28 (.20)	80 (.57)	140
Private sector	18 (.19)	12 (.13)	63 (.68)	93
Semi-government/NGO	1 (.20)	0 (.00)	4 (.80)	5
Other	1 (.11)	1 (.11)	7 (.78)	9
Total	52	41	154	247

Note. Row proportions in parentheses. The private-sector total of 93 in this cross-tabulation differs by one from the figure of 92 reported in Table 2.

Although, majority of the respondents were aware of the process, there were some differing observations too when analyzed the demographics in detail. Among the designation category, around 48% of all lecturers that responded to the survey were either not aware or not sure of any such process whereas 52% responded in favor of them being aware of the processes. In all other designations, faculty responses in favor of their awareness towards any faculty evaluation processes being implemented at their institute were greater than 60%.

The above variables were analyzed through Chi-square to identify any association between these variables and awareness. Chi-square tests are applied when there are categorical variables in a single set and associations are to be found with the dependent variable (Bordens & Abbott,

2011). From the chi-square test, it was found that only association between designation and awareness is observed (0.005 is less than the significance level 0.05) whereas there is no significant observed relationship between university status and years of experience (0.52 and 0.32 respectively). From the results it may be said that the university is public or private sector or no matter how long faculty member has served the institute, awareness about practices of Performance evaluation mechanisms may not be associated (Table 7).

This was confirmed with the Cramer's V test of measure of association. Cramer's V is used after chi-square test of association to determine strengths of association. Value closer to 1 determines stronger association. For designation this value is more than Experience and University Status test results (0.22, 0.15 and 0.10 respectively; see Table 7) thereby confirming the nature of relationship between awareness and designation

Table 7

Tests of Association Between Awareness of Evaluation Processes and Respondent Characteristics

Variable	χ^2	df	p	Cramér's V
Designation	25.017	10	.005	.225
Years of experience	11.402	10	.327	.152
University status	5.139	6	.526	.102

Note. Only designation is significantly associated with awareness at the .05 level.

Current Input Criteria and Sources

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan utilize a variety of tools and inputs for faculty evaluations and performance assessments (Usmani et al., 2012). The Higher Education

Commission (HEC) recommends focusing on three key evaluation areas: Faculty, Program, and Course evaluations. The HEC's IPE manual emphasizes that institutions should establish a defined system for faculty development and improvement as part of best practice criteria. Specifically, the following areas of intervention, highlighted in the Quality

Assurance (QA) manual, require HEIs to report on the extent to which these guidelines are utilized, reviewed, and implemented within their frameworks:

Classroom Observations: Are there written reports detailing the implementation status within departments and their impact on evaluation and faculty improvement?

Student Course Evaluations: Who is responsible for collecting these evaluations, and how are they utilized in decisions regarding faculty promotion or merit pay? Alternative Evaluation Methods: What additional means are HEIs employing to assess and enhance teaching effectiveness?

Documentation of Service Contributions: How is faculty involvement in service activities recorded, and in what manner is this documentation used in promotion or merit pay decisions?

Peer Review Processes: How are peer reviews conducted, and what role do they play in reporting teaching effectiveness?

Moreover, semester guidelines by HEC and one of the accreditation criteria for programs include self-assessment and teacher portfolio as mandatory requirement (HEC, 2019)

For this study, 130 full time faculty members (were aware of any performance evaluation being practiced within their institution), therefore, were asked to select amongst all the input criteria (that us Self, student and peer evaluations, classroom observations, research and publication, behavior and attitudes as well as service domains) that are being used at their respective institutes. Table 8 provides a summary of the input criteria and sources used for faculty evaluations and faculty responses:

Table 8

Sources of Input Currently Used for Faculty Evaluation, as Reported by Faculty (n = 130)

Source of input	No		Yes	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Self-evaluation	48	37	82	63
Student evaluation	11	8	119	92
Peer evaluation	88	68	42	32
Classroom observations	67	52	63	48
Teacher portfolio	33	25	97	75
Operational contribution	17	13	113	87
Research and publication	22	17	108	83
Behaviour and attitude	61	47	69	53

Note. Responses from the 130 faculty members who reported being aware of a performance evaluation process at their institution.

Self-evaluations are used only said yes by 63% of faculty members, Student evaluations 92%, peer evaluations 32%, classroom observations 48%, teacher dossier or portfolios 75%, departmental and operational input 87%, Behavior & Attitude 53% and research & publication 83%. This suggest that in most of the HEIs, students input, teacher portfolios, operational responsibilities and research and publication are the most used criteria or sources of input against which faculty members are evaluated (constituting more than 75% of responses). Furthermore, around 18% of the respondents suggest that all the sources of input (i.e., Self, student, peer, observations and portfolios) are used within their institutes and this percentage goes up to 56% where only self and student evaluations are used. Around 48% responded in favor of Research, operations as well as behavior domains to be part of their faculty evaluation processes; which goes up to 76% where operations and research domains are used as evaluation criteria within HEIs.

From the earlier researches that the researcher managed to review, it was observed that the most used evaluation criteria is by student (Sar-

war et al, 2017), since this is the widely reported tool in QA mechanism deemed mandatory by HEC. This study is consistent with the results where more than 90% of the respondent agreed with the use of student evaluations.

Table 9 summarises responses against each criterion based on university status:

Table 9

Sources of Input Currently Used, by University Status (n = 130)

Source of input	Public (71)	Private (52)	Semi-govt. (4)	Other (3)	Total (130)
Self-evaluation	42 / 59.2	35 / 67.3	3 / 75.0	2 / 66.7	82 / 63.1
Peer evaluation	22 / 31.0	17 / 32.7	3 / 75.0	0 / 0.0	42 / 32.3
Student evaluation	62 / 87.3	50 / 96.2	4 / 100	3 / 100	119 / 91.5
Classroom observations	31 / 43.7	28 / 53.8	3 / 75.0	1 / 33.3	63 / 48.5
Teacher portfolio	48 / 67.6	45 / 86.5	3 / 75.0	1 / 33.3	97 / 74.6
Operational contribution	59 / 83.1	48 / 92.3	4 / 100	2 / 66.7	113 / 86.9
Research and publication	55 / 77.5	46 / 88.5	4 / 100	3 / 100	108 / 83.1
Behaviour and attitude	32 / 45.1	33 / 63.5	2 / 50.0	2 / 66.7	69 / 53.1

Note. Cells show the count of respondents using that source, followed by the percentage within its university-status group. Group sizes are given in the column heads.

According to Harman (2011), student input, peer evaluation and teacher portfolios are the tools that are often used for assessment of teaching quality. Although such process of evaluation involves individual judgements (ibid), it would be better if consistent objective tool with proper feedback be provided; it is then that the process would be beneficial for improvement in performance (Cheng, 2017; Armstrong, 2006).

According to Ellahi (2018) and Raza & Irfan (2018), student input, being the easiest although are implemented as part of Quality Assurance Criteria but their input is often distorted and may not be considered true reflective of teaching within the classroom. In Pakistan, its usage reflects mandatory requirement by HEC's QA mechanism and hence most commonly used evaluation tool for faculty members. Course dossiers or teacher portfolios, peer evaluations, classroom observations are not

amongst the most emphasized input and therefore not observed to be most commonly used in most of the responses.

Heads of the department and QEC representatives' responses regarding what tools and sources are being used for faculty evaluations at HEIs in Pakistan are found to be similar. For example, all of the 13 respondents (one respondent was found to be not aware of faculty evaluation being used at his HEIs) mentioned student input being used as the most common response. Although, most of them selected multiple sources for evaluation used within their institutes, least used criteria were found to be self and peer evaluations.

Research publications and service related activities was another major criterion for faculty evaluations (Research: 77% by Heads and 83% by faculty; Service: 69% heads and 89% faculty). This suggest that most of the representative HEIs are found to be putting emphasis on research and service activities by faculty than teaching and learning. Significance of research output and publication is observed in many of the institutes' evaluation systems (Bai et al, 2014; Blair, 2018). Specifically, research output are most used criteria for faculty decisions then teaching and service (Cadez et al, 2017). However, emphasis should be made to evaluate how researches can in turn support teaching (Blair, 2018). Hence, use of various sources must triangulate faculty performance such that faculty commitment and their complex activities are reflected entirely.

Table 10 provides a summary of the input criteria as provided by HODs and QEC representatives.

Table 10

Sources of Input Currently Used, as Reported by Heads of Department and QEC Representatives (n = 13)

Source of input	No		Yes	
	n	%	n	%
Self-evaluation	10	77	3	23
Student evaluation	0	0	13	100
Peer evaluation	9	69	4	31
Classroom observations	5	38	8	62
Teacher portfolio	5	38	8	62
Operational contribution	4	31	9	69
Research and publication	3	23	10	77
Behaviour and attitude	4	31	9	69

Note. Thirteen of the fourteen interview respondents were aware of a faculty evaluation process at their institution.

Faculty Perceptions and Perspectives

HEC's Institutional Performance Evaluation manual suggest that

"The institution regularly evaluates its actions and achievements in conformity with its mission and goals. The evaluation results provide a fair and systematic set of information to help in institutional improvement with emphasis on academic programs...the results of the evaluation inform about the institutional planning effectiveness in relation to resource allocation programs and learning outcomes as well as future development" (p. 16)

In this respect various purposes and uses of faculty evaluation processes were reviewed in literature. These may include results being used for either summative decisions like incentives, bonuses, promotions or layoff or formative improvements including training and development. This may also include results being used for self-reflection purposes. In this study, responses from faculty members were sought against uses of teacher evaluation results in the context of

HEIs in Pakistan. Perceptions and perspective regarding faculty evaluation processes reflect that most of the faculty members agree or strongly agree that performance evaluation process is used for self-reflection (68%), to plan faculty roles and responsibility (66%), set and measure academic goals (64%), facilitate compensation, increment or promotion decisions (63%) and determine training and development needs (59%).

However, performance evaluation processes are often claimed to be a formality within the institute where it becomes a redundant exercise and not valued by relevant stakeholders (Aslam(b), 2013). From the survey it was found that around 68% agree or strongly agree that the performance evaluation processes or results are taken seriously by the stakeholders. Moreover, only 30% agree or strongly agree with the fact that it does not mean anything to them as individuals.

Table 11 summarises the survey responses:

Table 11

Faculty Perceptions of the Results of the Performance Management Process (%)

	SA	A	N	D	SD
<i>"I believe that results of the performance management process at my institute..."</i>					
are used to set and measure academic goals for the university	24	40	21	11	5
are used to plan various roles and responsibilities for faculty members	22	44	15	14	5
are taken seriously by stakeholders (faculty, management, HoDs/HR)	25	43	15	11	6
are used to determine individual training and development needs	19	40	16	16	9
are used to facilitate decisions on pay increases, promotions and layoffs	18	45	18	11	8
are used by teachers for self-reflection and improvement	21	47	15	10	6
do not mean anything to me	14	16	16	36	18
are communicated to the faculty members	27	42	14	11	6
are compared with the previous year's performance	18	33	27	12	9
are measured and reviewed in a timely manner	18	43	19	13	6
are interpreted justly by management	16	45	25	10	5
are kept secret from teachers	16	32	25	21	6

Note. Values are percentages of respondents. SA = strongly agree; A = agree; N = neither agree nor disagree; D = disagree; SD = strongly disagree. Rows may not total 100% because of rounding in the original data.

Table 12*Descriptive Statistics for Faculty Perception Items*

Item	Mean	Std. deviation	Variance	Skewness	
				Statistic	Std. error
are used to set and measure academic goals for the university	3.68	1.096	1.201	-.683	.195
are used to plan various roles and responsibilities for faculty members	3.65	1.112	1.236	-.716	.195
are taken seriously by stakeholders (faculty, management, HoDs/HR)	3.68	1.153	1.329	-.829	.195
are used to determine individual training and development needs	3.44	1.231	1.516	-.555	.195
are used to facilitate decisions on pay increases, promotions and layoffs	3.53	1.161	1.349	-.765	.195
are used by teachers for self-reflection and improvement	3.66	1.122	1.258	-.878	.195
do not mean anything to me	2.71	1.312	1.722	.420	.195
are communicated to the faculty members	3.74	1.148	1.318	-.868	.195
are compared with the previous year's performance	3.39	1.184	1.403	-.462	.195
are measured and reviewed in a timely manner	3.53	1.127	1.270	-.665	.195
are interpreted justly by management	3.58	1.021	1.042	-.699	.195
are kept secret from teachers	3.32	1.148	1.319	-.244	.195

Note. Items were rated on a five-point scale. In the original manuscript this table was misaligned, with item labels detached from their statistics; rows have been reassembled by matching each item to the response distribution shown in Table 11.

The data highlights that faculty evaluations are considered integral tool for improvement in faculty performance with means greater than 3 in all of the areas (except one). One of the faculty member in the comments mentioned that "I am

very impressed with the system of my institute. This should be employed in every institute and universities.” Similarly,

some of the QEC and departmental representatives were of the view that: “Teachers take it as an improvement exercise”

and that

“we made it an improvement activity rather than punishment. We associated reward and training opportunities with results”

Also

“they (teachers) mostly think good (about the process) ...”

And

“results (of evaluations) are used for future planning” In

addition

“it (faculty evaluation) plays very important role for the award, scholarships, incentives and promotion”

The above comments reflect faculty survey responses that faculty performance evaluations at HEIs in Pakistan are mostly taken as constructive where they are used for planning, promotions as well as taken seriously by stakeholders including teachers themselves. The study complies with observations by Mirza & Sherjeel (2018), which suggest that employees have confidence in performance evaluation systems which will help managers in bringing in improved processes. However, it was also found that *“It’s just done for the sake of activity”*

And that

The main aim of performance evaluation should be the long term human resource development in any organization. Unfortunately, it is use for just a formality and most of the time to punish faculty in universities by sending show case notice/warning letters etc.

Even more so

“its just done for the sake of activity and very rarely action taken”

And

“the results are not used for decision making. Its only used for pressurizing faculty”

According to Stronge (2006) and Santiago & Benavides (2009), there may be a risk of redundancy with implementation of teacher evaluations

for which its integration with overall culture of the institution and assessment by experienced assessors are required. In addition, simpler processes and evaluation for development is a must. This means that evaluations for performance should not be a process where faculty feels threatened (Aguinis, 2013). In this respect, teacher evaluation may be altered to be more collaborative, realistic in implementation and a practice for bringing improvement (Makhubela et al, 2016).

Positive reinforcements may be through faculty development and motivation decisions including professional development or for promotion (Aguinis, 2013; Brefo-Manuh et al, 2017). It is important to realize that with positive enforcement and institutional emphasis given to the process play a key role. For instance, one of the respondents said that,

"it plays very important role for the award, scholarships, incentives and promotions"

In addition, there were responses which claimed evaluation processes to be 'not optimistic', 'negative', 'not effective', 'useless practice' or 'counterproductive'. Nonetheless, it

may seem that faculty evaluations are considered lucrative but one should not be misled, as the process is also found to be "Good & Constructive" by most of the faculty members. According to Sarwar et al, 2010, new teachers might feel threatened by evaluation practices because of challenges of transparency and unclear processes. However, it was also suggested that for better implementation, comprehensive stakeholders' input and training should be provided (ibid). This means that faculty members are not against the system, but need proper guidance, open communication and understanding of faculty roles.

Feedback and open communication for faculty evaluations prior to and post evaluation is a healthy exercise whereby faculty members do not become subject of assessment but become part of the process and take ownership of their performance (Sarwar et al, 2010). Moreover, the results may need to reviewed and measured timely. Survey found that around 69% of the faculty members agree or strongly agree with the fact that the results are communicated back to the faculty members and around 61% said that faculty evaluation results are measured and re-

viewed timely. Lastly, perception that a fair and just evaluation are done is also a key determinant of positive perception towards faculty evaluation processes. In this respect, around 61% agree or strongly agree that in their perception results are interpreted justly by the managers or reviewers.

Process Improvement Recommendations

The research study also brought about certain measures as suggested by faculty members and heads of departments for bringing improvement in faculty evaluation processes. Faculty evaluation process is suggested to be integrated and constructive. They need to be owned by faculty members and to be considered worthy to bring in necessary change that institutions aim (Sarwar et al, 2010; Kyeremeh & Pimpong, 2018; Mirza & Sherjeel, 2018).

Faculty members from the study suggested that:

"I need flexible environment to further improve my self And

that

"Counselling session (should be) held after evaluations results being shared with heads and faculty members"

According to HODs and QEC representatives, following may be some of the initiatives that can be taken to implement/initiate Faculty evaluation processes at HEIs:

"Through awareness workshops"

"Regular interaction with the faculty on the subject matter" "It is possible only by visionary leadership in public and private universities."

"HR should have a more inclusive approach for evaluation"

HEC (2019, p. 50) guidelines also recommend that

"Collaboration between faculty and university administration for the purpose of facilitating each other in goals achievement at both levels"

This means that effective implementation of faculty evaluations can be through quality academic environment, acceptance amongst stakeholders, visionary leadership as well as continuous collaboration (Sherwani, 2014). This also means that it should be multi decision making process

and must have faculty members voice as part of the decision making process (Abro & Rashidi, 2012; Aslam(a), 2013).

Recommended Teacher Evaluation Instruments and Processes at HEIs

In the last section of survey questionnaire, faculty members and heads of departments and QEC representatives were to suggest input sources which they believe should be part of faculty evaluation criteria within their HEIs. Most of the faculty members were found to preferred self and student evaluation (approximately 71%) but there is 51:49 ratio against and favor for peer evaluations. Furthermore, 35% faculty members suggested including all three stakeholders' input that is self, student and peers. Amongst the most preferred input criteria or source of evaluation (that is student input, self-evaluation, portfolio, operational activities & research publication), approximately 36% of faculty members were found to be in favor of all (as discussed below). Moreover, in suggesting instruments for teacher evaluation most of the teachers suggested teacher portfolio, research, service to departmental and admin operations (> 72%). Only 54% recommended classroom observation of teaching practice as means to evaluation faculty performance. For professional behavior and attitude, approximately 66% recommended this to be included in the faculty evaluation criteria.

In all, the findings suggest that although faculty members prefer multiple sources of input, but openness for peer evaluations and classroom observations is amongst the least. This may be because of the perceived sense of judgement associated with it. According to Greenberg (2004) teachers value independence in teaching practice and that any external observation would mean questioning their expertise and subject knowledge. However, despite minimum preference, from the study it was found that most of the faculty members suggested the use of 4 or more tools.

Study also analyzed tools suggested by HODs and QEC representatives. Least preferred input was portfolio or curriculum dossiers as means for teacher evaluations. However, top preferred sources include

Self-evaluations, Student-evaluations, Peer evaluations and service or operational (64%) domains to be evaluated. Whereas research operations and behavior components remain at 57%. Unlike faculty responses, least preferred sources of input involved portfolio assessment. Only 50% were found to be in favor of having portfolio or teacher dossier as part of faculty performance evaluation processes. According to English & Lachlan-Haché (2015), teacher portfolios where on one hand provide evidence for teaching and learning in addition to classroom observations or where classroom observations limit the evaluation results; on the other hand, are resource intense and lack standardize evaluation controls. This may be the reason that heads of the departments who also are administrative heads within HEIs do not prefer portfolios as assessment tool. Since it would be time consuming and difficult to monitor growth (English & Lachlan-Haché, 2015).

Table 13 summarises the responses received from heads of department and QEC representatives:

Table 13

Sources of Input Suggested by Heads of Department and QEC Representatives (n = 14)

Suggested source	No		Yes	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Self-evaluation	5	36	9	64
Student evaluation	5	36	9	64
Peer evaluation	5	36	9	64
Classroom observations	6	43	8	57
Teacher portfolio	7	50	7	50
Operational contribution	5	36	9	64
Research and publication	6	43	8	57
Behaviour and attitude	6	43	8	57

Conclusion and Recommendation

In Pakistan, various faculty evaluation practices are in place at HEIs as per the requirement of Quality Assurance Agency at Higher Education Commission. HEC has recommended implementation of courses, program and faculty evaluation throughout HEIs, be it public or private, as part of QEC self-assessment, accreditation processes and overall Institutional performance evaluations. Such guidance is reflective of the significance of faculty evaluations practices as part of overall institutional effectiveness and perceived quality. However, the implementation and acceptance of evaluation practices are not without challenges. Faculty evaluations may say to be taken as a formality, mere annual practice, involve no communication and may not be valued by stakeholders. This is because of the judgements and rewards associated with the same which may hinder faculty morale, organizational commitment and motivation to develop and improve. In this respect, faculty evaluation processes are required to be holistic, reflective of complex faculty work, provide for open communication as well as reflective of organizational goals. Moreover,

purposes and use of results are recommended to be for both summative and formative decisions; that is rewards and training respectively. In addition, current demands of institute's improvements call upon processes that promote mutual decision making, team development and consensus-based policies (Aleamoni, 2015). Therefore, it is recommended that such practices are integrated in the evaluation process that may bring positive effects on teaching and student outcomes (Akram & Zepeda, 2013). From the study it was found that faculty evaluations are commonly practiced in most of the HEIs irrespective of the status of the institute (ie. Public or Private Sector) and that most of the faculty members were aware of the processes being used within their HEIs. Furthermore, student evaluations are found to be most used input and peer evaluations, and classroom evaluations are amongst the least used practices in HEIs in Pakistan. Since, criteria for evaluation and sources of input are to be defined and integrated towards faculty decisions, the use of the same within HEIs must be carefully planned. From the study it was found that most used criteria and source of input for performance are mostly those that are recommended by the HEC self-assessment manual that is student evaluation. Since weightage of the same is greater in the institutional assessment and scoring, it seems that HEIs in Pakistan have implemented the same. However, when asked what criteria or input in faculty opinion must be part of performance evaluation practices, it was found that self-evaluations, student evaluations and input based on research publication, operational activities (service), behavioral aspects must be part of overall faculty evaluation process.

Furthermore, it was found that faculty evaluations are taken seriously by the stakeholders within respective HEIs, used by faculty for self-reflection as well as are communicated to faculty members. from the interview as well as questionnaire, although faculty members highlighted that sometimes evaluations practices are mere activity within their institute or are counterproductive. It may be said that perceptions were a mixed of both positive and negative where qualitative input are considered. Furthermore, evaluation results were also found to be used for

reward, layoffs and promotion decisions in addition to its use in identification of training needs and professional development.

The study also aimed at presenting recommendation for HEIs in Pakistan such that evaluation practices may be used to support quality improvement. From the study it may be suggested that faculty evaluations to be maintained confidentiality yet open for communication. Faculty performance and its evaluation be aligned with the organizational goals and objective. Multiple sources of input for faculty evaluations must be used. However, the choice and purpose for which these mechanism or tools must be used should be reflective of their specific context and shared with stakeholders to increase commitment, responsibility and accountability.

For faculty members to understand the processes and to integrate their role and opinion within the system, evaluation systems must be flexible, backed by awareness and counselling workshops and be of more inclusive approach. This suggest that no faculty member was found to be against implementation of performance evaluation, but all it is required is to have clarity of purpose and it be meaningful. Lastly, integration of classroom observations as well as peer evaluations as part of overall faculty evaluation need to be looked at. Reasons for its unpopularity as well as benefits of the same when implemented at HEIs must be further studied. It may be said that faculty, managers as well as HEC must be vigilant towards more qualitative approaches and must also put more weightage of rest of the instruments for faculty evaluations. Nonetheless, it is to say that HEIs have come a long way and there are hopes for its future competitiveness.

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