

Coping the Challenge of Change in Academe – Are we really Learning Organizations?

Syed Gohar Abbas*, Muhammad Tariq Yousafzai** & Muhammad Imran Qureshi***

Abstract

This survey is distillation of four months participant observation, informal exchanges, and formal interviews to explore higher education sector of Pakistan in the context of change, coping and learning. Popular literature on organizational change contends that organizations with proactive coping approaches consider “change management” as an integral ingredient of their culture to reap the benefits of the learning organization principles. Earlier researchers had paid scant treatment to this area as evident from the scarce published frameworks and empirical research in the domain of change management which warrants conducting exploratory studies. Inspired with the phenomenon of “change and learning” this preliminary exploratory study focuses on higher education sector of Pakistan and highlights how the public sector, semi government and private sector universities have addressed this challenge of change. For this study primary data was collected using semi-structured interviews supported by a questionnaire. However, some data from secondary sources has also been used as additional sources of information. The research argues theoretically and results reveal empirically that semi-government and private sector faculty were on same page, as they have been found proactively coping the challenge of change as compared to the public sector. The research leaves the issues of job security and lack of proactivity in public sector for future researches.

Keywords: Learning Organizations; Proactive Coping and Change; Higher Education.

Introduction

‘One cannot learn without changing and one cannot change without learning’ (Weick & Westly, 1999)

In this era of technological transcendence and evolving customer preferences in a change driven competitive workplace, it has become

* Dr. Syed Gohar Abbas, Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Sarhad University of Science & IT, Peshawar.

** Muhammad Tariq Yousafzai, Assistant Professor, FAST-NUCES, Peshawar. Email: ibc208tamu@gmail.com

*** Muhammad Imran Qureshi, Lecturer, COMSATS University, Abbottabad

more crucial than ever realized before for the organizations to proactively become learning organizations (Garvin et al, 2008). This trend is evident from extensive discussions on coping mechanisms, change and organizational learning during the start of the new millennium (Moilanen, 2001) however because of little success rate of change programs and lack of proven frameworks & empirical research on change management, it warrants the initiation of further exploratory studies (Todnem, 2005). Considering the case of higher education sector, the unsystematic and unplanned mushroom growth of private and public seats of higher learning in developing world has fostered competition and organizational change in the academic landscape (Rajarajeswari, 2010) and shift from traditional university culture towards a corporate culture has been observed. Research on learning organizations show that most of the organizations learn as it is a fundamental requirement for their existence but that some learn purposely by developing their capabilities which are consistent with their long term goals (i.e. a strategic/proactive approach towards change) and others learn by chance with no focused efforts (i.e. an unplanned approach to change management) which usually do not contribute positively (Kim, 1993) to overcome the challenges of change. The introduction of Quality assurance programs is a signal of positive change towards raising the quality of business education worldwide. According to (Raja, 2013) the National Business education accreditation council of Pakistan established in March (2007) so far 20 universities have received accreditation for their business programs out of which 7 universities are from public and the remaining 13 come from the domain of private and semi government institutions. Likewise, the formation of National Computer Education Accreditation Council (NCEAC) and National Teachers education accreditation council (NTEAC) has been enforcing change in Pakistan academic landscape (ibid). Whether planned or unintended, any change effort definitely has a trickledown effect on employees, as they try to adapt to these changes by using different coping mechanisms which may prove mutually beneficial or detrimental for individuals and institutions. In the context of “management of change” in higher education, the current paper tries to explore the two important dimensions i.e. proactive coping and learning, which are interrelated to each other and share some qualitative features.

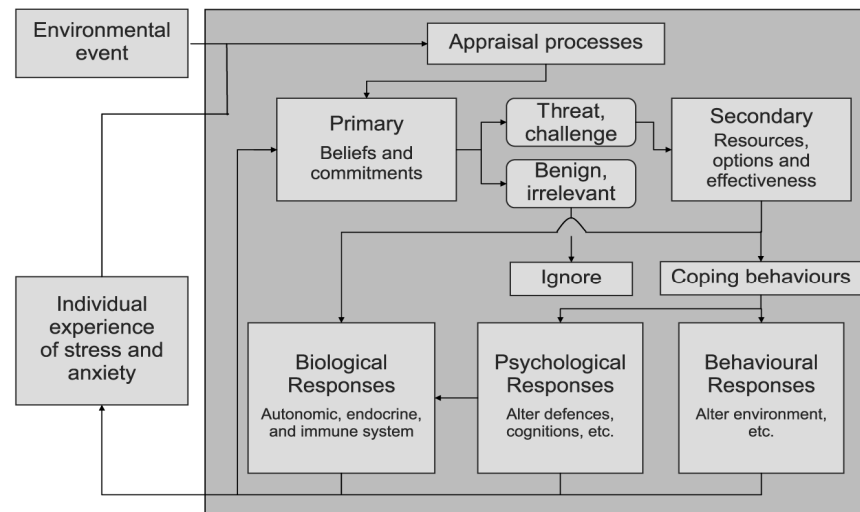
Memon et al, (2010) contends that in Pakistan where this study took place, despite of the fact that enrollment in higher education has been on a rise with the number of public and private sector universities growing there is still widespread mismanagement. This may be partly to some uncontrollable external factors such as political instability and lack of resources (ibid). However, one cannot make a sweeping generalization that all the HEIs witnessed mismanagement as many authentic sources

revealed that by 2018 Pakistan will be among the top ones (in Asia) countries with reference to research. This preliminary study focuses specifically on higher education sector of Pakistan and tries to explore how the professionals (academic staff) at universities have addressed the challenge of change? Based on the results of the survey which was conducted on three different types of universities, this study proposes some recommendations for the higher education sector of Pakistan.

Literature review

Proactive Coping and Change – The individual perspective

Different theories of organizational learning and change recognize that organizations are highly distinguished social systems with employees divided into groups with functional expertise and different status levels (Gardner et al., 2001) and moreover change occurs in organizations which are dynamically interconnected to social action & communication (Rooney et al., 2010). Elsbach, (2003) proclaims that during implementation of new ways of working and/or new performance standards changes the employee perceptions with reference to their identification in the organization which resurfaces in the form of fear of the unknown. The experience of organizational change leads to uncertainty and it creates stressful environment for many employees, so it is intriguing to study the role of coping mechanisms in understanding how organizational change can be managed to implement a successful change process by overcoming the resistance to change. Employees react to changes differently (e.g. threat or challenge) depending upon what information and resources are available to them and what role they have been assigned during organizational change. Likewise, they appraise (and cope) the situation based on their unique interpretations as well as the informational and support resources at their disposal. Thus it is important to examine the cognitive mechanisms through which such appraisal processes are related to individual coping (See figure 1).



Source: Lazarus and Folkman (1984) in Lovullo (1997, p. 77)

(Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) presented a cognitive model of stress and coping which suggested that it is central to have an understanding of how individuals adjust to stressful life events and coping resources play a significant role in shaping one's assessment of/reaction to demanding situation. This cognitive model was later on used by Terry and Callan, (2000) to develop a model of employee adjustment to organizational change. There are different forms of coping classically described as problem focused and emotion focused coping (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984); positive and negative coping (Burke & Greenglass, 2000) and in some literature it is mentioned as proactive & reactive coping. Traditional approach to coping was derived from the perspective that coping is mainly reactive i.e. a coping mechanism used once stress has been experienced. On the other hand, proactive coping is based on goal setting and is associated with resources for self-improvement, including social support (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009). According to them, coping and social support revealed to be in a synergistic relationship, associated with a positive state and relate to better psychological functioning. Studies revealed that coping is influenced by the appraised and actual attributes of the stressful situation (e.g. imposed change), and also by the social resources available to the individual (Folkman and Moskowitz, 2000), thus social support has also been termed as an important construct of coping (Burke & Greenglass, 2000).

Individuals with positive psycho-social profiles (with more perceived social support) can cope more proactively and effectively with life stressors because they have broader coping choices which they can use to overcome the challenges of life (Uchino, 2009). With particular reference to demanding job conditions, perceived supervisor support and

perceived coworker support have been recognized as important organizational resources with a strong impact on well-being (Beehr, 1985; Van Emmerik, Euwema, & Bakker, 2007) and positive job outcomes. Perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support constitute the beliefs of employees regarding the degree to which supervisors and colleagues can provide instrumental and emotional support (Thoits, 1985) in demanding situations.

The perception of social support can positively influence adaptation to stress situation by triggering more adaptive appraisal patterns and coping behaviors and perceived social support may also be related to greater proactive coping (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). Proactive coping is future-oriented, therefore mostly regarded as a goal management strategy where people foresee risks and opportunities in the future and evaluate these as challenges rather than threats (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009). For example in reaction to any major change or transformation which is about to take place in future, the professionals fine tune themselves in advance to be ready for a new challenge and instead of considering the change as a threat, for them it may seem as a blessing in disguised.

Learning, Change & Pro-activity – The organizational perspective
Proponents of Learning Organizations mostly agree on the phenomenon of continuous improvement and transformation as a key ingredient of the LOs (Prewitt, 2003). In the same vein Pedler et al. (1989) defines learning organization in the organization which facilitates the learning of all its members and transforms itself to meet their long term goals. Thus transformation and change has been acknowledged as a key component in LOs as one cannot learn without changing and one cannot change without learning (Weick & Westly, 1999). However, the change can be discontinuous i.e. sudden shifts in strategy, structure or culture (Grundy, 1993) or continuous i.e. incremental planned approach towards change where people constantly sense and respond to fast paced changes (Luecke, 2003; Burnes, 2004). The organizations which are pro-active to adapt to changes particularly in the external uncontrollable environment reflect the learning organization culture. In such organizations, individuals think proactively, focus and refocus their vision, they work and learn in teams with shared vision i.e. a shared commitment to what the organizational vision really is and incorporate the systems thinking approach (Senge, 1990; 1997).

Garvin, Edmondson & Gino (2008) proposed three building blocks of a learning organization which includes a supportive learning environment, concrete learning processes and leadership that reinforces learning. According to them, organizations should assess, identify and

improve the main characteristics of these building blocks in their teams if they really want to be a learning organization.

One of the most important agents of a successful change is transformational leadership which focuses on the leadership activities at each level, and in such organizations decision making is encouraged even at lower levels (Senge, 1990). Moreover, knowledge workers are empowered and trained in strategic decision making, strategies can emerge from anywhere in the organization, rather than merely depending on top management (James, 2003). In such organizations, employees with pro-active attitude tend to transform into knowledge workers, by continually upgrading their skills, they transfer knowledge to others and act as change agents. However, one may find many other employees who are not proactive, do not want to break the status-quo show resistance against the changes imposed upon them and they prove to be the losers in long run.

The Challenge of Change in Higher Education

Universities are considered as the most important forum where the transfer and creation of knowledge takes place and people join these to learn or involve others in learning process through research and teaching (Romainville, 1996). Successful transformation and change heavily depends on proactive/planned approach towards organizational learning, modifying individual and social understandings regarding facts and developing awareness about changing socio-technical systems of organizations (Kriz, 2003). Some researchers claim that usually educational institutions are bureaucratic organizations resistant and slow to purposeful change (Drugovich et al., 2004) and though these promote learning but very few of these could qualify as real learning organization (Senge, 1990; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1999). On the individual level, the dual core responsibilities of a university teacher includes teaching and research (Romainville, 1996) and thus the role of a teacher in a university is framed by performance of these two functions (Mirza et al, 2012). As mentioned earlier, the rapid growth of private sector and public sector universities in most of the developing countries has initiated competition for funding and rankings, which in turn has changed the conventional culture of a university to a business/corporate culture, where faculty members have much more challenges to overcome and must think proactive to cope this change.

Considering the case of HEIs of Pakistan (where this study took place), Pakistan has witnessed considerable economic, social, political and technological changes during the last 13 years and the future of its higher education depends on how the stakeholders respond to these changes (Rao, 2003). According to Higher Education Commission Islamabad in Pakistan the total numbers of Degree Awarding Institutes in

Pakistan in the year 2000 were 77 (35 private sector and 45 public sector). It experienced a whopping increase to reach 134 in 2012 (74 private sectors and 60 public sector). According to Raja, (2013) the number of universities further raised to 147 with the addition of some other degree awarding bodies. Similarly, the number of higher education opportunities rose from a dismal 3 percent of population in 2004 to more than 10 percent of the population in 2013 (ibid). Institutes of Higher Education of Pakistan during the last 13 years have observed a shift from traditional teaching oriented culture to research oriented culture. Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan incorporated much stricter hiring and promotion policies during last five years and moreover categorically defined quality standards for a university to hold their entitlement as a Degree Awarding Institutes (DAIs). Unfortunately during the last six years Pakistan has observed political instability, lack of resources, and inconsistency in policies and poor implementation of policies. All this coupled with increased performance pressures to compete for international rankings, competition to secure scholarships and funding from HEC were some other challenges, which forced the higher education sector of Pakistan to incrementally improve its standards, generate its own resources and incorporate the principals of learning organization in its true spirit. University rankings announced by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (hec.gov.pk) shows that private sector and semi government universities of Pakistan have performed remarkably in terms of teaching and research amid resource constraints. Despite the fact that these two categories of universities are relatively new in Pakistan and have less government support as compared to public sector universities, they secured their due share in top ten universities of Pakistan (category wise rankings on hec.gov.pk). These official sources revealed that many established public sector universities could not meet the challenges in the way they were expected to achieve though they were more resource intensive with more resources at their disposal. Hence there is an ominous need to explore the different types of higher education institutes of Pakistan with particular reference to organizational change, coping to change and organizational learning (Rehman et al., 2011). How actively the faculty members are dealing with this change, how proactive they are ready to deal with the forthcoming challenges and what academia should do to inculcate the learning organizational culture are few of the issues that this research intends to explore with particular reference to three different types of universities of Pakistan.

Important features of three types of universities under consideration
Before discussing study objectives and methodology, it is important to know some important features and differences among of public, private

and semi government universities. During the past five decades the education sector has experienced an under investment by the Government of Pakistan as evident from its public spending on education which stands at 1.8 percent of the GDP which is much lesser than the 4 percent proposed by UNESCO (Chaudry et al 2009). The most important difference between a public sector and private sector / semi government university (job) is the nature of job contract. Public sector employees have permanent job contracts and have some other entitlements e.g. pension benefits, accommodation opportunities within campus etc. which the private sector employees do not enjoy. Each year, there is allocation in the federal budget for higher education which goes to public sector universities and this is the main source of their funding. Secondly, they also earn from the students' registration/semester/annual fees. However, the fee structure of Public Sector University is much lower than private sector and semi government. Public sector universities have also started self-support/finance programs (mostly afternoon/evening batches) and the teachers who offer their overtime services for self-finance programs are entitled for honorarium (per hour basis). Semi government universities have little support from government particularly during initial stages but these are not fully supported by government like public sector universities. In most of its features, it closely resembles the private sector university, defines its own human resource management policies but under guidance of HEC. Private sector and semi government jobs are not permanent but contractual and contracts are renewed based on the performance of the faculty member and moreover the departmental/university's requirements. The main source of funds/revenues for a private sector university comes from students' fees. For well-established private sector universities and even semi government universities which have enough students enrollments each semester/year, students enrollments and finance may not be the problem but in general for most of the private sector universities, finance is a big problem as there is no government support (through budget). Despite the facts mentioned above, private sector university growth in Pakistan has been much faster than the public sector during the last decade. It is pertinent to mention that salary structures for PhD faculty of well-established private sector universities are quite impressive and usually higher than those of public sector universities.

Study aims / objectives

Based on the literature review and some facts mentioned in section 1 and 2, this study aims to explore higher education sector of Pakistan in the context of change management. More specifically the main objectives of this study are to:

- i). Conduct a comparative study in three different types of universities of Pakistan to explore how the faculty members differ in their perceptions of change and their proactive coping mechanisms to address the challenge of change.
- ii). Explore whether these universities are moving towards the “learning organization” culture or not?

This study also aims to explore, how and why private sector and semi government universities (with less resources and less government support) have challenged the established public sector universities and have achieved their benchmarks in terms of university rankings and national level accreditations? Based on analysis, this study will suggest recommendations to traditional universities regarding how to transform into learning universities.

Methodology

Participants & data collection

The survey was carried out in year 2011-2012, on a convenience based sample of 120 lecturers and assistant professors from three different types of universities of KPK, province of Pakistan (details in table 1). We purposefully included only lecturers and assistant professors in this survey and used convenience based sampling because of time limitations. Only willing faculty members have been approached in this survey to collect rational responses.

Faculty list, their email addresses and telephone numbers were acquired through proper channel (Central/Coordination Offices). To complete the survey form and respond to some semi-structured interviews the faculty members have been requested beforehand for an appointment and strict confidentiality were observed. Respondents have been categorized on the basis of gender, last degree, type of university and job category (post) and job contract (permanent or contractual). Each participant was interviewed (approximately 30 minutes) and his/her responses were noted in real time. In the meanwhile, survey form was personally delivered to all respondents and collected back by hand.

Table 1: Demographic break-up

Demographic Characteristics (n=120)		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	72	60 %
	Female	48	40 %
University	Public Sector	40	33%
	Private Sector	38	32%
	Semi Government	42	35%

Rank	Lecturers	79	66%
	Assistant Professors	41	34%
Job Contract	Permanent	40	33%
	Contractual	80	67%

Instrumentation

This research is qualitative in nature as interviews have been used to collect primary data and in addition a three scaled survey form was also used to get additional information regarding employees' performance, perception of change and organizational culture and various other attributes of job including the demographic information. The survey instrument was specifically designed for this study based on personal experience, observations and informal feedback of the faculty on the academic attributes mentioned below. Our personal experience of job as an academician, informal feedback we got from faculty on daily basis and participant observations (before and during the survey) helped us a lot in comprehending the global picture of academe with particular focus on their efforts to overcome the challenge of change. These inputs in-turn helped us to formulate a simple questionnaire which we used in our study. It mainly covered the following attributes (details in table 2)

- Perceptions of change in the academic world.
- Perceptions regarding organizational culture & leadership
- Faculty development & curriculum development.
- Research initiatives
- Pro-activeness

Results

As mentioned earlier, survey aimed to explore the differences among three different types of universities based on the feedback from the faculty regarding their perceptions pertaining to several different features of the universities concerned. Results are summarized below (Tab 2)

Table 2: Results Summary - (*AG= Agreed and **DA=Dis-Agreed)

Survey Questions	Public Sector	Private Sector	Semi Gov.
Perceptions of change in academic world.	80% AG*	85% AG	87% AG
i). <i>Have you observed too many changes (in university) imposed during last five years.</i>			
ii). <i>Do you think that atmosphere in academic world has become over competitive?</i>	50% AG	76% AG	80% AG
iii). <i>Do you think that demands of academicians' job have appreciably increased?</i>	81% AG	84% AG	86% AG
Perceptions regarding organizational culture & leadership	89% AG	82% DA**	80% DA
i). <i>Is your university a typical bureaucratic</i>			

<i>institution?</i>				
ii).	<i>In your university, decisions are imposed without consent from faculty?</i>	66% DA	79% DA	74% DA
iii).	<i>Are HoD/Chairman mostly busy in day-to-day transactional activities?</i>	74% AG	81% DA	83% DA
iv).	<i>Do you work as teams and always get credit for your ideas/projects from your bosses?</i>	81% DA	83% AG	80% AG
v).	<i>Your HoD/Chairman take keen interest in innovation and transformational activities?</i>	76% DA	78% AG	75% AG
Faculty development & curriculum development		81% DA	71% AG	82% AG
i).	<i>Do you think that your department/univ takes interest in your professional development?</i>			
ii).	<i>Your university regularly conducts seminars and workshops for professional development?</i>	73% AG	76% AG	81% AG
iii).	<i>The course contents of subjects you teach is updated as you regularly revise it with consent of seniors and others teaching the same course?</i>	62% AG	85% AG	84% AG
Research Initiatives		71% DA	77% AG	79% AG
i).	<i>Does your University supports & motivates you financially in your research initiatives e.g. publications rewards etc?</i>			
ii).	<i>Is there a Research cell at your university/department which is very active and updated?</i>	81% DA	71% AG	76% AG
iii).	<i>Do you think that research you do is a worthless effort with negligible contribution to the society/community around us?</i>	83% AG	84% AG	83% AG
Pro-activeness		76% AG	78% AG	80% AG
i).	<i>Do you know the challenges ahead and are ready to cope with the "challenge of change" e.g. regularly apply for PhD/Post Doc Scholarships (Domestic and overseas)etc?</i>			
ii).	<i>You do not worry for what happens in future and let the fate decide about your career?</i>	74% AG	91% DA	85% DA
iii).	<i>Do you think that one should react to problems when s/he encounters the problem (being proactive is useless)</i>	66% DA	79% DA	78% DA

It is worthwhile to mention that this study did not intend to explore any correlations among the variables. This preliminary exploratory study will provide the base for future studies in the context of learning organizations and management of change in institute of higher education. The detailed results are as follows:

Perceptions of change in academic world

- i). Have you observed too many changes (in university) imposed during last five years: Above 80% of the respondents from all

the three types of universities agreed with this statement. Most of the public sector employees who did not agree with this statement pointed out that changes have taken place, but not too many and these changes had not been imposed forcefully but it is a question of perceptions. According to them, the changes they have observed had no effect on their status as an academician so far. However, private sector and semi government faculty mentioned that they have to behave proactively to the changes; else their careers will suffer in the long run.

- ii). The atmosphere in academic world has become overly competitive: Approximately 75-80% faculty members of private sector and Semi-government University agreed with this statement and referred to their research publications and doctoral studies for this competitive environment. According to them the more publications you have, the higher chances you have to win universities' scholarships and annual salary increments. Approximately, 50 percent of public sector (permanent) employees agreed with it. According to them, the environment has become overly competitive in the universities particularly where there is a competition and competition is faced by faculty who join such universities. But for those who want to stay in the same setup and feel comfortable within noncompetitive environment, this absolutely does not matter.
- iii). The demands of academicians' job have appreciably increased: Above 80% of respondents from three types of universities agreed with this statement. According to them, they have more exams to conduct, more students to deal with, extra administrative assignments to handle, more projects/reports to supervise and their work-life balance has been disturbed. Most of the respondents mentioned that performance pressures because of research have contributed much to disturbed work-life balance. Private sector faculty has been observed more overloaded with job demands and more stressed as compared to public sector.

Perceptions regarding organizational culture & leadership

- i). Your university is a typical bureaucratic institution: Approximately, 90% of the respondents from Public Sector University agreed with it and on the contrary more than 80% of the private sector and semi-government employees disagreed.
- ii). Decisions are imposed without consent from faculty: Majority of Private sector and semi government faculty members disagreed with this statement and mentioned that senior representatives from the department constitute a departmental committee and

decisions are taken jointly at campus level meetings after taking into consideration the faculty's reservations. On the contrary, in the public sector there are departmental committees and even faculty unions but still there are many decisions which are imposed against the will of faculty. However, later on the faculty unions can raise their voice (strike, negotiations etc) to reverse the decisions e.g. increase in salaries as announced in budgets, claim arrears etc.

- iii). HoD/Chairperson/Bosses are mostly busy in day-to-day transactional activities and departmental politics: Approximately, 74% of the public sector faculty agreed with this statement and even mentioned that HoD/Chairperson have been found consumed in departmental politics rather than daily academic/transactional activities. Majority of the private sector and semi government staff mentioned that daily transactional activities are mostly carried by Departmental Coordinators and Course Coordinators under supervision of senior faculty. However they ultimately report to HoD/Chairperson. Departmental politics is strictly discouraged at each forum.
- iv). You work as teams and always get credits for your ideas/projects from your bosses: Concerning teamwork, approximately 81 percent of the respondents from Public Sector University mentioned that they have teams "in documents" but real teamwork has been seldom observed. So far, majority of them have had very little chance to work in team and prefer solo flight. Their ideas/projects are mostly welcomed by their bosses but have never seen any of these being implemented. Even for projects they have devoted a great deal of energy are ignored (because of organizational politics). The private sector faculty mentioned that they prefer to work in teams, they have regular team meetings and they try their best to submit projects jointly for acquiring research grants. For this they need support from their bosses which encourage them to get involved in such projects. Ideas are welcomed and appreciated but not always implemented because of shortage of resources or non-availability of sponsors. Semi government employees also revealed their inclination towards team work and their entrepreneurial ideas have always been appreciated by top management.
- v). HoD/Chairman/Bosses take keen interest in innovation and transformational activities: Majority of public sector employees mentioned that innovation and transformational leadership seldom exists in their university. Bosses seem to be working as "busy bees", busy with routine day to day activities. Both the semi government and private sector faculty considered

innovation and transformation as an important ingredient of their university's culture. They regularly organize workshops and conferences and go beyond routine transactional activities at campus.

Faculty development & curriculum development

- i). Your department/university takes interest in your professional development: Approximately 81% of Public sector employees mentioned that university/department did not care for professional development and they have to care for themselves. University offers scholarships for higher education but because of bureaucracy, favoritism and legal bonding, they felt reluctant to invest time on it. However, majority of private sector faculty mentioned that their university constantly announced faculty development scholarships and other training programs but qualifying for such scholarships seemed to be quite difficult and time consuming. Faculty development culture in semi Government University has been found even more than the private sector.
- ii). Your university regularly conducts seminars and workshops for professional development (which were fruitful as you learned much through such workshops): More than 70% of the public sector faculty members agreed with the fact that their university/department organized workshops but mostly they were required to follow training sessions that did not correspond to their interests. Majority of the private sector and semi government employees mentioned that they have gone through initial faculty orientation workshops. Moreover they had a chance to attend faculty development workshops or seminars (at campus or outstation) at least once an year. Different departmental teams also organize customized training sessions at campus particularly before the start of the semester.
- iii). The course contents of subjects you teach is updated as you regularly revise it with consent of seniors and others teaching the same course: Regarding course contents, 62% of the public sector faculty agreed with the fact that they use to update it, compare it with other faculty member teaching the same course. In some cases the camera ready course contents (dossiers) have been given to faculty members for the sake of uniformity but the HEC recommended curriculum is not fully adopted. In private sector, more approximately 85% of faculty agreed to it that course contents are updated on regular bases, faculty members must submit the course plan before the start of the semester, senior faculty members thoroughly browse the course plans

particularly if the courses are “pre-requisite” for the higher level courses. Senior faculty member (program coordinators and HoDs) of both semi government and Private Sector University mentioned that they maintain a regular check on the faculty member to make sure that they teach according to the course plans already discussed and finalized before the commencement of the semester. It is worthwhile to mention that the semi government university offered portal services, where the courses plans, books, notes, handouts, assignments, quizzes and their solutions can be uploaded/downloaded without any wastage of time and resources. Concerned program managers/HoDs can access and browse the portal status and this can be shared even in different campuses. Using such portals, even interested parents can check the status of their children (e.g. their courses, attendance, etc.)

Research Initiatives

- i). University supports you financially in your research initiatives e.g. publications and there is a financial reward for faculty members who publish papers: 71 % of the public sector faculty disagreed with the statement regarding university’s financial support and financial rewards for the publications. However many of the senior faculty mentioned names of few other universities (public & private sector), which introduced the financial support/reward policies for staff who published in journals of good repute. They also mentioned that few departments have funds for such heads but usually these are not fully utilized for the same purpose. Approximately 80% of the private sector and semi government faculty agreed with the statement regarding university’s policies to support and appreciate the research publications of their faculty through rewards and/or payment for subscription/registration fees. Semi government faculty members even mentioned that special prize distribution events have been organized to award monetary rewards to good researchers.
- ii). Research cell at your university/department is very active and updated: Majority of the public sector faculty disagreed with this statement and categorically mentioned that their research contributions are because of their personal efforts. Research teams/cells (if any) only shares information whatsoever they have through emails or notice boards. According to them, such research cells cannot be termed as very active and updated. Research & Development department allocates funds for higher studies but as usual, there are many bureaucratic bottlenecks. On

the contrary, majority of the semi government and private sector faculty mentioned that they have departmental research teams and campus level Research & Development department. Departmental research teams regularly meet and share information they have and even organize research workshops and conferences on regular basis.

- iii). Research you do is a worthless effort with negligible contribution to the society/community around us: Surprisingly more than 83 % of all the three categories agreed to this statement and mentioned there research seldom goes beyond their CVs so they will be in a better position to get promotion and/or switch over to a good paymaster. Those who did not agreed to this statement were mostly the researchers from engineering and life sciences departments who mentioned that these small contributions in research finally make a big positive impact on the lives of living beings around us.

Pro-activeness

- i). You know the challenges ahead, are ready to cope with the “challenge of change” and regularly apply for PhD/Post Doc Scholarships (Domestic and overseas): Majority of the respondents mentioned that they knew the challenges ahead for example an MS/M-Phil and/or PhD degree requirement will be demanded from them in near future by the parent organization or Higher Education Commission. For a faculty to teach in a university, they should have these higher level degrees/diplomas else they shall not be considered eligible for teaching and promotion. They will definitely face stagnation in their careers and due to this reason they are in search of PhD scholarships. Majority of the faculty interviewed during this survey had already got themselves registered in same or some other university for MS/M-Phil leading to PhD.
- ii). You do not worry for what happens in future and let the fate decide about your career: To this statement majority of the Public sector faculty showed a favorable response based on the fact that “they are permanent employees”, so they do not worry much for what happens to their job in future. Most of them revealed external locus of control as a personality trait, with very little worries about their careers/jobs and describing external (uncontrollable) factors responsible for whatever will happen in future. On the contrary, private sector employees revealed that they are more worried for their future (even more than semi government) and majority of them did not agreed with this statement. According to them, private sector university owners

have created a corporate culture/environment in their universities where hard work and performance (rather than fate or luck) shall decide about their career growth. This inwardly caused the private sector employees more stressed and burned-out, with more work-life balance issues than the public sector.

- iii). One should react to problems when s/he encounters the problem (being proactive is useless) or being proactive is the key to success: All the categories have been found on the same page regarding the question on pro-activeness. The Majority of them disagreed that one should wait for the problem to arise and then tackle the problem. They agreed that planning ahead of time and being proactive is the key to success. According to them social/management support and pro-active planning two of the most important coping strategies to overcome the problem situations. However, to what extent these strategies can be used varies from person to person and job to job.

Discussion & Conclusion

Educational institutions are often considered as bureaucratic institutions exemplifying controlling structures with more hierarchies, resistant to change, competitive rankings and lack of teamwork in teaching and research (White & Weathersby, 2005). But do all the educational institutions exhibit same features or there are some exceptions as well? Definitely not and it is worthwhile to mention that we do not intend to make any sweeping generalization based on our results of this exploratory survey. Our main purpose is to highlight some important features of three different types of universities in the context of change, coping & learning and moreover to initiate a debate regarding implications of these burning issues in academe which is relatively unexplored.

Perceptions of change in academic world and Pro-activeness

Public sector faculty though realize the facts regarding change in the academic world e.g. demands/expectations from academicians' job has been increased and initiation of a competitive environment in academe but still they revealed that these changes have little effect on their status as an academician. Moreover, they revealed that most of them are reluctant to switch over to private sector, even if offered with higher salary. As a matter of fact, they feel much comfortable with "secure" jobs, in less competitive environment even at lesser salary thus preferring long term benefits. On the contrary, private sector employees have been observed as responding to change positively, diversifying their portfolios in terms of research even at the cost of their work-life balance. May be it is a question of their survival i.e. "survival of fittest", so they are striving

hard. However their turnover intentions revealed to be quite high as compared to public sector, which is not a good indicator.

Interestingly, if we note the attribute of pro-activeness with particular reference to public vs. private university and semi Government University, public sector faculty revealed to be less pro-active with little worries about their job and mostly believed in the external factors which drive/decide about their future in university. Though they believe in the fact that hard-work and proactive planning is the key to success in general, but while talking about the career prospects, their point of view changed and this may be due to the perception of their organizational culture (which may not be absolute reality). Semi government and private sector faculty seemed more pro-active and worried as well because of organizational pressures which according to them resembles close to “corporate culture”. Whether public, semi government or private, majority of the faculty interviewed during this survey were already registered in same or some other university for MS/M-Phil leading to PhD which shows their pro-active efforts to overcome the challenges of future.

Most of researchers have identified change oriented learning organizations as the organization where knowledge workers learn, create and transfer whatever they have learned and help their organizations to adapt to the new environments much faster than their competitors (Garvin, Edmondson & Gino, 2008). In this context the results reveal that semi government and private sector universities being more proactive to change actually have tried their best to adapt to change and to incorporate learning organization culture. Argyris and Schon (1997) mentioned the same as organizational learning takes place when employees and employers act as learning agents for the organization by proactively responding to changes in the external and internal environments. However we cannot make sweeping generalization about all universities from these initial results and we may find many of the public sector faculty members to be very proactive in their individual capacity, but because of lack of learning organizational culture in their university/department, individual efforts do not go in the right direction.

Organizational culture, structure, leadership & quality improvement

Public sector university has been revealed by their faculty as a typical bureaucratic institution where decision making is mostly centralized, coupled with political manipulation and lack of team spirit. Most of them revealed their bosses (and colleagues) busy with tackling the day to day transactional activities, departmental politics and least bothered to think about transformational or developmental activities. Semi government and private sector has been found less bureaucratic, where self managed teams could take decisions, transactional tasks assigned to selected

officers reporting to HoD, their ideas usually welcomed and directly or indirectly everyone is contributing towards slow but steady transformational process.

In addition public sector faculty members showed their concerns regarding indifferent attitude of their university/department towards faculty development and improvement in other aspects of academic life. Private sector and semi government feedback revealed the element of continuous improvement/development through customized training programs; conferences and workshops, curriculum development, use of information technology i.e. course portals, online database management systems or MIS for that matter.

Browsing the above mentioned features of public, semi government & private sector universities, one can judge that in semi government and private sector universities transformational leadership, team spirit and quality improvement principles of learning change management are quite dominant as compared to public sector. At departmental level, there might be many departments in the public sector universities where the HoD/Chairperson focuses on transformations, development and quality improvements but again solo flight does not matter unless all the departments are on same grid and contribute jointly towards over all mission of the university with the same vision under transformational leadership of the Vice Chancellor or rector for that matter. However, public sector universities are much larger in size (number of departments, faculty, and students etc) so it is quite challenging for the Vice Chancellors to manage it effectively, the way private sector universities are managed by their Vice Chancellors/Rectors/Directors. Researchers mostly agree on the features of continuous improvement and transformation as a key component of the change oriented learning organizations (Prewitt, 2003). In the context of change and transformation, a proactive organization facilitates the learning of all its members and transforms itself incrementally in order to meet its long term goals (Pedler et al. 1989).

Research initiatives and performance

Performance and ranking of a university is heavily judged by quality of research conducted by its faculty. Particularly for the good rankings and accreditations, semi government and private sector universities have introduced many research initiatives for the faculty to grab research projects, publish papers etc. On the other hand well established public sector universities already have many departments, some centers of excellence, research labs/funding etc.

The public sector university we surveyed did not offer much incentives to their researchers as compared to other two types and even formal performance appraisal procedures seldom existed there. The

secondary sources (different websites) showing category wise ranking of universities (e.g. HEC-Pakistan at hec.gov.pk) revealed that few semi government and private sector universities have outclassed some public sector universities. Surprisingly most of these semi government and private sector universities are not as well established as public sector and generate their own funding rather than relying on federal budget. From these rankings and our results, one may conclude that active research cells/teams at departmental levels working under supervision of research gurus can help to achieve research benchmarks efficiently. A step ahead, now the universities are competing for international rankings and research is no doubt one of the most important criteria everywhere. Incentives related to research in private and semi government universities are the source of motivation for research oriented faculty to stay there and contribute their inputs in the form of publications. Here, it is worthwhile to mention that we cannot make a sweeping generalization regarding all universities in Pakistan (merely based on our results). HEC's website also shows some public sector universities among top ten universities list (overall and category-wise ranking), and it definitely shows that some public sector universities are trying their level best to promote research culture and appear among the top 500 worldwide university ranking.

Recommendations

Based on our results and discussion mentioned above, we put forward some of the recommendations for HEIs in general. From our results first of all we recommend that the captains of HEIs should play their role as transformational leaders (rather than transactional) and should act as role model for faculty. They should try level best to incorporate change in the fundamental beliefs of their employees and all office bearers (from top to bottom) should have a common perception and commitment to what the organizational vision really is (Senge, 1990). They should regularly disseminate their vision of pro-activeness, continuous improvement and change through different sources.

To overcome the general job related apprehensions of the faculty and particularly worries regarding their careers in universities, authors recommend that they should be well-informed with the merits of proactive coping mechanisms. HoD/Chairperson offices must provide their faculty members with clear guidance and resources to ensure that they are well planned for the future challenges and integrate proactive coping mechanisms in their daily routine as well. Seminars and workshops on themes like time management, proactive coping etc. should be regularly arranged at departmental and university level for the larger interest of faculty members and university.

The office bearers particularly HoDs, Chairperson or any other must create an environment of trust and support in their departments so the faculty members should have the perception of sufficient social support particularly from their reporting officers. Perceived social support has been considered as one of the most effective coping mechanisms/resource available to any individual, with a positive impact on well-being and productivity.

Negative organizational politics must also be discouraged at all levels and it can be achieved by taking decisions purely on judicious merit basis. If everyone has a common perception regarding the merit decisions, they will try their best to perform well rather than to depend on favoritism or unethical maneuvering. This will initiate proactive mechanisms to overcome the challenges efficiently and augment internal motivation to learn and break the status quo.

Additionally universities should seriously focus of quality intake e.g. hiring teachers who have aptitude towards teaching & research. To incorporate organizational development and learning culture, universities should have Quality Circles to monitor all the quality aspects as a routine and strive towards continuous improvement. Regarding research, universities should have clear policy statements. Being the most important criteria of university ranking particularly in 21st century, universities must facilitate and motivate the faculty members who prove to come out with good research publications. Universities should adopt a holistic approach to promote strong research culture and they should have their mission statements clearly emphasizing the value of research in academe (Mirza et al., 2012).

Limitations

As mentioned earlier, this was a preliminary exploratory survey primarily incorporated participant observation, informal exchanges, and formal interviews in an effort to explore higher education sector of Pakistan in the context of change management and learning organization. This research is subject to many limitations e.g. no statistical quantitative methods have been used in this study nor have we used triangulation as a qualitative technique. The interviews conducted were not “in-depth interviews” and results have been analyzed and discussed based on percentage findings only rather than advanced qualitative or quantitative techniques. Moreover, this survey was based on a cross sectional data at a point of time rather than the longitudinal. Only three universities have been considered in this survey based on convenience which can be increased in future research in this domain. Preliminary results from this exploratory survey can be used to design the questionnaires in alignment with the questionnaires already used for such surveys and thus the results can be quantified using quantitative statistical tools.

Reference List

- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1997) Organizational learning: a theory of action perspective. *Reis, Reis: Revista española de investigaciones sociológicas*. (77/78). pp. 345-348
- Beehr, T. A. (1985) The role of social support in coping with organizational stress. In T. A. Beehr & R. S. Bhagat (Eds.), *Human Stress and Cognition in Organizations: An Integrated Perspective*. New York: Wiley. pp. 375-398.
- Burnes, B. (1996) No such thing as... a "one best way" to manage organizational change. *Management Decision*. 34(10). pp. 11-18.
- Chaudhary, A. R., Iqbal, A., & Gillani, S. Y. M. (2009) The nexus between higher education and economic growth: An empirical investigation for Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Commerce and Social Sciences*. 3(1). pp. 1-9.
- CSML, M. P. E., Boydell, T., & CSML, J. B. (1989) Towards the learning company. *Management Education and Development*. 20(Part 1). pp. 7989.
- Drugovich, M.L., Saatcioglu, A. and Bilimoria, D. (2004) Institutionalism and transformational leadership: exploring linkages between the two perspectives, (Doctoral dissertation, CASE Western Reserve University)
- Elsbach, K. D. (2003) Relating physical environment to self-categorizations: Identity threat and affirmation in a non-territorial office space. *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 48(4). pp. 622-654.
- Gardner, M. J., Paulsen, N., Gallois, C., Callan, V. J., & Monaghan, P. G. (2001) Communication in organizations: An intergroup perspective. In W. P. Robinson & H. Giles (Eds.). *The New Handbook of Language and Social Psychology* (2nd ed.). Chichester, Sussex: John Wiley & Sons. pp. 561-584
- Garvin, D. A., Edmondson, A. C., & Gino, F. (2008) Is yours a learning organization?. *Harvard business review*. 86(3). p. 109.
- Grundy, T. (1993) *Managing Strategic Change*. London: Kogan.
- James, C. R. (2003) Designing learning organizations. *Organizational Dynamics*. 32(1). pp.46-61.
- Kim, D. H. (1993) The link between individual and organizational learning. *Sloan Management Review*. 35(1)
- Kriz, W. C. (2003) Creating effective learning environments and learning organizations through gaming simulation design. *Simulation and Gaming*. 34(4). 495-511.
- Luecke, R. (2003) *Managing Change and Transition*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

- Memon G.R., Joubish M.F. and Khurram M.A. (2010) Education in Pakistan: The Key Issues, Problems and the New Challenges. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 6 (6). pp. 672-677.
- Mirza, N., Qazi, W., & Rawat, K. J. (2012) Research Culture in Teacher Education: A Study of the Perception of University Teacher Educators in Pakistan. *European Journal of Social Sciences*. 28(4). pp. 559-568.
- Moilanen, R. (2001) Diagnostic tools for learning organizations. *The Learning Organization*. 8(1). pp. 6-20.
- Peter, S. (1990) The Fifth Discipline: *The Art & Practice of Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday Currence.
- Prewitt, V. (2003) Leadership development for learning organizations. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. 24(2). pp. 58-61.
- Raja, A., A. (2013) Value and importance of NBEAC accreditation nationally and internationally (conference paper) presented at 2013 APQN conference and annual general meeting from April 7-8, 2013, Chinese Taipei.
- Rajarajeswari, S. (2010) Role stress among the aided and self-financing college teachers: A discriminant analysis, *Global Management Review*. 4(4). pp. 73-86
- Rehman R., Qadeer F., Ahmad. M. and Shafique. M. (2011) Does ownership of higher education institute influence its HRM patterns? the case of Pakistan. *International Journal of Business and Management*. 6(1). pp. 230-241.
- Romainville M. (1996) Teaching and research at university: A difficult pairing. *Higher Education Management*. 8. pp. 135-144
- Rooney, D. (2005) Knowledge, economy, technology and society: the politics of discourse. *Telematics and Informatics*. 22(4). pp. 405-422.
- Rooney, D., Paulsen, N., Callan, V. J., Brabant, M., Gallois, C., & Jones, E. (2010) A new role for place identity in managing organizational change. *Management Communication Quarterly*. 24(1). pp. 44-73.
- Scardamalia, M., & Bereiter, C. (1999) Knowledge-Building Organizations. In D. Keating & C. Hertzman (Eds.). *Today's Children, Tomorrow's Society: The Developmental Health and Wealth of Nations*. New York: Guilford. pp. 274-289.
- Senge, P. M. (1997). The fifth discipline. *Measuring Business Excellence*. 1(3). pp. 46-51.
- Taylor, P. and Hirst, J. (2001) Facilitating effective change and continuous improvement: The mortgage express way, *Journal of Change Management*. 2(1). pp. 67-71.

- Thoits, P. A. (1985) Social support and psychological well-being: Theoretical possibilities. In I. G. Sarason, & B. R. Sarason (Eds.) *Social Support: Theory, Research, and Applications*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff. pp. 51-72
- Todnem By, R. (2005) Organisational change management: A critical review. *Journal of Change Management*. 5(4). pp. 369-380.
- Van Emmerik, I. J. H., Euwema, M. C., & Bakker, A. B. (2007) Threats of workplace violence and the buffering effect of social support. *Group and Organization Management*. 32(2). pp. 152-175.
- Weick, K. E., & Westley, F. (1999) Affirming an Oxymoron. *Managing organizations: Current issues*. London: Sage. pp. 190.
- White, J., & Weathersby, R. (2005) Can universities become true learning organizations? *The Learning Organization: An International Journal*. 12(3). pp. 292-298.