

Hindering Factors of Beginning Teachers' High
Performance in Higher Education Pakistan
*(Case Study of IUB-The Islamia University of
Bahawalpur)*

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Abstract

Orientation-This exploratory study elaborates the hindering factors of high performance of the beginning teachers in higher education of Pakistan and suggests the solutions with their implications which lead to an effort for performance improvement of beginning teachers in the higher education institutions. Researchers have taken IUB as a case study.

Purpose – The aim of the researchers in this endeavor is to identify the challenges and obstacles faced by beginning teachers in higher education. This study also explores practical implications and what adaptation can be utilized in order to have high performance of the beginning teachers.

Design/ Methodology- Researchers have applied qualitative technique to collect and interpret data. Semi structured Interviews were conducted from the 40 beginning teachers of the case study university in order to identify various hindering factors of high performance.

Findings- Research results indicate that by addressing the 11 major hindering factors of beginning teachers' high performance i.e. less teaching exposure, over overburden, strict evaluation, lack of training, insufficient material and supplies, lack of effective communication, student counseling problems, class room discipline problems, Difficulties in assessing students' work, least expectations of career in teaching and misbehavior of students, the performance level of beginning teachers in higher education can be enhanced.

Practical implications- Current research may be use by universities to identify and resolve the beginning teachers' problems in order to get high performance. It also provides the literature for future researches.

Keywords: Recruitment, Performance, Perception, Hindrances, Higher education

1. Introduction

Teachers are not only building blocks of higher education institutions but also of the nations as a whole. They always prove to be an essential human resource in order to get accelerated organizational learning. University teachers are supposed to do teaching and research as part of their professional career demands. As Oshagbemi (2000) pointed out that the main tasks of academic staff can be distributed into three categories namely teaching, research and management. So the institutions must ensure their availability in sufficient amount. To cope up with emerging students learning and research demands, institutes regularly hire new faculty members. If we consider developing countries scenario where growing government of these countries are struggling hard to improve higher education institutions, such new appointees are fresh ones most of the times. Therefore, higher education institutions where experienced faculty shortage prevails, need to enhance their performance level by reducing the hindering factors which directly affects their beginning teacher's performance. As Veenman (1984) asserts that in order to get teacher's high involvement and extreme motivation, departmental management in universities need to facilitate the beginning teachers as they are real human resource investment who will generate long term reputation of the institutions afterwards. He further emphasized that the problems of beginning teachers are class room discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, evaluating students' performance, organization of class work and insufficient materials and supplies. The other major performance constraint for beginning teachers in higher education is the lack of training, lack of support from senior faculty members and the behavior of the students with beginning teachers. If teachers in universities will be performing well, definitely the students will be high achievers and universities will have high contribution towards higher education. However, in order to get this ideal scenario, universities need to facilitate and train their teachers for generating high performance. This support or training becomes more significant in case of beginning teachers. Since the beginning teachers in universities used to face various uncertainties including career planning, growth opportunity, colleague and students' behavior and personal adjustment in the institution. Higher education institutions if identify and address various issues of beginning teachers, they can undoubtedly increase their organizational capability.

As compare to leading universities in the world, higher education institutions in Pakistan are still growing or struggling organizations. There is no doubt that significant developments have been made by the Pakistani government in order to increase performance of universities in Pakistan including infrastructure development, increased staff salaries and quality assurance plans, still various teacher's centered and particularly beginning teacher's problems are remain unaddressed. As Sadiq (2007) emphasized the same point by stressing that higher education commission in Pakistan should put its efforts on professional development of university teacher's first. Only salary or comprehensive compensation plans cannot increase the productivity, various issues need to be addressed in order to get highly motivated teachers in Pakistani universities. He further explored a mixture of various teachers' oriented problem areas including beginning teachers in Pakistani universities. As significant number of fresh master's or graduates are being attracted towards universities in Pakistan due to beneficial

pay packages and compensations plans offered by the government, the problem of inexperienced faculty in many departments is becoming dominant hindering factor in achieving institution's performance. Addressing problems of beginning teachers in Pakistan is becoming an emerging issue, as people get attracted towards this glamorous job hurriedly but get de motivated as they find decreased support or training for their professional development.

Present paper is an attempt to find the hindering factors of high performance of the beginning university teachers. Researchers have attempted to explore various problematic issues or challenges which are being faced by university teachers in their initial teaching career. One of the leading public sector university called as The Islamia University of Bahawalpur has been taken as a case study for the present research. In order to achieve possible data reliability, qualitative research procedure has been adopted. Questionnaires have been distributed among beginning teachers covering their potential problems and their significance to them. For the purpose getting in depth analysis of causes and effects relating to these problems upon beginning teachers' performance, researchers have conducted semi structured interviews from the sample of 40 teachers. Current study has explored different diverse constraints and performance obstacles for beginning teachers in Pakistani universities which are remain neglected areas for universities administration.

The Islamia University of Bahawalpur is working since 1975 as a general university. There are 45 different departments offering 74 disciplines. More than 12000 students are studying in its three main campuses, two sub campuses and different constituent colleges. It offers various programs at under graduate and post graduate levels. Recently university has hired 75 new lecturers in various departments in order to facilitate its student learning and research activities. Most of the new faculty members are fresh graduates or having master degrees without prior job experience. Present research has explored initial problems which are being faced by these teachers in their respective university.

2. Literature Review

The quality of higher education institutions depends upon the high performance and job involvement of the university teachers in achieving their job tasks for the purpose of increased knowledge management and student learning. As Gupta (1993) assists that by enhancing the quality of human resource, standards of local higher education will be improved to the international level and teachers are the main catalyst in achieving this objective. Hattie (2003) stated that "Students who are taught by the expert teachers exhibit an understanding of the concepts targeted in instruction that is more integrated, more coherent, and at a higher level of abstraction than the understanding achieved by other students". So in order to provide quality education, educational institutes have to enhance the performance level of their faculty members. According to Brock and Grady (1995), "Teaching is one of the few careers in which the least experienced members face the greatest challenges and the most responsibilities" The quality of human resource could be enhanced through practical work and experience. The more the expertise the more quality education teachers can provide. As Murray (1995) emphasized that experience increases the teacher's productivity at all

levels. Especially higher education level the importance of experienced teachers enhanced. Jacob (2007) assists that teaching experience has consistently been found related to teacher effectiveness. Ehrenberg and Brewer (1995) emphasized teachers' verbal ability, skills and subject matter preparation, contribute to teacher effectiveness. Garet et al(2001) assists that professional education can improve teachers' abilities in the classroom and also Schlosser & Balzano (2002) emphasizes that the field-teaching experience is a powerful motivator for beginning teacher. But few of the researchers also emphasize that there is the weak or no relation between experience and teacher's effectiveness. Sprinthall et al (1997) insists that experience has no relationship to either teaching effectiveness or student achievement.

The recruitment and selection of experienced teacher is much difficult for educational institutes. But with the increasing number of students at higher education level, educational institutes have to hire numbers of new teachers. Most of the newly recruited teachers are usually fresh graduates or having master degrees without any prior experience of industry or teaching. It is all because educational sector all over the world is still bearing the deficiency and unavailability of experienced or highly qualified persons. So the institutes are compelled to hire fresh graduates. Cheng (2000) asserts that newly hired teachers in this era of rapid change have to play many roles and responsibilities that may relate to teaching, curriculum changes, educational innovations, student learning experiences, professional development, working with parents and interacting with the community. Now the question arises, should fresh graduates be appointed as a teacher at higher level of education? Camp (1990) in his studies reported that 15% of newly recruited teachers leave the profession after the first year, and that almost 50% leave within six years. It can be concluded from this study that beginning teachers face various hurdles in their initial career which compel them to think about leaving the job or taking transition to some other professional field. When a teacher joins his/her university different type of fears and anxiety including unfamiliar office environment, students response or colleague support in learning process. These starting issues if not handled properly by university administration can lead to high turnover rate in universities.

As due to current scenario of demand in Pakistani universities, institutes are hiring fresh graduates for higher level of education. Universities need to motivate their beginning teachers' right from their first day in the institution. However, quality improvement process of beginning teachers starts from selection procedure of teaching staff. As Hanushek and Rivkin (2006) asserts that the right selection policies can improve the quality of new teachers. But after the careful selection, next step is the improvement of performance level of newly hired teachers. As the new teacher joins the educational institute, he faces various obstacles that negatively affect his performance such as lack of communication and little or no support from the senior faculty members, absence of infrastructure in institution, personal fright and the most common is the reality shock that comes after facing the teaching workload when new teacher join the job. Veenman (1984) explained this phenomenon as "a collapse of the missionary ideals formed during training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life. Similarly, Ryan (1986) described it as the most turbulent, difficult, frustrating, and painful one in a young teacher's life.

Again, this is institution's responsibility that it facilitates the new teachers while their initial teaching career. Preliminary teaching workload and administrative duties can be minimized to create ease in beginning adjustment of teachers in their respective departments. Moreover, training may also play an effective role in reducing the job stress of an employee. Donald et al (2005) explains that institutions may affect the teacher effectiveness through resources, administrative leadership, and/or curriculum. Ryan (1974) stated that inadequate introduction to the profession and insufficient support for beginning teachers are that 30% of personnel trained for teaching never enter into the field and out of 1 from 5 beginning teachers report that he or she does not anticipate teaching 5 years later. In addition to preliminary introduction and training, support from senior colleagues in developing course outlines, class assignments, research methodologies and in many other dimensions can develop a learning environment that plays an important role in institution's progress as a whole. As Stansbury and Zimmerman (2001) explained the same point emphasizing that experienced teachers can guide beginners in planning and accomplishing these tasks effectively with the help of a veteran teacher, the beginner doesn't have to reinvent the wheel for such standard activities. Veterans can also share sometimes the unwritten expectations associated with such tasks in a given school, district, or state.

3. Objectives of Study

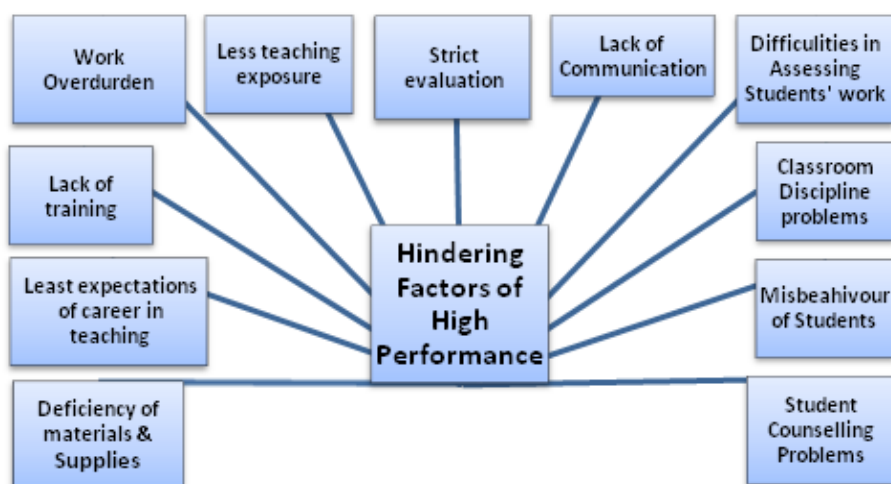
- a. To recommend suggestive solutions with their implications which lead to an effort for performance improvement of beginning teachers in universities.
- b. To explore the challenges and obstacles for beginning teachers in their initial teaching career in higher education institutions of Pakistan.
- c. To identify various problems which beginning teachers face in IUB.

4. Research Methodology

This is exploratory research is done to identify the hindering factors of high performance for the beginning teachers in higher education. In order to conduct the current research different data collection techniques have been adopted such as face to face interviews have been conducted from the sample of 30 newly hired teachers serving at different level in IUB to get their open opinion about the problems that are directly affecting their performance level.

5. Findings and discussion

The research conducted focusing on above mentioned objectives, revealed diverse performance hindering factors that are faced by new teachers of Case Study University. These factors include lack of teaching experience, overburden, strict evaluation, ambiguous job description, lack of training, deficiency of material and supplies, communication gap between senior and junior staff, student counseling, maintaining class room discipline, assessing students' work, least expectations for the career in teaching and behavior of the students with beginning teachers as shown in figure below.



Research results have shown that 67% of the respondents have showed their concern that three major factors ambiguous job descriptions, overburden workload and the strict evaluation process create stress among beginning teachers. Although fresh blood can show better performance than the aged one. Young graduates are usually more energetic and volunteer to show up high performance. But in teaching of higher education more skilled persons are required, those who have a big exposure of implementing the theories. As data analysis shows that 90% of newly recruited teachers believe that experienced person is more appropriate for the teaching of higher education students. According to one of the teacher *“There is a vast difference between practical and the theory and the person having practical exposure must be better especially in higher education”*. It is because higher education is all about research and implementation of theories, and if the teacher has good know how of practicality of such theories then he can better perform while teaching.

The fact that practical experience in teaching plays a vital role is major stress source for initial teachers as they have to work hard in developing link between theory and practice. However, on the other hand higher education in Pakistan is in real need of teachers for universities of higher education institutions. In order to meet this human resource crisis particularly in Pakistan, universities have started to hire young faculty in universities. University expectations of high performance and at the lack of teaching skills among beginning teachers create immense stress in teachers. As one of the junior lecturers stressed that, *“I want to deliver my best and I know I can but university authorities should realize that I cannot do it at once. I need some time and training so that I can polish myself”*.

Moreover, teachers are overstressed because of extreme workload imposed on them in very initial days of their appointment. Results show that 72% of respondents complained that their job description is highly unclear to them. They have been assigned the academic and administrative duties at the same time without any prior training or guidance about these tasks. Increased workload results in performance decline which ultimately affect the institution and students learning as a whole. As one of the respondents expressed *“My job description doesn't include as much extra assignments which I have been given. Because of this increased assignment quantity my working quality actually suffers. Moreover, these all*

tasks are followed by strict evaluation criteria which always put me under pressure". In addition to that, Students at higher education level require continuous supervision of the teachers but due to overburden of work on the teachers, they are unable to deal with problems of individual students. As one of the teacher said *"we should hear the students individually after and before the classes for their individual research issues but overburden of the work and high strength of the students prevent us from doing that"*.

Above mentioned statement not only states the apprehension of teachers regarding their workload but also stress upon evaluation criteria which is unclear and rigidly imposed on them. Results have shown that 54% of teachers are not satisfied with the performance evaluation system which is being executed for teachers' evaluation. In interview sessions, most of the teachers explained the reasons for this dissatisfaction in terms of lack of evaluation transparency, no feedback system and less number of evaluation sources. Respondents stressed that university is still using conventional annual confidential report on performance which lacks feedback mechanism. Teachers are not been informed about their weaknesses and strengths each year which leaves them in darkness with no light.

In addition to that, participant of current study stressed upon mentoring or coaching role of senior faculty members, so that they can get immediate feedback on their performance or guidance to evaluate that how they can perform better. Beginning teachers appreciate the beneficial feedback they receive from senior teachers as long as such teachers are not in the formal evaluator role. As one of the teacher said *"University must find ways to facilitate newly recruited teachers in receiving feedback and seeking help form senior teachers without fears"*.

The next major factor which has been identified by the researchers as beginning teachers' problems is the lack of training before the commencement of the classes. As there is no training for curriculum design, evaluation of assignments and designing activities relating to various tasks assigned to students, teachers feel extremely uncomfortable in initial classes. As one the respondents said, *"Initially I was not given any training that how I can evaluate assignment, initiate group discussions among students or deliver effectual lectures. I tried various methods as experiment and then chosen the best one. Still I am not confirmed about its effectiveness because no one guided me in this"*.

More than 73% of the respondents said that there was no training session before the commencement of classes so how can we perform better, what students learning skills we should adopt or how course design can be made effective. As Pakistani universities have taken recent transition from annual to semester system, most of the teachers had exposure of annual system of education and they are unaware from semester system norms. They are facing difficulties while adjusting themselves in the departmental culture. 70% of the teachers think that there must be 3 months training while 20% think that there must be on the job training. Interview results have shown that teachers also stressed upon the need of guidance for the curriculum design and assignments evaluation criteria so that high standards of student oriented learning can take place in classes. Teachers show their concern that training is extremely essential in student teacher communication, course design and classroom

management aspects which are unaddressed issues from university management. These areas directly affects on the motivation level of the students. However, due to lack of exposure and expertise teachers face difficulties while tackling such sort of matters. Class room discipline is very tough job for the beginning teachers. Research results have shown that 73% of the beginning teachers think that they are unable to maintain the discipline in the class rooms. 35% teachers said that students come to them for counseling purposes but they have no idea how to guide them as a mentor. Moreover, teachers have also showed their concern about facing the misbehavior of their students. As 38% of the beginning teachers think that at various times they face the misbehavior of their students during the lectures.

The 5th hindering factor is the deficiency of material and supplies in the university, it includes advanced computerized labs, fully equipped library with latest books and online contents, High speed internet, teaching aids and subscription of international journals. About 90% of the teachers think that infrastructure unavailability is the major hindrance in their performance. There is the unavailability of high speed internet, printers and stationery items. They want to use teaching aids while during the lecture but there is the shortage of multimedia and projectors. As one of the teacher said *“This University is much improved in all aspects but still there is the need of computers, projectors, printers and high speed internet”*. Another teacher emphasized on unavailability of sufficient rooms in the department. Among new appointees one of the teachers suggests that there should be digital libraries in all departments separately. There is also the need of research journals to carry the research work. Teachers suggest that university should take the subscription of few international research journals.

Another hindering factor for beginning teachers in delivering high performance of is the lack of affective communication and support due to rigid hierarchical organizational structure in the university. It includes the problems of communication between senior and junior faculty members. Beginning teachers emphasized on the need of well-structure mentoring schemes, collegial support, leadership that is more accepting, receptive and actively compassionate. Respondents stressed that institutions have to reduce the communication gap existed among the teachers because this gap leads to departmental politics and blame games among the faculty members which eventually causes learning destruction. 70% of the teachers said that senior faculty members are highly occupied and they are not supporting enough. But 20% of new appointees think that their old faculty members are supporting them in all the dimensions. One of the new appointees said *“In start I face the problems while preparing my course outline, but there was no one available to help me out”*. Another teacher said *“There are no informal talks among the faculty members in our department so we are unable to discuss our problems at any platform”*.

The last hindering factor of high performance mentioned by the respondents is related to the career expectations of the beginning teachers in the same institution. It is obvious that positive expectations enhance the morale of the teachers. 85% of the teachers think that if they continue their studies while teaching, then they can enhance their performance. But the problem is that university is not allowing them to continue study while teaching. They have to take the leaves which will lead them to financial problems. It leads them towards job

dissatisfaction and de motivation as they feel that their learning level has been struck to a certain level. Research indicates, there is immense desire of teachers to pursue their studies in order to have professional growth. As one of the teacher said *“Through this survey I wish to convey my message to senior management of the university that kindly allow us to start our M-Phil classes while teaching”*.

So in short above discussion may suggests that in any educational institution the very first year of a teacher support effort is likely to be bouncy; success requires a commitment to learn from mistakes and to identify necessary changes in attitude, resources, policies, and practices. The potential payoffs — lower teacher attrition, higher teacher morale, and, most importantly, improved teaching and learning — make the effort worthwhile

6. Conclusion

As discussion shows that major issue or obstacle of high performance from beginning teachers is lack of training in teaching field. As beginning teachers have least or no previous exposure of teaching due to which they face hurdles in course design, classroom management or student evaluation. In order to train teachers for developing students, they need to be developed first. Universities in Pakistan can introduce introductory training courses for their newly recruited teachers including basic education about teaching or research methodology. These training workshops should be designed at institutional level so that teachers can get immediate benefit of it.

Research has revealed another fearing factor for beginning teachers in case study University that they seem to be frightened from strict evaluation process and lack of transparency in it. Teachers have emphasized the need of comprehensive evaluation criteria in which all the stakeholder including students, teachers, peers, departmental head, should be included so that more transparency can be initiated in this regard. Moreover, appropriate guidance what the tasks are and how they would be accomplished is highly lacking in IUB. Teachers are been overloaded due to extra administrative assignments due to which their academic performance suffers and overall affect comes on institution's performance. For this purpose higher education institution is Pakistan can collectively make an teacher's evaluation system at university level which may include comprehensive guidance, training and transparency, so that teachers may feel motivated for their improved performance and could be able to get constructive feedback in their lacking areas.

The last major concern stressed by case study beginning teachers in this research is communication gap between senior and junior faculty in departments. A vast majority of beginning teachers has emphasized that universities in Pakistan are lacking effective knowledge management and mentoring culture in their organization. Seniors are not willing to transfer their tacit knowledge in explicit mode. Interview analysis in this research shows that junior faculty members want to learn from experienced teachers but there are no proper mechanisms to learn. As one the teachers pointed out that, *“teachers are extra ordinary occupied by different assignment that they do not have time to sit together and talk”*. In order to implement knowledge management mechanisms, IUB may develop some platforms for teachers to work collectively. As research indicate that faculties are lacking team oriented

approach to perform various tasks. The internal culture is individual oriented. IUB might implement mechanisms of team oriented culture where a mixture of junior and senior faculty members perform collectively for institution development.

7. Limitations of the study

This survey is conducted only from the beginning teachers of 3 main campuses of The Islamia University that are situated in Bahawalpur City. A more comprehensive study can be conducted by involving new teachers from other universities. Same research design can also be implemented in other industries like banking, telecommunication, FMCG's etc.

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