



STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION-THE CASE OF A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY OF PAKISTAN

Rana Muhammad Dilshad,

Assistant Professor, Department of Education,
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur – Pakistan



The author is Assistant Professor in the Department of Education at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan and has more than 15 years experience of teaching and student research supervision. Besides M.A. Education, he has done Masters in English literature. He has won and availed Pre-doctoral Fulbright Scholarship in 2004, and has completed his Ph.D. research on Quality Management Practices at Teacher Education Institutions in Pakistan. His primary areas of interest include Education Management, Quality Assurance in Education, and Teacher Education. He has published in various journals and made presentations in a number of significant national and international conferences on Education. He is member of various prestigious academic/professional organizations including Pakistan Education Foundation, Pakistan National Association of Fulbright Alumni (NAFA), Indo-Pak Fulbright Forum and International Reading Association (IRA), USA. He has also paid academic visits to USA and UK.



STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION-THE CASE OF A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY OF PAKISTAN

Rana Muhammad Dilshad, Dr. Akhtar Ali
Assistant Professors, Department of Education,
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur – Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Purpose:

This study was designed to explore students' perceptions about education quality at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB), a Pakistani public university established in 1975. The students' views were also compared in terms of gender, subject, programme, examination system.

Methodology:

The opinions of randomly selected 580 students from 29 departments were surveyed through a questionnaire based on five dimensions of education quality namely learners, learning environment, content, processes and outcomes. With reliability coefficient of 0.96, the questionnaire comprised 57 items on five point Likert scale. The data was analyzed by calculating frequency of responses, mean and standard deviation, and by applying t-test through SPSS.

Findings:

It was found that most of the students of IUB were not satisfied with the academic quality. There was significant difference in the perceptions of male and female respondents, and that of Bachelor and Master students. No significant difference was found in the quality of Arts and Science subjects, and of annual and semester systems. In contrast to their respective counterparts, male gender and students enrolled in Master programmes were more satisfied with the academic quality. The quality of Science subjects was slightly better than that of Arts disciplines, and students enrolled in annual system expressed slightly positive opinions as compared to students studying under semester system. Lack of physical facilities, insufficient library resources and inappropriate instructional methods were the major impediments for academic quality.

Practical Implications:

This empirical research would be an addition to scanty literature on quality assessment at higher education level in Pakistan. In the light of the findings of the study, the IUB administration may get aware of its weak areas and take initiatives to enhance quality of services up to the satisfaction of students.

Category: Research paper.

Key Words:

Education quality, Higher education, Learning environment, Outcomes, Quality framework, Students' satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The system of higher education in Pakistan has expanded significantly in the last ten years. This is reflected by establishment of 70 new universities/ degree awarding institutes since 1999, a record number in the history of Pakistan. (Higher Education Commission [HEC], 2007). With 56839 teachers and 948,364 student enrollment, 132 universities (73 public and 59 private) are presently operating in Pakistan (Government of Pakistan, 2010). Over the last four years, Pakistan's higher education budget has increased more than sevenfold (to 0.5% of GDP) and percentage of college-age students enrolled in higher education institutions (HEIs) increased from 2.9% to 3.8% (Government of Pakistan 2007). Despite the rapid growth of HEIs, higher education sector is undergoing serious problems that are impeding its overall efficiency and performance. The major problems include inadequate funding, lack of competent teachers, outdated curriculum and course materials, gender and class disparities, student discipline, ineffective system of governance and management, lack of student support services, and low quality of education and research (Afridi et al. 2002; Asghar et al. 2002; Government of Pakistan, 1998, 2009; Rehman, 2008; Virk 1998).

The quality of education at the higher level in Pakistan is under the severe criticism from the concerned constituencies. This is evident from the annual reports of the Federal and Provincial Service Commissions and other recruitment bodies (Government of Pakistan, 1998). There is a general feeling among the public and academics that the Pakistani universities and colleges are lagging behind the international standards and their graduates can not compete internationally. As compared to private HEIs which focus on modern management techniques and clients' satisfaction, the public institutions remain victims of status quo in their academic and administrative affairs. In this regard, the observation of the Task Force on Improvement of Higher Education is worth-noting: "Students in publicly funded institutions get an education of mediocre quality, which does not prepare them to participate effectively in the economic, political and social life of the country, leave alone the competitive global economy" (Government of Pakistan, 2002, p.57). Analyzing the declining performance of Pakistani universities, Isani and Virk (2005) outline various causes such as limited financial input, rapid expansion of higher education, periodic student unrest, inadequate and distorted autonomy of the universities, weak research base, inadequately equipped libraries and laboratories, and shortage of qualified teachers. However, government of Pakistan has recently taken considerable initiatives steps to upgrade the quality of universities through education Higher Education Commission.

The HEC Medium Term Development Framework 2005-2010 has identified access, quality, and relevance as key challenges (HEC, 2005), which are being catered by laying increasing

emphasis on strategic planning, performance indicators, academic audit, accreditation, ranking order of universities, faculty development, and updating laboratories, library resources and student support services. A silent campaign for linking public universities' funding with their academic performance is also under way (Jadoon & Jabeen, 2006). Recently established Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) at public universities are given mandate for self-assessment and provision of institutional support to quality improvement initiatives. In the context of quality-driven changed scenario, it is imperative for Pakistani universities to continuously evaluate and improve quality of their academic processes and services.

The British Standards Institution (BSI) defines quality as "the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy the stated or implied needs" (BSI, 1999, p.7). Using several alternative terms such as effectiveness, efficiency, excellence and equity (Adams, 1993), various authors have identified determinants of education quality. For instance, Cheng and Cheung (1997) define quality of education as a set of elements containing input, process and output of education system. Adams' (1993) framework of quality, based on engineering model of education, includes reputation of institution, resources and input, process, content, outputs and outcomes, and value added. Another significant model of quality of education has been given by UNICEF (2000) which comprises five dimensions i.e. quality learners, quality learning environments, quality content, quality processes, and quality outcomes. The first three elements of UNICEF's model (learners, learning environments and content) may be viewed as inputs which are transformed into outputs or outcomes through a number of academic and administrative processes. This framework seems to be more viable and relevant if specific criteria are outlined to assess the quality of education (Memon, 2003). Based on this framework, Dilshad (2007) developed a questionnaire to assess the academic quality at teacher education institutions.

In the paper prepared by UNICEF (2000), five dimensions of quality were discussed and supported by extensive literature. Quality of learners was shown by students' good health and nutrition, early childhood psychosocial development experiences, regular attendance, and family support for learning. Physical elements (e.g. school facilities, class size etc.), psychosocial elements (e.g. safe environment, teachers' behaviour, discipline policies, non-violence etc.), and service delivery (e.g. health services) were the indicators of quality learning environments. Quality of content was reflected by student-centred and standard based curriculum, uniqueness of local and national content, and focus on literacy, numeracy, and life skills. Factors relating to teachers and teaching (e.g. teachers' competence, support for student-centered learning, participation based teaching methods, teachers' working conditions etc.), and supervision and support (e.g. administrative leadership, effective use of technology, diversity of processes and facilities etc.), determine the quality of processes. Quality of outcomes was indicated by students' achievement in literacy and numeracy, life skills, health outcomes, outcomes sought by parents, community participation, and learners' confidence.

Embedded in the UNICEF's quality framework, this study was an attempt to investigate students' perceptions about the education quality at The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) which was established in 1975 with the view to meet the higher education needs of population living in Southern Punjab and contribute to national self-reliance. Having three campuses located in Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar and Rahim Yar Khan, IUB offers courses at Bachelor, Master, M.Phil. and Ph.D. levels under six faculties. In the academic session 2007-08, over 10,000 students were enrolled in 33 teaching departments of the university (IUB, 2008). At the time of data collection, the university was passing through a transition period from annual examination to semester system according to the guidelines and national policy endorsed by Higher Education Commission.

Objectives of the Study

Focusing on the case of a public university, this study was aimed at assessing the quality of higher education in Pakistan. Students' perceptions were sought about various aspects of education quality to compare and analyze the current state of academic quality in terms of gender, subject (Arts/ Science), programme, examination system, and identify quality-related problems at The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. In order to improve the situation, this study also put forward some suggestions which may be generalized to other public sector universities in Pakistan. This study specifically focused on the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent students are satisfied with the quality of education at IUB?
- 2) To what extent students are satisfied with different aspects related to quality of learners, learning environment, content, processes and outcomes?
- 3) Is there any difference in the perceptions of male and female students about quality of education?
- 4) Is there any difference in the perceptions of students enrolled in Arts and Science subjects about quality of education?
- 5) Is there any difference in the perceptions of students enrolled in Bachelor and Master programmes?
- 6) Is there any difference in the perceptions of students studying under Annual and Semester Examination Systems?

Research Methodology

The target population for this research was students of IUB, who may be considered primary customers of higher education (Sallis, 2002) and whose perceptions are important in quality assessment of university education. Being descriptive in nature, this study employed survey method to collect data from 580 students of 29 teaching departments of IUB. The list of students, enrolled in Bachelor and Master programmes in session 2007-08, was obtained from each department. Twenty students (10 male and 10 female) were selected randomly from each department giving equal representation to Bachelor and Master programmes, if offered both in the department. Out of 461 students who returned the questionnaires, majority were female (53.6%) and belonged to 20-25 year age group

(81.6%). Sixty three percent of them were enrolled in Master programmes whereas 37% were taking Bachelor courses. Students who had annual examination system were 66% and 34% were studying under semester system. As far as class timing is concerned, a marked majority of students (81%) had enrollment in morning classes. The respondents from 29 departments were grouped into two broad subject areas i.e. Arts and Science. Hence, 54% Science and 46% Arts students responded to the questionnaire.

The Research Instrument

The research tool was tailored from Dilshad's (2007) questionnaire which was based on the quality framework proposed by UNICEF in 2000. Keeping in view the research requirements, items and content of the questionnaire were adapted and a demographic section was added to the research tool. A group of ten experts was requested to establish content and face validity of the questionnaire. The modified questionnaire was then piloted on 100 students of IUB. The Cronbach Alpha value for the questionnaire data was 0.96 that shows sufficiently high reliability of the scale as maintained by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) that the questionnaire is considered highly reliable if the Cronbach Alpha coefficient ranges from 0.80 to 0.90. The final version of questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part I contained demographic information (gender, age, programme, examination system, class timing and department) while part II comprised 57 statements regarding quality of education on five-point Likert scale. The response options for each statement ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire consisted of five dimensions of education quality namely learners (8 items), learning environment (18 items), content (7 items), processes (16 items) and outcomes (8 items). Two open ended questions pertaining to problems and suggestions were also included in part III of the questionnaire.

Collection and Analysis of Data

The process of data collection lasted for three months (from March 2008 to May 2008). Since the researchers are working as faculty members at the university under study, the questionnaire was administered to respondents by approaching them personally. The help of several teachers teaching in different departments of the university was also sought in the process of data collection. The respondents were given enough time for completing the questionnaires. As a whole, 461 questionnaires were returned and the return rate was found to be 79.48%. It was observed that majority of students did not respond to the open ended questions.

In order to arrive at findings and conclusions both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences-Version 14 (SPSS). Personal information of the respondents were worked out through frequency distribution and percentage. The mean response value along with standard deviation was calculated to see students' extent of agreement with each statement. Independent sample t-test was employed to find out impact of gender, subject, programme and type of examination system on the students' perceptions. On these variables, only significant

differences in the students' perceptions were reported and discussed. Statistical significance for t-test was determined at 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was focused on investigating students' perceptions about the quality of education at a public sector university of Pakistan through a questionnaire survey based on five dimensions of quality i.e. learners, learning environment, content, processes and outcomes. Table 1 shows overall mean response values for five components of quality. The cumulative mean (2.99) indicates students' dissatisfaction with the education quality at the university, but the cumulative mean score is close to neutral mean value (3.0). Out of five variables, students gave favourable views only about one subscale i.e. learners (M = 3.91). There is a clear indication that students are least satisfied (M = 2.58) with the component of 'contents'. These results support the findings of Dilshad (2007) who investigated quality of teacher education and reported students' dissatisfaction with the academic quality. He concluded that there was reasonably good quality of learners, but low quality of content, learning environment, processes and outcomes. On contrary, Hussain and Saeed (2008) conducted study to evaluate the quality of B.Ed. programme and reported students' overall satisfaction with their college experiences.

If we look at the descriptive statistics about the individual subscales, the quality of 'learners' appears to be satisfactory (as shown in Table 2). Students elicited mostly positive opinion about the help they received from previous education (M = 4.25) followed by family members' interest in their studies (M = 4.22), motivation for learning (M = 4.17), and students' health (M = 3.95). On the subscale 'learners', the lowest mean score (3.55) is observed for the students' positive social behaviours though it is above the neutral mean value.

As depicted by the cumulative mean (2.81) shown in Table 3, students perceived quality of 'learning environment' negatively. Out of 18 statements included in this subscale, students' positive views were noted about seven items i.e. transport facilities (M = 3.95), discipline rules (M = 3.74), access to institution (M = 3.69), teachers' relations (M = 3.67), students' safety (M = 3.51), provision of learning materials/ handouts (M = 3.25), and equal treatment of students (M = 3.20). Regarding teachers' professional relations, similar results were reported in other two studies conducted by Dilshad (2007) and Dilshad & Iqbal (2009). For the rest of eleven items, the mean scores that fell below the neutral mean value reflect the dismal position of learning environment at the university. The institution's academic environment is specifically affected by the inappropriate hostel facilities (M = 2.17), student guidance (M = 2.23), learning materials (M = 2.23), class size (M = 2.27), departments' buildings (M = 2.31), and library resources (M = 2.32).

The data of Table 4 clearly indicates very low quality of 'contents' included in the academic programmes offered by the university. The curricula of the academic programmes appear to be weak in all the seven areas including localization of curriculum (M = 2.16), development of problem solving skills (M = 2.18), meeting students' needs (M = 2.25),

balance between skill development and knowledge transfer (M = 2.29), clarity of learning objectives (M = 2.30), development of academic skills (M = 2.31), and inclusion of latest issues/ topics (M = 2.31) in the contents. Contrary to findings of this study on quality of contents, Ali (2005) reported moderate level satisfaction of students with the curriculum of universities included in his research which focused on academic functioning of Pakistani universities.

Table 5 shows students' perceptions about the quality of 'processes', which is not satisfactory at IUB (Cumulative Mean = 2.94). Students responded positively about nine items that included teachers' preparation for lectures (M = 3.79), their knowledge (M = 3.75), professional development (M = 3.66), regularity (M = 3.66), appropriateness of timetable and calendar (M = 3.47), monitoring and supervision (M = 3.42), teachers' satisfaction with salary structure (M = 3.28), students' knowledge of language used as medium of instruction (M = 3.21), and teachers' satisfaction with working conditions (M = 3.06). The results regarding teachers' knowledge, preparation and professional development are in line with Dilshad's (2007) findings, but contradict with the conclusions of Iqbal (2004), Isani & Virk (2005), Hamid-ullah (2005), and Jadoon & Jabeen (2006). On the other hand, students' perceptions about teachers' satisfaction with their remuneration and working conditions are not consistent with the results reported by Hamid-ullah (2005), Bhatti & Tauqeer (2006) and Dilshad & Iqbal (2009). In the light of students' responses, it may be concluded that lectures, marked with students' low participation (M = 2.15), are not linked with students' daily lives (M = 2.13) and quality of student research is not up to the mark at IUB (M = 2.22). Students' perceptions were also negative about the effectiveness of evaluation techniques (M = 2.25), teaching methods (M = 2.25), importance given to students (M = 2.27), and use of technology (M = 2.51) in the instructional process.

According to Table 6, students' level of satisfaction is quite low about the quality of 'outcomes' (Cumulative Mean = 2.71). The results reveal students' (M = 3.63) as well as parents' satisfaction (M = 3.47) with students' academic performance, and reasonably good confidence and socialization of graduates (M = 3.27). However, respondents showed their concern about students' mastery of content (M = 2.22), graduates' employment opportunities (M = 2.25), dropout rate of students (M = 2.27), institution's standing at national level (M = 2.29), and students' continuity of education due to quality of education (M = 2.32).

The t-test of independent samples was used to compare students' perceptions by gender, subject, programme and by type of examination system, and the significant statistical differences have been presented in Table 7, 8, 9 and 10 respectively. Out of 57 statements, significant difference between the opinions of male and female respondents was found for six items only. It is observed that male students gave comparatively more favourable views on students' safety, equal treatment of students, teachers' satisfaction with working conditions, and students' knowledge of language used as a medium of instruction. However female students' perceptions, as compared to their male counterparts, were more positive about their family members' interest in their studies and teachers' preparation for lectures.

The t-statistics of Table 8 reflect the significant difference in the opinions of Arts and Science students about nine aspects of education quality. The mean differences indicate that the quality of Science disciplines, as compared to Arts subjects, seems to be better on seven items i.e. help from previous education, parents' education, family members' interest in studies, access to institution, discipline rules, students' satisfaction with their academic performance, and graduates' employment opportunities. On the other hand, Arts students were more positive in their class attendance and received comparatively equal treatment from their teachers.

According to Table 9, the quality of Bachelor and Master courses is significantly different only on two aspects. Students of Master programme held more favourable views about their teachers' knowledge, whereas parents of students enrolled in Bachelor courses had better education as compared to those of Master programme students.

With respect to examination system, significant difference (as shown in Table 10) was found in the perceptions of students studying under annual and semester systems on thirteen statements related to education quality. Of them, semester system students were better in terms of their parents' education, family members' interest in studies and motivation for learning. On the other hand, the academic quality of annual system appears to be better on appropriateness of departments' buildings, library resources, equal treatment of students, class size, students' harassment, balance between skill development and knowledge transfer, localization of curriculum, teachers' knowledge, teachers' satisfaction with salary structure, and institution's standing at national level.

Table 11 shows comparison of students' views about education quality in terms of gender, subject, programme and examination system. The t-statistics indicate significant difference in the perceptions of male and female respondents, and of Bachelor and Master students. In contrast to their respective counterparts, male gender and students enrolled in Master programmes were more satisfied with the academic quality at the university. No significant difference was found in the quality of Arts and Science subjects, and of annual and semester systems of examination. However, it is evident from the mean scores that quality of Science subjects is slightly better than that of Arts disciplines. Similarly, students enrolled in annual system expressed slightly favourable opinions as compared to students studying under semester system. Lack of physical facilities, insufficient library resources and inappropriate instructional methods were the major problems identified by the students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Students are primary customers/stakeholders of higher education institutions, who directly receive the academic and administrative services of the institutions. Hence, students' views about the teaching-learning processes assume great importance in assessment of education quality at higher level. This study investigated students' perceptions to evaluate education quality at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. This empirical research is significant because it would be an addition to scanty literature on quality assessment at higher education level in Pakistan. In the light of findings of the study, the IUB administration may get aware of its weak areas and take initiatives to enhance quality of services up to the

satisfaction of students. With the exception of quality of 'learners', the results show majority of students' dissatisfaction with 'learning environment', 'contents', 'processes' and 'outcomes'. Relatively more positive views of respondents were observed in favour of Science subjects, Master programmes and annual examination system. Even after 35 years of its establishment, the IUB is struggling with academic quality and facing the problem of lack of academic as well as physical resources. Though conducted on a single case of higher education institutions, the findings of this study may have implications for other public universities having academic environments and problems similar to IUB. Since universities in Pakistan are switching from annual to semester mode under the direction of HEC, there is a dire need to strengthen semester system through intensive faculty development, need-based curricula, learner-centred teaching strategies and effective student support services. Along with Science disciplines, the departments of Social Sciences must be given due importance with regard to implementation of quality improvement initiatives. There is also need to pay attention to the quality of four-year Bachelor degree programmes recently introduced at universities in Pakistan. Above all, public universities should survey students' needs and perceptions about the academic affairs, and must strive for their satisfaction.

REFERENCES

- 1) Adams D. (1993), "Defining education quality", In *Improving educational quality project, Publication # 1. Biennial report*, Institute for International Research, Arlington, V.
- 2) Afridi, K. K. et al. (Eds.), (2000), *Higher Education in Pakistan: Towards a Reform Agenda*, The Boston Group, Boston.
- 3) Ali, A. (2005), *A Study of the Academic Functioning of the Universities in Pakistan*, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis), University of Sargodha, Sargodha.
- 4) Asghar, A. et al. (Eds.), (2002), *Pak-Millennium Conference, Higher Education in Pakistan: Challenges for Reform*, The Boston Group, Boston.
- 5) Bhatti N. and Tauqir, S.R.. (2006), "Input for quality assurance: Case study of University of the Punjab", In *Proceedings of 1st international conference on assessing quality in higher education*, 11-13 December, 2006, Lahore-Pakistan, pp.111-125.
- 6) British Standards Institution (1999), *Management Systems of Schools: Guidance Notes for the Application of ISO 9002 for the M management Systems of Schools*, BSI., London.
- 7) Cheng, Y. and Cheung, W. (1997), "Multi-model of education quality and multi levels of self management in schools" *Educational Management and Administration*, Vol. 25, No.4, pp.26-37.
- 8) Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007), *Research Methods in Education*, (6th ed.), Routledge, London.
- 9) Dilshad, R.M. (2007), "Assessing quality of teacher education: A student perspective", Paper presented in the *First international conference on quality of teacher education*, 5-6 November 2007, Lahore, Pakistan.
- 10) Dilshad, M. and Iqbal, H.M. (2009), "Human resource management at teacher education institutions in Pakistan- A total quality perspective", *Journal of Educational Research*, Vol.12, No. 2,, pp.48-63.

- 11) Government of Pakistan, (1998), *National Policy of Education: 1998-2010*, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- 12) Government of Pakistan, (2002), *Task Force on the Improvement of Higher Education in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities*, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- 13) Government of Pakistan (2007), *Pakistan Economic Survey: 2006-2007*, Planning Commission, Islamabad.
- 14) Government of Pakistan (2009), *New Education Policy 2009*, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- 15) Government of Pakistan, (2010). *Pakistan Economic Survey: 2009-2010*, Planning Commission, Islamabad.
- 16) Hamid-Ullah, M. (2005), *Comparison of the Quality of Higher Education in Public and Private Sector Institutions in Pakistan*, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis), University Institute of Education and Research, University of Arid Agriculture, Pakistan, Rawalpindi.
- 17) Higher Education Commission (2005), *Medium-term Development Framework: 2005-2010*, HEC, Islamabad.
- 18) Higher Education Commission (2007), *Guidelines for the Establishment of a New University or an Institution of Higher Education*. HEC, Islamabad.
- 19) Higher Education Commission (2009), *Annual report 2007-08*, HEC, Islamabad.
- 20) Hussain, S. and Saeed, M. (2008). "Evaluating the quality of B.Ed. programme: Students' views on their college experiences", In *Proceedings of 2nd international conference on assessing quality in higher education*, 11-13 December, 2008, Lahore-Pakistan, pp. 198-211.
- 21) Iqbal, A. (2004), *Problems and Prospects of Higher Education in Pakistan*, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis), University Institute of Education and Research, University of Arid Agriculture, Pakistan, Rawalpindi.
- 22) Isani, U.A.G. and Virk, M.L. (2005), *Higher Education in Pakistan: A Historical and Futuristic Perspective*, National Book Foundation, Islamabad.
- 23) Islamia University of Bahawalpur (2008), *Prospectus 2008-09*, IUB, Bahawalpur.
- 24) Jadoon, Z. I and Jabeen, N. (2006), "Human resource management and quality assurance in public sector universities of Pakistan: The case of Punjab University", In *Proceedings of 1st international conference on assessing quality in higher education*, 11-13 December 2006, Lahore-Pakistan, pp. 42-61.
- 25) Memon, M. (2003), "The quality of education in Pakistan: A national policies perspective", Paper presented in the conference on *The research and policy dialogue on achieving quality in education*, 4-5 March 2003, Lahore.
- 26) Rehman, S. (2008), "Some aspects of quality of higher education in Pakistan: A historical perspective" *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, XXIX (1), 175-188.
- 27) Sallis, E. (2002), *Total Quality Management in Education*. (3rd ed.), Routledge, New York.
- 28) UNICEF (2000), "Defining quality", Paper presented in the *International working group on education meeting*, June 2000, Florence Italy, (Principal researcher: Jeanette Colby).
- 29) Virk, M.L. (1998), *Universities of Pakistan*, UGC, Islamabad:

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Overall Mean Response Values for Five Components

N = 461

Variables	Mean
1. Learners	3.91
2. Processes	2.94
3. Learning environment	2.81
4. Outcomes	2.71
5. Contents	2.58
Cumulative Mean	2.99

Table 2: Students' perceptions about quality of learners

N = 461

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Help from previous education	4.25	.950
2. Family members' interest in studies	4.22	.953
3. Motivation for learning	4.17	.907
4. Students' health	3.95	.847
5. Parents' education	3.73	1.076
6. Attendance in the classes	3.72	1.165
7. Help from family members	3.69	1.349
8. Positive social behaviours of students	3.55	1.129
Cumulative Mean	3.91	

Table 3: Students' perceptions about quality of learning environment

N = 461

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Transport facilities	3.95	1.079
2. Discipline rules	3.74	1.027
3. Access to institution	3.69	1.116
4. Teachers' relations	3.67	1.128
5. Students' safety	3.51	1.093
6. Provision of learning materials/ handouts	3.25	1.280
7. Equal treatment of students	3.20	1.257
8. Appropriateness of furniutre	2.51	1.288
9. Comfortability of furniture for students	2.38	1.200
10. Students' harassment	2.38	1.249
11. Medical facilities	2.36	1.232
12. Co-curricular activities	2.34	1.210
13. Library resources	2.32	1.238
14. Appropriateness of department building	2.31	1.253
15. Class Size	2.27	1.233
16. Appropriateness of learning materials	2.23	1.229
17. Student guidance	2.23	1.229
18. Hostel facilities	2.17	1.185
Cumulative Mean	2.81	

Table 4: Students' perceptions about quality of contents

N = 461

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Inclusion of latest issues and topics	2.31	1.187
2. Development of academic skills	2.31	1.230
3. Clarity of learning objectives	2.30	1.236
4. Skill development and knowledge transfer	2.29	1.219
5. Meeting students' needs	2.25	1.195
6. Development of problem solving skills	2.18	1.212
7. Localization of curriculum	2.16	1.191
Cumulative Mean	2.58	

Table 5: Students' perceptions about quality of processes

N = 461

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Teachers' preparation for lectures	3.79	1.170
2. Teachers' knowledge	3.75	1.167
3. Teachers' professional development	3.66	1.107
4. Teachers' regularity	3.66	1.107
5. Appropriateness of timetable and calendar	3.47	1.175
6. Monitoring and supervision	3.42	1.137
7. Teachers' satisfaction with salary structure	3.28	1.114
8. Students' knowledge of language	3.21	1.306
9. Teachers' satisfaction with working conditions	3.06	1.098
10. Use of technology	2.51	1.288
11. Importance given to students	2.27	1.197
12. Use of teaching methods	2.25	1.203
13. Appropriateness of evaluation techniques	2.25	1.192
14. Quality of student research	2.22	1.196
15. Students' participation in classroom activities	2.15	1.194
16. Link of lectures with daily life	2.13	1.188
Cumulative Mean	2.94	

Table 6: Students' perceptions about quality of outcomes

N = 461

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Satisfaction with academic performance	3.63	1.074
2. Parents' satisfaction with students' academic performance	3.47	1.126
3. Graduates' confidence and socialization	3.27	1.168
4. Students' continuity of education at the department	2.32	1.187
5. Institution's standing	2.29	1.219
6. Dropout rate of students	2.27	1.196
7. Graduates' employment opportunities	2.25	1.194
8. Students' mastery of content	2.22	1.199
Cumulative Mean	2.71	

Table 7: Comparison of students' perceptions by gender

Statements	Gender	N	Mean	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig.
1. Family members' interest in studies	Male	214	4.09	-.247	-2.800	.005
	Female	247	4.34			
2. Students' safety	Male	214	3.62	.209	2.051	.041
	Female	247	3.41			
3. Equal treatment of students	Male	214	3.33	.239	2.040	.042
	Female	247	3.09			
4. Teachers' preparation for lectures	Male	214	3.67	-.222	-2.028	.043
	Female	247	3.89			
5. Teachers' satisfaction with working conditions	Male	214	3.18	.227	2.222	.027
	Female	247	2.96			
6. Students' knowledge of language	Male	214	3.46	.458	3.808	.000
	Female	247	3.00			

Table 8: Comparison of students' perceptions by subject

Statements	Subject	N	Mean	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig.
1. Help from previous education	Arts	211	4.11	-.263	-2.988	.003
	Science	250	4.37			
2. Attendance in the classes	Arts	211	3.87	.263	2.467	.014
	Science	250	3.60			
3. Parents' education	Arts	211	3.55	-.338	-3.381	.001
	Science	250	3.89			
4. Family members' interest in studies	Arts	211	4.08	-.259	-2.937	.003
	Science	250	4.34			
5. Equal treatment of students	Arts	211	3.43	.419	3.614	.000
	Science	250	3.01			
6. Access to institution	Arts	211	3.55	-.258	-2.490	.013
	Science	250	3.81			
7. Discipline rules	Arts	211	3.62	-.219	-2.294	.022
	Science	250	3.84			
8. Satisfaction with academic performance	Arts	211	3.53	-.198	-1.977	.049
	Science	250	3.72			
9. Graduates' employment opportunities	Arts	211	2.12	-.233	-2.092	.037
	Science	250	2.36			

Table 9: Comparison of students' perceptions by program

Statements	Program	N	Mean	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig.
1. Parents' education	Bachelor	172	3.92	.296	2.878	.004
	Master	289	3.62			
2. Teachers' knowledge	Bachelor	172	3.59	-.248	-2.214	.027
	Master	289	3.84			

Table 10: Comparison of students' perceptions by examination system

Statements	Examination	N	Mean	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig.
1. Parents' education	Annual	304	3.64	-.279	-2.657	.008
	Semester	157	3.92			
2. Family members' interest in studies	Annual	304	4.09	-.379	-4.120	.000
	Semester	157	4.47			
3. Motivation for learning	Annual	304	4.10	-.201	-2.262	.024
	Semester	157	4.30			
4. Appropriateness of department building	Annual	304	2.40	.258	2.101	.036
	Semester	157	2.14			
5. Library resources	Annual	304	2.41	.265	2.185	.029
	Semester	157	2.15			
6. Equal treatment of students	Annual	304	3.30	.290	2.358	.019
	Semester	157	3.01			
7. Class size	Annual	304	2.36	.250	2.072	.039
	Semester	157	2.11			
8. Students' harassment	Annual	304	2.47	.244	1.996	.046
	Semester	157	2.22			
9. Skill development and knowledge transfer	Annual	304	2.38	.241	2.021	.044
	Semester	157	2.13			
10. Localization of curriculum	Annual	304	2.24	.231	1.980	.048
	Semester	157	2.01			
11. Teachers' knowledge	Annual	304	3.83	.227	1.984	.048
	Semester	157	3.60			
12. Teachers' satisfaction with salary structure	Annual	304	3.37	.244	2.238	.026
	Semester	157	3.12			
13. Institution's standing	Annual	304	2.38	.241	2.021	.044
	Semester	157	2.13			

Table 11: Comparison of students' perceptions by various demographic variables

Variables	Category	N	Mean	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig.
1. Gender	Male	214	2.95	0.06	4.238	.013*
	Female	247	2.89			
2. Subject	Arts	211	2.91	-0.02	-.848	.444
	Science	250	2.93			
3. Program	Bachelor	172	2.87	-0.08	-3.046	.038*
	Master	289	2.95			
4. Examination	Annual	304	2.96	0.11	1.819	.143
	Semester	157	2.85			

* = significant value at .05 level