

IMPACT OF EDUCATION REFORMS AND POLICIES ON THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT--*The study in hand is an analysis of educational reforms and policies and their impact on the quality in the higher education sector of Pakistan from 2005 to 2010. Three indicators of quality named performance indicator for programme evaluation, performance indicator for teacher evaluation and performance indicator for student evaluation were selected for the present study. The research was in quantitative paradigm and was designed as a causal comparative or ex-post facto research. The population of the study was all Private and Public Universities in the Province of Punjab and 600 respondents were selected randomly from the population. Undergraduate, postgraduate students and faculty members from different Public and Private Higher Education Institutions were selected for the research. The data were analyzed with the help of descriptive and inferential statistics. Finding and results were presented in the form of tables, graphs and graphic organizers. Overall, the results paint a very encouraging picture of the higher education sector of Pakistan, especially in public sector, as students seem to be highly satisfied with the key criterion of education quality identified by this study. Academic content and delivery scores, especially were high on student satisfaction scores, highlighting the quality of teachers and the content being delivered in these institutions. Graduating students reflected high aspirations and confidence in terms of the key skills they have acquired within their academic training. Research students similarly showed enthusiasm about the level of support provided to them and the facilities available for such work. Similarly, majority of the students reflected that the academic as well as administrative issues regarding different programs were being handled efficiently. No significant difference was recorded among educational quality of public and private sector.*

Keywords-- Educational reforms, polices, quality in higher education, public and private sector

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the basic need of every society.

Well-developed and organized education system determines the status of a country in global market. Higher education is a different stage (Best, 1994) and deals with the education of universities and colleges. Higher education is multidimensional because it brings change in personal, social, economic and cultural aspect of a person (Haneef, 2017). Higher Education means high level of awareness. It makes people responsible. Higher Education of any country depicts high standard of living and quality of life in that country. There is a strong relationship between higher education and economic development of a country. Knowledge gap paves way to economic gap. There are four areas of progres

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in knowledge economy. High quality education, science and technology, innovation and entrepreneurship and good governance. Due to knowledge-based economy and globalization, higher education and particularly the quality of higher education has become more important. To get benefit from global knowledge-based economy, developing countries need to improve quality of higher education (World Bank Report 2000). Despite the crucial impact of education on the wellbeing and the standard of living of a nation, the issue of quality in higher education has not received sufficient attention from academics (UNESCO, 1994).

Quantitatively, the Pakistan's Higher Education Sector has shown marvelous growth but qualitatively there is no marked achievement. The issue of quality in Pakistan is more acute due to lack of academic research about quality in higher education. Pakistan needs to formulate policies and reforms to promote quality education. Quality higher education in Pakistan can be improved by establishing international level universities, center of excellence in important fields and by establishing a relationship between industry and education. In these circumstances Pakistan needs well designed and modified quality higher education system. Higher Education in Pakistan is divided in two Sections. First Section includes the Universities and Degree Awarding Institutes while the other Section deals with affiliated colleges. The Government dissolved UGC (University Grant Commission) in 2002 and established Higher Education Commission. Higher Education Commission (HEC) is an independent body working for allocating public funds from the Federal Government to Universities, DAI and Affiliated Colleges. Mostly, HEC provides funds to Public Universities but in the last few years, it has started funding for private universities also in research and infrastructure development. The main function of HEC's establishment was to improve the quality of Higher Education in Public and Private Higher Education Institutions in quality, access, governance and management.

Background of the study

Due to changing Socio-Political situation, 9th Education Plan (1998-2003) was delayed and later it was abandoned. So, the period from 1998 to 2005 is called non-plan period. Successive Government announced Social Action Program (SAP-II), Education Sector Reforms (ESR), Annual Plan and 10-year perspective plan for Education Sector. The implementation of Education Policy (1998-2010) was made through these reforms.

The Education Policy 1992 was revised in the form of National Education Policy (1998-2010). In this policy, it was decided to introduce entry test for admission in the Higher Education Institutions. The purpose was to improve quality of Higher Education. It was also decided to give autonomy and degree awarding status to different reputed colleges with the option to get affiliated with any recognized Pakistani University and Degree Awarding Institution. To attract highly talented qualified teachers, it was also decided to raise their salary packages. The decisions were also taken to start local M. Phil and Ph.D. program, with strong and improved laboratory and library facilities. Split Ph.D. program in collaboration with reputed foreign universities was also suggested to start.

To encourage Private Sector Investment in Education, Private Higher Education Institutions could apply for financial assistance with donor agencies in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. For the construction of Higher Education Institutions plots on reserves prices were offered along with rebate in income tax. Curriculum of Private Institution was restricted to observe the Principles laid down in the Federal supervision of curriculum.

The Education Sector Reform (ESR) 2001-05 was based on the Education Policy (1998-2010), it was not a new policy but it was the action plan for implementing these reforms.

Medium term development framework 2005-2010

In June 2004, the Planning Commission gave a new name to the five years plan i.e. Medium-Term Development Framework. The important feature of this programme was free education up to secondary level, introduction of technology education, upgradation of curricula and decentralization of teacher training institutes.

The most important feature of MTDF was the introduction of four years bachelor degree programme in colleges. It was also decided to start new 100 colleges with four years program.

Higher Education was given special place in this plan and was made a part of Development of Knowledge Economy framework. Four percent participation rate at higher education level was thought grossly inadequate to achieve the purpose of knowledge economy and hence, the plan revised to improve access to tertiary education by increasing enrolment to 8% by 2010. Heavy investment in higher education was considered an important step in this regard and allocation to various sub-sectors of education was made accordingly. University education, technical education and research and development received major share of financial allocation.

Statement of the problem

Keeping in view the above discussion about quality in higher education and educational reforms and policies in Pakistan's context, this research aims to investigate the impact of educational reforms and policies on the quality of higher education.

Objectives of the study

The research focused the following objectives:

- 1) To measure the quality of higher education in terms of quality of courses/programs perceived by faculty and students.
- 2) To find out the quality of higher education in terms of teachers' performance perceived by students.
- 3) To measure the research facilities available to post graduate students.
- 4) To compare the quality of education provided in public and private sector.
- 5) To find out the impact of educational reforms and policies on the quality of public and private higher universities in Pakistan.

Research questions

Following were the research questions of the study:

1. What is the quality of higher education in terms of quality of courses/programs perceived by faculty and students.
2. What is the quality of higher education in terms of teachers' performance perceived by students.
3. What research facilities are available to post graduate students.
4. How public and private sector universities are different in quality of teaching learning process?
5. What is the impact of educational reforms and policies on the quality of public and private higher universities in Pakistan.

6. How these educational reforms can be improved to meet the challenges of higher education in the twenty first century?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The most important aspect of Muslim civilization in the sub-continent was the spread of education. Before Muslims, Aryans, especially Hindus had a totally different point of view about education. To maintain Brahmin supremacy and the religious sanctity of the class system, majority of the people were deprived from the advantages of education. Muslims challenged this class-based Hindu system with the result that social behavior, interaction, relationship, education training and marriages were improved (Khalid, 2006).

Religious parties and their conservative partners played a very imperative role in determining the ideological core of Pakistan's National Education curriculum policy since last 20 years they are trying to promote a political agenda marked by a distinctive Islamic ideology (Haque, 1983). Their main purpose in presenting Islam as a national ideology has been to make their role acceptable in society, using social forces in Pakistan against India and Western countries and using the Muslim world to achieve their political goals. They have revised history and promoted an Islamic Paradigm of citizenship education in the nation's schools through the social studies curriculum (Mustafa, 2004).

Higher Education in Pakistan remained a controversial issue since the independence of the country (Iqbal, 1988). Serious problems of Higher Education in Pakistan are access, quality, equal opportunities, burgeoning youth population, increasing competitive pressures, poor quality faculty, low student motivation, rote learning, out dated curriculum, poor student discipline, lack of funding and lack of resources (Aziz, 2014).

In Pakistani colleges and universities, there is no progress for social and technical skill (Haque, 1983). These skills make graduating students strong contributors in the social and economic development of the country and in the global market also (Aziz, 2014). Due to knowledge-based economy and globalization, quality Higher education has become more important. Without improving quality of education, a developing country will find it difficult to benefit from the global knowledge-based economy (World Development, 2000/2001).

Our secondary and intermediate education system is ill equipped to prepare the students for higher education. We should develop critical and moral reasoning, effective communication self-directed lifelong learning and development of curriculum which encourages students for innovation in the rapidly changing words (Task force, 2002).

Other than quantity and funding there should be deep concern about the quality of education. Most of the undergraduate and post graduate students learning level is lower than required or acceptable for that a grade or age (Parveen, et al. 2011).

Pakistan has seen different periods of educational planning. Ambitious policies and reforms were announced but with little or no follow up. Each plan was designed in the best possible way but due to poor governance, political instability, lack of responsibility, lack of continuation and lack of accountability, these plans failed to implement properly. In Article 37(b) of the 1973 Constitution of the state. "The State shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimum possible period" but today after 45 years later, different Governments failed to fulfill this goal. The period from 2005 till 2010 was very critical in the history of

higher education all over the world. Attempts were made by the government to streamline higher education because a very significant link was found between economic growth and higher education. Teaching outputs and performance appraisal of faculty members were the most prominent features of higher education in the developed countries like Britain and Australia from 2005 till 2010 and under developing countries like Pakistan also. In Pakistan, from 2005 till 2010, new reforms and policies were introduced under different names and titles, commencing a new era of quality higher education.

III. METHODOLOGY/MATERIALS

The study was conducted in quantitative paradigm. A causal comparative or ex-post facto research method was used to compare public and private universities. In this study, five major quality measures (questionnaires) were selected from Higher Education Commission's (HEC) website to gauge the quality of Higher Education for evaluating quality of courses, instruction and research facilities from students' and teachers' point of view. The questionnaires were dual sided in nature and allowed the researchers to take perceptions from students as well as faculty members. These include evaluation of the satisfaction of graduating M.Phil. and Ph.D. students. There were five questionnaires in total. The first two performas measured quality of Higher Education in terms of courses offered and found perceptions of graduate and post graduate students. The third proforma was about teachers' performance reported by the students. The fourth proforma measured facilities for research and the fifth proforma measured course content in teachers' point of view.

Research design

Causal comparative or ex-post facto research method was used for this research. Three indicators of quality titled, performance indicator for programme evaluation, performance indicator for teacher evaluation and indicators for research facilities were selected. Questionnaires were adopted based on above mentioned indicators. Sample was selected randomly from the selected universities. The data were collected from public and private universities and were analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Tables and graphs were generated and interpreted.

Population

The population of the study was all private and public universities in province of the Punjab.

Sample

A sample of 600 respondents, 500 post graduate (M.Phil and PhD) students and 100 teachers, from 6 public and private sector universities were requested to fill up the questionnaires through simple random sampling technique. Total 452 post graduate students (response rate 75.33%) and 61 university teachers (response rate 61%) returned the questionnaires. The distribution is detailed in the table below.

Table 1: Sample distribution

Instrument	Topic of the questionnaire	Respondent type	Responses by sector
a 1	Perform Student Course Evaluation	Post graduate Students	Total Responses 103 46% Public 53% Private
a 3	Perform Insights from graduating students	Post graduate Students	Total Responses 150 69% Public 31% Private
a 10	Perform Teacher/Instructor evaluation from students	Post graduate students	Total Responses 135 47% Public 53% Private
a 4	Perform Research students' progress review	Post graduate students	Total 64 86% Public 14% Private
a 5	Perform Staff/Faculty satisfaction with programs	Staff/Faculty	Total Responses 61 46% Public 54% Private
			Total Responses: Students 452 Teachers 61

Inclusion criterion

All postgraduate students, M.Phil/MS and PhD from different disciplines of public and private universities could participate in the research. Two proformas were filled in by the faculty members of different public and private universities.

Delimitation of the study

The research includes three public and three private universities of Lahore including Lahore College from Women University, Punjab University, University of Education, Kinnaird College for Women, FC College for Men Chartered University, UMT (University of Management and Technology).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by descriptive statistics. The percentages of public and private sector have been compared in the following tables. The *t test* for independent sample was applied to find out overall mean difference in public and private sector.

IV. RESULTS

Table 2: Comparison of teachers' evaluation by students in public and private sector (Proforma 10)

	Public universities			Private universities		
Teacher Evaluation by students	atisfied with this state ment /Yes %	issatisfied with this statem ent/No %	thers%	atisfied with this state ment /Yes %	issatisfied with this state ment/ No%	thers%
1. The Instructor is prepared for each class	4.1	.7	.2	4.0	2.0	.0
2. The Instructor demonstrates knowledge of the subject	8.9	1.1		5.2	1.3	.5
3. The Instructor has completed the whole course	3.6	.1	.3	8.0	.0	.0

	Public universities			Private universities		
Performa 10 -						
Teacher Evaluation by students	atisfied with this statement/Yes %	issatisfied with this statement/No %	thers %	atisfied with this statement/Yes %	issatisfied with this statement/No %	thers %
4. The Instructor provides additional material apart from the textbook	5.6	0.4	4	5.5	0.3	4.2
5. The Instructor gives citations regarding current situations with reference to Pakistani context.	2.3	1	6.7	5.4	0.5	.1
6. The Instructor communicates the subject matter effectively	0.8	.6	.6	8.0	2.0	0
7. The Instructor shows respect towards students and encourages class participation	2.2	.6	.2	7.1	.8	.1
8. The Instructor maintains an environment that is conducive to learning	0.8	.4	1.8	9.9	0.1	0
9. The Instructor arrives on time	7.8	.9	3.3	8.2	0.3	.5
10. The Instructor leaves on time	4.1	1.1	4.8	5.5	8.9	.6
11. The Instructor is fair in examination	1.1	3.3	5.6	0.0	0.0	0
12. The Instructor returns the	6.3	0.4	3.3	2.0	8.0	0

	Public universities			Private universities		
Performa 10 -						
Teacher Evaluation by students	atisfied with this state ment /Yes %	issatisfied with this statem ent/No %	thers %	atisfied with this state ment /Yes %	issatisfied with this state ment/ No%	thers %
graded scripts etc, in a reasonable amount of time						
13. The Instructor was available during the specified office hours and for after class consultations						
	2.6	.7	0.7	4.0	2.0	.0
14. The Subject matter presented in the course has increased your knowledge of the subject						
	5.2	.6	.2	4.0	6.0	0
15. The syllabus clearly states course objectives requirements, procedures and grading criteria						
	6.3	.7	7	2.0	8.0	0
16. The course integrates theoretical course concepts with real-world applications						
	6.3	.7	7	5.5	3.5	1
17. The assignments and exams covered the materials presented in the course						
	1.5	0.1	.4	5.0	5.0	0
18. The course material is modern and updated						
	4.1	2.6	3.3	6.0	4.0	0

Performa 10, in Table 4.1, reveals that most of the students were overwhelmingly satisfied by the quality of education based on the conduct of lecturers and their delivery of the content. Academic issues like communication,

knowledge, preparation, and syllabus structure as well as examination quality scored high on satisfaction amongst other variables. Similarly, non-academic education indicators like punctuality of lecturers, feedback times were also key indicators that resonated higher levels of education quality as shown in the table above.

Table 3: Comparison of Student Course Evaluation in public and private sector (Proforma 10)

	Public Universities			Private Universities			
	P	Satisf	Dissat	ther	atisfi	issatis	the
erforma 1 - Student Course Evaluatio n	ied with this statement/Yes %	isfied with this statement/No%		%	ed with this state ment /Yes %	ied with this state ment/ No%	r %
earing Material quality	L 78.7	8.7		2.6	5.2	0.6	.2
egularity/ Punctualit y of instructor	R 73.8	4.8		1.4	7.4	1.8	0.8
nderstandi ng the Content of Lectures	U 84.5	8.8		.7	8.8	7.6	.6
uality of Tutorials	Q 81.5	18.4		.1	5.4	0.6	
uality of Practical	Q 78.7	4.9		6.4	5.5	3.6	9
lear course objectives	C 82.6	6.8		0.6	8.7	1.9	.4

W	70.3	14.6				
orkload is manageab le			5.1	2.8	0.0	.2
C	77.7	10.7				
ourse organizati on			1.6	2.3	1.8	.9
I	76.7	11.7				
have made progress in this course			1.6	5.5	2.6	.9
C	84.5	10.7				
ourse structure supported learning objectives			.8	6.4	2.5	.1
E	80	9				
nvironme nt was conducive to learning			1	6.0	2.5	.5
A	58.2	19				
vailability of learning resources in library			2.8	7.8	7.4	.8
A	72	8.8				
vailability of learning resources in web			9.2	6.1	1.3	.6
P	75	10				
ace of course			5	8.0	2.0	0

T	61	10.5			
utor was			8.5	7.4	0.6
very					
helpful					

Performa 1 in Table 4.2, was gauging students’ perceptions of the quality of higher education in Pakistan and results are summarized above. Generally, students are highly satisfied with the course content and administration, with tutorials and course objectives whose scores are especially high on student satisfaction. University environment was also perceived to be highly conducive for learning in the case study universities. Potential areas of concern here might include the availability of learning resources in labs, which suggest that the allocation of resources might not be efficient in dealing effectively with student demands of course materials. The comparison shows that students from both universities were perceiving their course quality above average for example, 75.68% in public sector and 77.55% in private sector were satisfied with their courses. It represents high level of satisfaction in both sectors. However, students of both sectors were less satisfied with availability of learning resources and the availability of tutors out of class.

Table 4: Research Students’ satisfaction/dissatisfaction levels with progress reviews (%) between private and public sector universities

	Public universities			Private universities		
Per						
forma 4 -	ati	issatisf	t	atisfie	issati	t
Research	sfi	ied	h	d with	sfied	h
Students'	ed	with	e	this	with	e
Progress	wi	this	r	statem	this	r
Review	th	statem	s	ent/Ye	state	s
Form	thi	ent/No		s	ment/	
	s				No	
	sta					
	te					
	m					
	en					
	t/					
	Y					
	es					
Re						
ceived	3.	5.6		5.0	5.0	0
training you	4					
may have						
received or						

would like to
 receive
 internally
 and / or
 externally?

Ac						
Access to	4.	5.3	2.0	8.0	0	
sophisticated	7					
scientific						
equipment?						
Suf						
Efficient	7.	2.2	4.0	6.0	0	
research	8					
material /						
commodities						
available?						

Performas 10 and 4 allowed students to evaluate teachers as well as the quality of research degrees based on their perceptions and the results point to a highly positive situation in this context. All the indicators of teacher quality scored incredibly high on student satisfaction, indicating the presence of a vibrant student focused faculty within the case study universities and these will be discussed considering the literature in the next section.

Table 5: Course Evaluation form showing students' evaluation of skills and capabilities within private and public sector universities (%)

	Public universities			Private universities		
Performance 3 - Course Evaluation by Graduating Students	satisfied with this statement/Yes	satisfied with this statement/No	Not satisfied with this statement/No	satisfied with this statement/Yes	satisfied with this statement/No	Not satisfied with this statement/No

	Ye s					
W						
ork	2	4.70	3	4.0	6.0	0
Pressure	%	%	.			
			3			
Te						
am working	9.	%	2	5.0	5.0	0
	30		.			
	%		7			
Pr						
ogramme	6.	3.30	.	2.0	8.0	0
administrati	60	%	1			
on	%					
An						
alytical and	0.	.40	1	5.0	0.0	5
problem-	70	%	.			.
solving	%		9			0
skills						
W						
ritten skills	6	.60	5	5.0	8.0	7
	%	%	.			.
			4			0
Pla						
nnng	9.	0.60	0	4.0	3.0	.
abilities	30	%	.			0
	%		1			
CI						
ear	5.	.30	7	8.0	6.0	.
programme	40	%	.			0
objectives	%		3			
Cu						
riculum	6.	0.00		0.0	0.0	0
Content	00	%				
	%					
Fa						
culty	4.	.30	8	5.0	5.0	0
competent	00	%	.			
to meet	%		7			

programme objectives						
En						
Environment conducive for learning	8.00%	0.00%	2	8.0	6.0	.0
Co						
-curricular and extra-curricular activities	6.00%	3.00%	1	4.0	1.0	.0
Int						
Internship experience	6.00%	.30%	6	2.0	5.0	3

Performa 3 in table above evaluated teachers' perceptions about the quality of higher education and it was found that they were highly satisfied with the key indicators like intellectual stimulation, interaction with students and the type of teaching they were doing. However, there are some areas of concern here as well, with job insecurity and work-life imbalance and remuneration being issues of high concern that need to be dealt with.

Table 6: Faculty programme satisfaction/dissatisfaction levels (%) between private and public sector universities

	Public universities			Private universities		
Perf						
orma 5 –	ati	issat	th	atisf	issa	t
Faculty	sfi	isfie	ers	ied	tisf	h
Satisfaction	ed	d		with	ied	e
with	wit	with		this	wit	r
Programmes	h	this		state	h	s
	thi	state		men	this	
	s	men		t/Ye	stat	
	sta	t/		s	em	
	te	No			ent/	
	me				No	
	nt/					
	Ye					
	s					

You	68.9				
r mix of research teaching and community service		1 . 3	5.00	5.0 0	(
The	89.1				
intellectual stimulation of your work		. 7	5.00	5.0 0	(
You	86.8				
currently doing your research			8.0	2	(
You	95				
r interaction with students			8.0	2	(
Coo	93.4				
peration you receive from colleagues		. 3	6.0	4	(
The	68.8				
mentoring (guidance) available to you		1 . 4	5.0	5.0	(
Ad	73				
ministrative support from the department		8 . 8	6.0	4.0	(
Prov	81.9				
iding clarity about the faculty promotion process			7.0	3.0	(
You	52				
r prospects for advancement and progress through ranks		0	5.0	2.0	. (

Sala	52.4				
ry and compensation packages		9	8.0	2.0	(
Job	57.4				
security and stability		.	5,0	5.0	(
Wor	54.1				
k life balance		.	6.0	4.0	(
Dep	72.1				
artment is utilizing your experience and knowledge			6.0	4.0	(

Table 7: Independent sample t-test checking the difference between public and private universities' satisfaction scores

tor	Sec	an	Me	Std.	f	l	ig. (2-tailed)
			Deviation				
Public	Pu	7	58.	15.2	2.038	1	.404
Private	Pri	6	61.	18.1			
		3067	2176				
		7308	3407				

An independent sample t-test was conducted to measure the difference between overall quality indicators in public and private sector. As indicated by the p value in table 7 above, there was no significant difference found between Public (M=58.30, SD= 15.22) and Private (M= 61.73, SD= 18.13); $t(101)=-2.038, p=.404 > .05$ universities regarding cumulative quality performance.

V. FINDINGS

As shown in the tables above, the various proformas evaluated the quality of higher education in Pakistan on two broad categories. Proformas 1, 4 and 10 evaluated students' perception of quality based on many broad themes and response rates are indicated above.

Overall, the proformas evaluated around 600 responses from students and teachers and the results were consistent with the key findings within the literature review. The massive amount of educational reforms that have

been brought about in Pakistan from 2005 till 2010 have significantly met their objectives of higher student satisfaction on most of the key indicators. As shown in the table above, Performa 1 clearly found that most of the students were satisfied with the learning materials, objectives and course structures within their universities. Even academic aspects of education like class organization, administration and learning environment scored high on the student satisfaction scales, complementing the impact of educational reforms within this era.

Performa 10 similarly found that most of the students were overwhelmingly satisfied by the quality of education based on the conduct of teachers and their delivery of the content. Academic issues like communication, knowledge, preparation, and syllabus structure as well as examination quality scored high on satisfaction amongst other variables. Similarly, non-academic education indicators like punctuality of teachers, feedback times were also key indicators that resonated higher levels of education quality as shown in the table above.

Performa 1, 3 and 10 were gauging students' perceptions of the quality of higher education. Generally, students are highly satisfied by the course content and administration, with tutorials and course objectives scoring especially high scores on student satisfaction. University environment was also perceived to be highly conducive for learning in these sample universities. Potential areas of concern here might include the availability of learning resources in labs, which suggests that the allocation of resources might not be efficient in dealing effectively with student demands of course materials.

Proformas 10 and 4 allowed students to evaluate teachers as well as the quality of research degrees based on their perceptions and the results point to a highly positive situation in this context. All the indicators of teacher quality scored incredibly high on student satisfaction, indicating the presence of a vibrant student focused faculty within the selected universities. Performa 5 showed some interesting points about staff satisfaction levels though. While most of the teachers and staff showed high levels of satisfaction with the academic environmental and resources available to them, they seemed to be issues regarding their management as work overload, work-life imbalance and job insecurity seemed to be issues of concern here.

Overall, the results paint a very encouraging picture of the higher education sector of Pakistan as students seem to be highly satisfied by the key criterion of education quality identified by this study. Academic content and delivery scores are especially high on student satisfaction scores, highlighting the quality of teachers and the content being delivered in these institutions. Graduating students reflected high aspirations and confidence in terms of the key skills they have acquired within their academic training. Research students similarly showed enthusiasm about the level of support provided to them and the facilities available for such work. Similarly, most of the students reflected that the academic as well as administration issues regarding the courses were being handled efficiently. It is imperative that such non-academic issues relating to the management of staff be managed effectively by senior managements to sustain the high levels of student satisfaction that can be seen in most of areas studied in this research.

Lastly, the key limitation of this study is that it was a cross sectional study conducted in one city. In the future research, a longitudinal study might be conducted in another part of the country that might be studied within the context of higher education quality to see whether student and staff perceptions of education quality vary over a period and to draw comparisons within the country. The teachers' perceptions of the quality of higher education are very important as well and these were measured through Performa 5 of the research instrument. An overwhelming majority of the staff seem highly satisfied with the way the current education institutes are managing

the delivery of educational content and indicators like intellectual stimulation, interaction with students, and administrative support from the department also scored high on the satisfaction scales. There were however, two key areas of concern for education institutes and these included the lower satisfaction scores regarding the time available for staff to give their families and the job security levels. This indicates a highly competitive education sector with increasing demands on the academics to deliver course content but also to produce high quality research and these issues need to be dealt with by the managements to sustain the education quality levels.

VI. DISCUSSION

The massive amount of educational reforms that have been brought about in Pakistan Higher Education Factor from 2005 to 2010 have significantly met objective of Higher Students satisfaction on most of the key quality indicators. Hence, overall our research confirms some of the findings within the literature, like (Ramsden, 1990) who found that when academic departments were perceived to provide to student requirements, their students were more likely to learn effectively from courses run within them and that students were more likely to attempt to structure and understand the content of the syllabus when they perceived the teaching to be clearly structured and helpful. On the other hand, students were more likely to adopt minimalist approaches narrowly focused on assessment (e.g. rote-learning for examinations) when they are under conditions of high workload and restricted choice over methods and content of learning. Our research supports the former aspect, suggesting a higher level of structured learning within the higher education sector of Pakistan, and indicative of a higher quality within the public sector and the findings provided confirmation that the relation between teaching quality and student learning was indeed a functional one (Entwistle, 1983). These results would seem to be even more persuasive when we note that they reflect typical findings in institutional effectiveness and institutional environment studies. Factors such as encouraging choice and independence in learning, clear explanations at the students' level, work-centered environment (with clear standards and structure), concern for interest in students, and appropriate assessment have all been found to be related to student achievement (Fraser, 1986) and our research suggests that such aspects are present in the context of Pakistan's higher education, promising a rising crop of students destined for higher achievement. Several studies (summarized in Biggs, 1990; see also Ramsden) confirm the critical importance to effective learning of teaching methods which emphasize student enterprise, student autonomy and co-operative endeavor and therefore we can say that Pakistan's higher education sector is headed in the right direction, providing a student centered approach towards teaching to reach the objectives of the modern education and employment needs.

Availability to students; enthusiasm and interest of teachers; clear organizational goals; feedback on learning; the encouragement of student independence and active learning; an appropriate workload and relevant assessment methods; the provision of a suitably challenging academic environment: these are among the key factors defining "good teaching" in higher education on which students are able validly to comment. (Entwistle, 1983), for example, described factors including the provision of clear goals, appropriate workload and level of difficulty, assignments providing choice, quality of explanations, level of material and the pace at which it is presented, enthusiasm, and empathy with students' needs. Discussions of the North American and Australian literature on student evaluation such as those of (Marsh, 1987), Feldman (1978), and Roe & Macdonald (1983), together with the authoritative

summaries of key findings of validity studies e.g. (Mckeachie, 1983; Centra, 1980) attest to the usefulness and accuracy of student evaluation of instruction in comparison with other measures such as peer evaluations. It is generally argued that because students see a great deal of teaching, they are in an unrivalled position to comment on its quality. Moreover, non- experts in a subject are uniquely qualified to judge whether the instruction they receive is helping them to learn. The existence of a positive relation between student evaluation and student achievement supports the validity of student ratings. It seems that, in spite of some academic myths that suggest otherwise, students are rarely misled into confusing "good performance" with effective teaching (Marsh, 1987), and hence, their evaluations of the quality of teaching in higher education are more likely to be valid.

VII. CONCLUSION

Overall, the results indicate that there is a marked improvement in the quality of Higher Education. Student body was found satisfied with the academic contents and teaching methodology. Research students similarly showed enthusiasm about the level of support offered to them and the facilities available at their universities. The result declared that the myth of discrimination among public and private universities has also been faded. There was no significant difference in the quality indicators of both sectors. Even the public sector seemed better than the private sector in many indicators, like better teacher student interaction, concept clarity, course structure and administrative support. Similarly, the teachers at public sector have clear selection and promotion policies and job security. This is a healthy competition among both sectors. It is also found that educational reforms at higher education level were beneficial for students and have a positive impact on overall quality indicators in higher education institutions.

Implications and recommendations of the study

The study holds implications for policy matters e.g. after the 18th amendment education has become a provincial subject, therefore, the provinces should form legislations and design education policies which ensure quality education within the cultural and economic context of each province.

1. There is no unity and collaboration between federal and provincial HEC departments. Difference between federal and provincial HEC departments must be resolved to streamline the transfer of resources and for the improvement of quality in Higher education.
2. An effective monitoring system need to be established to avoid corruption and nepotism and to promote a culture of transparency within Higher education institutions.
3. For quality improvement in Higher education, it is imperative that relevant structure must be developed for the implementation of different reforms and policies.
4. Workload of senior faculty members must be reduced to improve the quality of research, and holidays as well as paid breaks must be allowed to staff to improve work-life balance
5. Financial resources must be used effectively for teachers training programs as well as to support the remuneration packages as staff satisfaction scores seemed to be low for these.
6. HEC needs to continue further reforms in the light of present and similar findings of local researches and review and revamp university programs to achieve the international benchmarks. The provision of infrastructure,

equipment and encouraging environment for quality education could only be possible by taking students and faculty on board.

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