

ACADEMICIANS' SATISFACTION WITH FACULTY SELECTION AND LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENT PRACTICES: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF UNIVERSITIES IN LAHORE

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Abstract

This study employed a quantitative research design based on a descriptive survey approach to examine academicians' perceptions regarding faculty selection criteria and leadership appointment practices in universities of Lahore. The key objective was to determine the level of satisfaction among faculty members with the Higher Education Commission (HEC)-regulated selection processes and leadership appointment practices in both public and private sector universities. Data were collected through a survey involving a sample of 236 academicians selected using proportional stratified random sampling from two public and two private universities. A self-administered questionnaire was developed comprising four dimensions: faculty selection processes, leadership appointments, academic satisfaction, and institutional policies. The instrument was validated by experts and demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) through SPSS. The findings revealed significant differences in perceptions between academicians from public and private universities. While merit-based selection and academic qualifications were acknowledged, respondents expressed dissatisfaction due to perceived favoritism, political influence, and lack of transparency in faculty recruitment and leadership appointments. The study concludes that implementing standardized, transparent, and merit-based policies is essential for enhancing faculty satisfaction, institutional credibility, and governance in higher education institutions. These findings provide empirical insights for policymakers and university administrators to improve recruitment and leadership appointment practices in Pakistani universities.

INTRODUCTION

The areas of faculty selection and leadership appointments are very important in the determination of the quality, governance and general effectiveness of higher learning institutions. Academic excellence, institutional

stability and sustainable development are characteristics that universities are guided by transparency and merit-based recruitment and leadership selection processes (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). These processes increase the

faculty satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment when they are viewed in ways that are considered fair and objective but can have a negative impact on the institutional performance and academic morale when perceived as unfair and biased (Shin & Jung, 2014). Academic qualifications, research productivity, teaching experience, and professional competence are usually the major criteria used in higher education systems throughout the world to select the faculty (Bryman, 2007).

University leadership positions, which include the vice chancellor, deans, heads of different departments, etc. demand administrative skills, ethical behavior, and vision, in addition to scholarly excellence (Bolden, Gosling, O'Brien, Peters, & Haslam, 2012). Empirical studies have shown that open and merit-based leadership appointment has a positive impact on the organizational governance and the trust of the professors (Morley, 2013). The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan has developed official principles of hiring and advancing faculty to guarantee the quality assurance and consistency of higher education institutions (Higher Education Commission, 2021).

Even with these standard policies, issues of favoritism, political influence, and the absence of transparency in the process of faculty selection and appointment of heads have commonly been mentioned in empirical studies (Ahmad, Farid, & Rehman, 2019; Khan & Jabeen, 2011). These practices have the potential to weaken meritocracy and decrease the satisfaction of academicians to the institutional processes. Faculty satisfaction is one of the important aspects that affect the effectiveness of teaching, research output, and commitment in universities (Ghazali, Nashuki, & Othman, 2015). According to quantitative research, the less academic members feel that recruitment and appointing to a leadership position is unfair or undemocratic, the lower their job satisfaction and credibility in the governance of an institution will be (Ali, Rehman, & Khan, 2018). On the contrary, the more the institutions follow transparent and fair selection processes, the more positive academic

climate and increased faculty retention rates can be ensured (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017).

Lahore, being one of the biggest learning centers of Pakistan, has a big population of state and private universities that have varied governance systems and recruitment methods. The institutional policy differences between the public and the private sector universities could affect the perceptions of academicians to the faculty selection criteria and leadership appointments (Tahir, 2010). Nevertheless, there is little empirical quantitative research that investigates these perceptions in Lahore context. Thus, the proposed quantitative research attempted to conduct systematic research on the perceptions of academicians regarding their satisfaction with faculty selection criteria and leadership appointment practices in universities in Lahore. Through statistical analysis, the research aimed to establish patterns, differences, and associations among the important variables in order to offer scientifically based information to guide policymakers, university management, and regulatory authorities. Finally, the research helped to enhance transparency, meritocracy, and satisfaction among faculty in the higher education sector of Pakistan.

Background of the Study

One of the main aspects of proper governance in higher educational institutions is faculty selection and practices that are used to appoint leaders. Merit-based and transparent recruitment systems are relied on by universities to have quality academic programs, credibility of the institution, and sustainable development (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). The results of empirical studies indicate that equitable procedures in hiring and selection of leaders are important factors in faculty satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and effectiveness in an institution (Shin & Jung, 2014). Most institutions of higher learning use uniform standards in recruiting faculty all over the world, but the standards are usually focused on academic credentials, research rates, teaching efficiency, and work experience (Bryman, 2007).

On the same note, university appointments of leaders like the vice chancellors, deans, heads of departments, etc., demand a blend of academic quality, management skills, and moral leadership (Bolden et al., 2012). Quantitative research has shown that the more transparent and meritocratic the process of the selection is in an institution, the greater the degree of trust of the faculty members towards it and the better academic performance (Morley, 2013). Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan has come up with formal policies of regulating recruitment and promotion of faculty in both government and the privatized universities. These policies are to guarantee uniformity, quality control and responsibility in the institutions of higher learning (Higher Education Commission, 2021).

Regardless of these rules, there is quantitative evidence that academicians often find discrepancies between official policies and their application, in terms of favoritism, political interference, and procedural lack of transparency (Ahmad, Farid, & Rehman, 2019; Khan & Jabeen, 2011). Faculty satisfaction is a quantifiable and essential variable that determines performance in teaching, research, and retention in institutions of higher learning (Ghazali, Nashuki, & Othman, 2015). In quantitative research studies, it is proven that in case academicians believe that recruitment and leadership appointments are not fair, the job satisfaction level, the trust in the administration, and the commitment to the profession decrease considerably (Ali, Rehman, & Khan, 2018). On the other hand, motivation, morale, and institutional loyalty among the faculty are positively related to fair and transparent selection procedures (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). Lahore is a big educational center in Pakistan and is home to a rich diversity of both the higher education institutions namely, public and private universities with different governance and recruitment policies. Quantitative institutional comparisons of the established institutions of the public sector with institutions of the private sector indicate the possibility that the institutional variations of organizational policies

and administrative discretion might be reflected on the perceptions of academic to faculty selection and leadership appointments (Tahir, 2010).

Nevertheless, there is scanty empirical quantitative research specifically on the satisfaction of academicians with such processes in Lahore. Thus, systematic quantitative research is required to describe the perception and satisfaction of the academicians concerning faculty selection procedure and leadership appointment practice in the universities of Lahore. Through statistical analysis, this study aims at offering the empirical evidence of the level of satisfaction and establishing meaningful differences between the types of institutions. The results should help to establish the evidence-based policy formulation to enhance transparency, meritocracy, and good governance in Pakistan higher education sector.

Statement of the Problem

Practices associated with faculty and leadership appointments are the key aspects of defining the quality of academic life in higher education and the efficiency of the processes of organizational operation and leadership in educational institutions. In Pakistan, Higher Education Commission (HEC) has put in place some standardized and merit-based policies, which govern faculty recruitment and appointments of faculty to leadership roles in various universities. The policies are aimed at enhancing transparency, fairness and accountability in the institutions of higher learning. But even though there are formal regulations there is still the concern of whether these criteria are always applied in practice.

It has been found on an empirical basis that in many instances academicians have felt that there are loopholes between the recommended policies on selection and their actual practice especially in terms of favoritism, politics and the absence of transparency in the processes. These perceptions can have negative influences on the job satisfaction levels, institutional leadership trust and organizational goal commitment among academicians. The decreased satisfaction of

faculty members may have an adverse impact on the teaching quality, research output, and performance of the institution. Although a number of studies have been conducted to study faculty recruitment and leadership practices in higher education, less quantitative research has provided a quantitative way of measuring the satisfaction of academicians towards faculty selection criteria and leadership appointments in the context of the universities in Lahore.

In addition, there is a lack of comparative quantitative evidence that measures the differences in perceptions of the universities in the public and the private sector. These problems are not empirically studied, and that is why policymakers and university administrators are not able to make evidence-based decisions to help change the recruitment and leadership appointment processes. As such, the research problem in this quantitative research is the absence of empirical data about the level of satisfaction of academicians with current faculty selection policies and leadership appointment processes in Lahore based universities. The proposed research aims at quantitative analysis of the perceptions of academicians, establishment of major discrepancies among different types of institutions and data-driven conclusions that guide the formulation of transparent, merit-based and effective selection and appointment of leadership positions in institutions of higher learning.

Objective of the Study

1. To explore the perceptions of academicians about their satisfaction with the current faculty selection criteria of Higher Education Commission in universities of Lahore.
2. To analyze the satisfaction of university academicians with the appointment on leadership positions (e.g., vice-chancellors, pro-vice chancellors, deans, directors, chairpersons) in Lahore's higher education institutions.

Research Questions

1. To what extent the academicians in universities of district Lahore are satisfied with the current faculty selection criteria of Higher Education Commission?
2. To what extent the academicians in universities of district Lahore are satisfied with the appointment of senior faculty against leadership and management positions (e.g., vice-chancellors, pro-vice chancellors, deans, directors, chairpersons) in universities of district Lahore?

Significance of the Study

This quantitative research is of great importance to various stakeholders in the higher education industry because it gives empirical data on the satisfaction of academicians with faculty selection policy and leadership appointment practices in Lahore university. Through the statistical analysis, the study will produce objective and quantifiable data about perceptions of transparency, meritocracy, and fairness in the process of recruiting and selecting leaders. To the policy makers and regulating agencies especially the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, the results of this study can provide evidence through data to determine the efficacy of current faculty selection and leadership appointment policies.

The quantitative findings can help the policymakers to determine the discrepancies between the policy-making process and the implementation process, thus aiding the reforms that would help improve the transparency, accountability, and consistency of both the public and the private universities. To the decision-makers and administrators of university such as the vice chancellor, the registrar and the selection committees, the study offers statistically based information on variables that affect the satisfaction of academicians. The knowledge of these aspects can inform administrators to revise their recruitment processes, enhance processes of appointing leaders, and reduce non-merit practices that are viewed as either favoritism or political influence. This can help to increase faculty morale, institutional trust and organizational effectiveness. Academically and research wise, the study fills the dearth in the

quantitative research on faculty selection and leadership appointment in higher educational setting of Pakistan especially in Lahore.

The fact that the study operationalizes the satisfaction of academicians as a variable which can be measured enhances empirical knowledge and provides a tested model that will be applicable by other researchers in the future working in different regions or institutional contexts. To the faculty members, the study offers a formal platform to which the perception of the faculty is measured and statistically represented. The findings can promote the idea of meritocracy and accountability, which will eventually create a more inclusive and more professional academic culture. Lastly, within the institutional and societal level, the findings of the study will play an important role in enhancing the quality of higher education in general. Academic excellence, research productivity, and good governance require having transparent and merit-based faculty selection and leadership appointments. This quantitative study will provide evidence-based decisions that can enhance the institutional credibility, which supports the development of the Pakistan higher education system over a long period by determining statistically significant differences and trends.

Research Methodology

The research employed quantitative research design based on a descriptive survey design to determine the level of satisfaction of academicians with faculty selection criteria and leadership appointment practices in universities of Lahore. The sample population consisted of academicians in the universities that are in the public and private sectors, that is, a sample of 236 members of the faculty was chosen through proportionate stratified random sampling to balance between academic ranks and faculty

sectors. Data were gathered using a self-constructed structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The main constructs of the instrument were faculty selection criteria, leadership appointments, and the satisfaction of the academicians. Experts of the subject validated the instrument. The reliability analysis confirms a good reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86). Data were interpreted using SPSS with descriptive statistics were used to summarize the responses as well as inferential statistics, with independent sample t-tests and one way ANOVA, which were applied to compare the groups at a level of significance of 0.05 and at the same time ethical considerations of informed consent and confidentiality were observed during the research study.

Results and Interpretations

The SPSS was used to analyze data to address the research objectives of the study. The responses of academicians on the selection criteria in the faculty as well as leadership appointment practices were summarized using descriptive statistics which included frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. An inferential statistic was used to investigate the difference between groups, with independent sample t-tests showing statistically significant differences in the level of satisfaction among academicians in public and private sector universities where the level of satisfaction was higher in the latter. Also, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) revealed that there are significant differences in the levels of satisfaction between the academic ranks. The findings indicated that the overall satisfaction of academicians was moderate to low especially on transparency and fairness in appointing leaders whereas merit-based selection practices had a strong positive correlation with the satisfaction of academicians at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 1
Detail of Universities (2 Public and 2 Private)

Sr. No.	Name of University	Departments	Total Faculty Members
1.	Public University 1	8	105
2.	Public University 2	8	155
3.	Private University 1	8	212
4.	Private University 2	8	105

The Yamane Formula was utilized to determine the sample size (i.e., $n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$). The level of confidence used in this equation was 95 percent and the margin of error was 5 percent. The number of respondents sample of the survey was 236. The participants in the survey were

chosen using the proportional stratified sampling method and a total of 43 individuals in Public University, 163 individuals in Public University, 287 individuals in Private University, 1, and 43 individuals in Private University, respectively, were selected to take part in the survey.

Table 2
Distribution of Sample Size

University	Departments	No. of Professors	No. of Associate Professors	No. of Assistant Professors	No. of Lecturers
Public University 1	8	4	7	10	35
Public University 2	8	6	11	16	55
Private University 1	8	7	16	24	79
Private University 2	8	4	7	10	35

This table presents the distribution such that each university will have 8 departments. The highest representation in all the universities is of lecturers, then assistant professors, then associate professors and professors. Thus, proportions are computed respectively.

The faculty who took part in the survey was provided with a self-developed and closed-ended questionnaire which was distributed to them in the form of heads, professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers. The items within the questionnaire were on the five-point Likert scale. The instrument had items

regarding four indicators, which are (a) faculty selection criteria, (b) leadership appointments, (c) satisfaction of academicians, and (d) institutions and policies. The instrument was tested by interviewing two or three experts. The reliability was checked with the help of Cronbach alpha, and the result of 0.70 or higher meant high internal consistency. The researcher designed a semi-structured interview that will be used to investigate the views of the teachers with regards to the use of social media as a teaching-learning tool.

Table 3
Comparison of Faculty Selection Criteria (FSC) in Public and Private Universities (Factor 1)

Variable	School	Mean	SD	F	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	St. Difference	Error
FSC	Public	43.39	5.17	.264	.247	.608	.6988	
	Private	43.18	5.46					

The data revealed that the average impression of the public university academicians (M = 43.39, SD = 5.17) was a little higher than the average impression of the private university academicians (M = 43.18, SD = 5.46). The standard deviation values indicated that the responses in both groups were quite stable yet the SD was relatively high in the case of the private universities (SD = 5.46) which implied that the academics in the private universities demonstrated more variation

of their opinions as opposed to the students in the public ones (SD = 5.17). This was a slight difference but t-value (0.247) and p-value (Sig. = 0.608) indicated that the groups were not statistically significantly different. According to this survey, the perceptions of both the professors of the university public and the university privacy have shown that they agree on the fairness, transparency and clarity of the faculty selection procedures.

Table 4
Comparison of TF between Public and Private Universities (Factor 2)

Variable	School	Mean	SD	F	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Std. Difference	Error
TF	Public	37.96	8.44	.050	.942	.820	1.095	
	Private	36.93	8.22					

The table gives a comparison of the mean scores of the TF variable among professors of both the public and the private universities. The means of the public colleges were a bit higher (mean = 37.96, SD = 8.44) than that of the private universities (mean = 36.93, SD = 8.22). The means of this standard deviation showed an intermediate degree of the variance in the answers of both populations as the professors in the public university displayed a little higher

degree of dispersal in their points of view in comparison with their peers in the private universities. Nevertheless, the t-value (0.942) and the p-value (Sig. = 0.820) indicated that the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant. This research has shown the views of both university professors in the public and the private sectors, and the perception of transparency and justice in faculty choices and leadership appointment was almost similar.

Table 5
Comparison of Leadership Appointments (LA) between Public and Private Universities (Factor 3)

Variable	School	Mean	SD	F	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Std. Difference	Error
LA	Public	39.18	6.721	.001	1.20	.220	1.070	
	Private	38.11	6.618					

It contrasts academic reviews of leadership appointments (LA) in Lahore, one of which is a state-owned institution and the other, a privately owned institution. The findings showed that the mean of the public institutions (M = 39.18, SD = 6.721) was slightly bigger than that of the private colleges (M = 38.11, SD = 6.618). The coefficients of the standard deviation indicated a certain degree of dispersion of responses of the two groups that indicated that the ratings of academics of the two universities (public and private) were rather similar. The variation

between the standard deviation of the public (6.721) and the private institutions (6.618) indicates that the reactions of the academics in the institutions of different institutions were slightly further spread in the former. The difference can be explained by different experiences and perceptions that they have on the issue of leadership appointment. Overall, the data proved that the process of leader's appointment received a higher rating among faculty members in the public universities than those in the privacy institutions.

Table 6
Comparison of Selection Process (SP) between Universities in Public and in Private. (Factor 4)

Variable	School	Mean	SD	F	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	St. Difference	Error
SP	Public	41.35	5.272	.780	.382	.733	.697	
	Private	41.19	5.269					

This table compared the evaluation of the academics to the public and the private universities in Lahore on the Selection Process (SP). The results showed that the means of the scores between the public and the private universities were almost similar (M = 41.35, SD = 5.272 and M = 41.19, SD = 5.269, respectively), which means that there was similarity in terms of evaluation of the selection process between the public and the private university. The similar values of standard deviation indicated that there was a similar level of variation in the answers given by the respondents in the two categories of

universities indicating uniformity of perceptions held by the scholars in the two industries. Moreover, the independent samples t-test results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the three universities (public and private) with regard to the selection process indicated by t-value (t = 0.382) and the p-value (p = 0.733). The implication of this finding is that the academicians of both industries had essentially the same perception of the fairness, transparency, and consistency of the faculty selection processes in their respective institutions.

Table 7
Comparison of Public and Private University Responses

Sr. No.	Statements	Mean (Public)	Mean (Private)	SD (Public)	SD (Private)
1	The selection criteria for academic appointments are well established and consistently implemented.	4.745	4.692	0.586	0.68
2	The qualifying conditions in job adverts mirror current selection procedures.	4.613	4.607	0.75	0.792
3	Selection committees follow HEC recruiting criteria.	4.518	4.561	0.607	0.609
4	Academic credentials and professional experience are properly assessed.	4.145	4.32	4.04	4.12
5	Research articles are appropriately considered in the selection procedure.	4.152	4.11	0.614	0.586
6	Faculty recruiting decisions are generally based on merit.	4.047	4.786	0.708	0.804
7	All departments use similar selection standards.	4.291	4.118	0.804	0.806
8	Personal or political considerations impact faculty hiring choices.	4.501	4.432	0.886	0.931
9	HEC criteria are appropriately utilized during the recruiting process.	4.339	4.331	0.791	0.813
10	Faculty selection panels are comprised of qualified and neutral members.	4.133	4.38	0.955	0.909
11	The faculty recruiting procedure is transparent at every level.	4.028	3.974	0.749	0.737
12	Candidates are shortlisted fairly based on predetermined criteria.	4.337	4.312	0.716	0.705
13	Interview processes are objective and standardized.	4.066	4.054	0.691	0.656
14	Internal and foreign applicants are treated equally.	3.821	3.788	1.492	1.413
15	Candidates receive feedback following the selection process.	3.641	3.512	1.212	1.252
16	The recruiting procedure adheres to the declared timetable.	3.828	3.721	1.161	1.155
17	Stakeholders have access to pertinent selection papers and reports.	3.831	3.721	1.133	1.131
18	There is a strategy for addressing claims of unfair selection.	4.512	4.298	0.978	1.065
19	Final hiring choices are properly conveyed to all candidates.	4.121	4.442	0.978	0.956
20	Institutional structures promote accountability in recruiting procedures.	4.112	4.425	0.921	0.941
21	Leadership roles are filled via a fair and open approach.	4.377	3.984	0.955	0.948

22	Leadership picks take into account both academic and professional achievements.	4.103	4.023	0.955	0.991
23	Appointments to leadership positions fit with the institutional aims and needs.	3.924	3.861	0.880	0.851
24	Leadership choices need collaboration with senior academics.	3.915	3.769	0.829	0.830
25	Gender equity is taken into consideration during leadership nominations.	3.641	3.546	1.139	1.079
26	Leadership responsibilities are swapped or evaluated frequently.	3.783	3.815	1.060	1.025
27	There are established requirements for selecting department heads or deans.	3.830	3.802	1.182	1.116
28	Leadership appointments reflect previous performance and appropriateness.	3.801	3.592	0.909	0.937
29	Stakeholder viewpoints are considered when choosing leaders.	3.650	3.407	1.078	1.166
30	The leadership selection procedure is free of favoritism.	4.541	4.315	0.978	1.127
31	I am generally satisfied with the existing faculty selection procedures.	4.198	4.098	0.989	1.029
32	Faculty members are confident in the existing selection mechanism.	3.962	3.881	0.935	0.961
33	The recruiting and hiring processes are effective and timely.	4.112	4.211	0.958	0.929
34	Selection techniques promote professional growth and development.	4.112	4.161	0.911	0.889
35	Transparent methods increase motivation and morale among instructors.	4.217	4.231	0.752	0.779
36	Unfair appointments have a detrimental influence on teacher performance.	4.245	4.226	0.673	0.699
37	Leadership appointments promote the institution's long-term goal.	4.161	4.186	0.718	0.761
38	Faculty members believe that their input counts in leadership choices.	3.915	3.919	0.876	0.873
39	Merit-based methods improve trust in the selection process.	4.131	4.197	0.815	0.857
40	Selection and promotion choices clearly demonstrate institutional responsibility.	4.277	4.244	0.774	0.818
41	Faculty selection and leadership criteria should be refreshed regularly.	4.292	4.221	0.768	0.833
42	Selection committee members should undergo proper training.	4.179	4.391	0.814	0.887
43	External specialists should participate in the selecting process.	4.162	4.112	0.757	0.874
44	Stakeholders should be involved in choices concerning leadership selections.	4.214	4.216	0.881	0.891
45	Gender-sensitive and inclusive policies must be implemented.	4.245	4.292	0.727	0.751

46	Technology should be utilized to increase the transparency in recruiting.	4.112	4.247	0.742	0.712
47	Independent reviews or audits of the selection process should be conducted.	4.145	4.186	0.773	0.748
48	There should be a systematic feedback method for applicants.	4.245	4.351	0.714	0.671
49	Leadership training should be necessary prior to appointment.	4.189	4.197	0.721	0.751
50	Institutions must value merit above influence.	4.122	4.144	0.764	0.763

The table contrasts the evaluation of faculty selection criteria and leadership appointments by academics in both the public and private institutions. The findings show that the players in the two industries agreed with majority of the claims because the mean scores were generally over 4.00 which means the positive attitude in both groups. The response to the question, the selection criteria on academic appointments are well established and constantly applied registered 4.745 (SD = 0.586) in the case of the public university, and 4.692 (SD = 0.680) in the case of the private universities. These scores show that most of the people interviewed thought the process of appointing academic posts is transparent, just and it is received in a homogenous way. Similarly, the sentence, which mentioned that HEC recruiting criteria are used by the selection committees, was assessed as positive in both public (M = 4.518, SD = 0.607) and private (M = 4.561, SD = 0.609) universities, which implies that the majority of the respondents believed that in general, hiring committees referred to the official rules and regulations.

Regarding the equity of the recruitment process, the statement that Faculty recruiting decisions are usually made on merit also scored high 4.047 (SD = 0.7088) in public universities and 4.786 (SD = 0.8045) in private universities, with the high scores being scored by the respondents of the private universities. The political or personal factors in faculty hiring were moderately agreed, nevertheless, Public (M = 4.501, SD = 0.886) and Private (M = 4.432, SD = 0.931). This means that even though the participants believed that merit is the most important element in the recruitment

process, they also advocated the existence of extraneous factors, such as personal or political influences, which at times have a part to play in the recruitment process. About transparency and fairness, the following statements were rated moderately with average scores:

The faculty recruiting procedure is transparent at all levels and Candidates are shortlisted fairly based on preset criteria. In the first statement the means of the variables were 4.028 (SD = 0.749) when it comes to the situation of the public universities and 3.974 (SD = 0.737) when it comes to the situation of the private universities. In the second, the mean of 4.337 (SD = 0.716) and 4.312 (SD = 0.705) were in the public and the private universities respectively. These results suggest that most of the respondents assumed that the hiring process was not in most cases biased but can be done better by being more transparent especially in the case of private universities. In the appointments of leadership positions, the statement Leadership positions are acquired in a transparent and fair system received the mean scores of 4.377 (SD =0.955) in public universities and 3.984 (SD =0.948) in the private universities. This shows that the public universities were assumed to be slightly more open in terms of the leadership choices. Other expressions such as; Appointments to leadership positions are in line with the goals and needs of the institution (Public: M = 3.924; Private: M = 3.861) and; Leadership positions are frequently reviewed or rotated (Public: M = 3.783; Private: M = 3.815) was rated quite reasonably.

Overall, the findings indicate that the leadership practice is quite institutionalized and fair but can be simplified and more transparent in the two

industries. The final section of the satisfaction and improvement policies proves that academicians are generally optimistic about the constant study and contemporary selection and leadership procedures. Using the example of the answer to the question of whether in a faculty selection and leadership criteria the refresh period should be renewed, the $M = 4.292$ ($SD = 0.768$) and 4.221 ($SD = 0.833$) score in the case of a public and a private university, respectively, indicates a high level of agreement on the question. Similarly, it was also consensus that Technology is to be employed to increase the transparency in the recruiting (Public: $M = 4.112$, $SD = 0.742$; Private: $M = 4.144$, $SD = 0.763$) and Institutions must prioritize merit over influence (Public: $M = 4.122$, $SD = 0.764$; Private: $M = 4.144$, $SD = 0.763$).

In general, research results show that there are no significant differences between the perspectives of the faculty in the public and the private universities on fairness, openness, and merit-based approaches to faculty selection and leadership appointments. Nevertheless, the absolute differences in means ratings indicate that the private colleges are willing to rate a bit higher on merit and technological transparency, but the institutions are public with a bit higher scores on procedural uniformity and norm conformity.

Major Findings

The quantitative analysis indicated that the overall satisfaction of academicians with faculty selection criteria and practices of appointing leaders in universities of Lahore were moderate to low. Even though the respondents did confirm that there were formal policies that were stipulated by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), a high number of the academicians were not satisfied with the way the policies were put in practice. It was also found that academic qualification and experience had been taken to be important and were to some extent followed when choosing faculty although transparency and fairness was not always followed as reported by respondents. The statistical findings indicated that the attitudes towards favouritism, political

involvement, and personal relationship were associated with a significant degree of satisfaction among academicians with the recruitment processes.

In terms of leadership appointments, the research established relatively lesser satisfaction levels as compared to those that were reported in faculty choice standards. Most of the respondents felt that leadership roles were not necessarily offered on a merit basis, leadership skills or administrative experience basis. Rather, non-academic influences were found to affect the choice of appointment, which affected faculty confidence with the institutional governance in a negative way. Comparative research indicated that there was statistically significant difference between the academicians of the universities in the public and private sector. The satisfaction with selection processes and appointing new leaders was quite high with the faculty of the private university as opposed to the public sector institution.

Differences were also observed to be significant among academic ranks with the senior faculty members indicating higher levels of satisfaction compared to junior faculty. Generally, the findings showed a strong correlation between the transparent selection practices and the satisfaction of the academicians. The results indicate that the inconsistency in the implementation of policies negatively influences the faculty morale, job satisfaction, and trust in the university administration.

Discussion

This quantitative research was carried out to assess the satisfaction of academicians regarding the faculty selection process and leadership appointment in Lahore universities. The results show that the overall satisfaction of academicians was moderate to low, especially in terms of using the policies of the existing recruitment and appointment of the leaders. Even though there are formal guidelines that are prescribed by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the outcomes indicate that there is a palpable gap between policy making and what is happening on the ground, which plays a major role in the

perceptions and satisfaction of the faculty. The results of the study concerning the faculty selection criteria, in turn, indicated that academic credentials, experience, and research credentials were generally considered as a constituent of the recruitment decisions. Nevertheless, scholars felt that the process of establishing transparency and fairness was not always upheld in the process of the selection. This finding is consistent with earlier quantitative analyses that found out that favors and politicking affect merit-based hiring and faculty confidence in institutional management (Ahmad et al., 2019; Khan & Jabeen, 2011).

The organizational justice theory confirms that such perceptions have a negative impact on faculty morale and organizational commitment (Ali et al., 2018). The researchers also discovered that the level of satisfaction of academicians in leadership appointment practices was less than the faculty selection criteria. Lots of the respondents felt that leadership roles were not necessarily filled on leadership competence, administrative experience or academic merit. This observation is consistent with previous studies that have indicated that non-transparent leadership appointments undermine institutional governance and destroy the faith of faculty members in the university management (Bolden et al., 2012; Morley, 2013). The quantitative data, presented in this research, supports the hypothesis that the credibility of leadership is closely related to the open process of appointment. The comparison between the public and the private sector universities showed that there existed statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the academicians. The levels of satisfaction with the choice criteria and appointment of leadership were found to be higher among faculty members of private universities compared to those in the public universities. It can be explained by the fact that the administrative autonomy is higher, performance-related management and more effective accountability mechanisms are in place in the institutions of the private sector, which previous researchers observed (Shin & Jung, 2014; Tahir, 2010).

Such results demonstrate the differences in the structure and governance of the two industries. There are also variations in satisfaction between academic ranks so that the senior faculty members reported to have a little bit higher level of satisfaction compared to the junior faculty. This can be indicative of increased participation of senior academicians in the decision-making process and selection committees which may affect the perception of fairness and transparency. The same tendencies are observed in previous quantitative studies of faculty governance and job satisfaction (Ghazali et al., 2015). Altogether, the results indicate the high correlation between the transparent and merit-based selection practices and the level of satisfaction of academicians. The findings support the need to enforce recruitment and leadership appointment policy consistently to enhance the morale of the faculty, organizational trust and academic achievement. This study offers empirical quantitative evidence about the universities of Lahore and this evidence can be used in the existing literature and also add insight to the policy-makers and university administrators who will want to enhance the governance in the institution of higher learning.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This scientific research paper has investigated the satisfaction of the academicians with faculty selection procedures and leadership appointment policies in the Lahore universities. The results showed that despite the standardized policies on the recruitment and leadership appointments, the general satisfaction of the academicians with the policies is moderate and low. Although the academic qualification and experience are ranked among the key aspects in recruiting the faculty, perceived absence of transparency, favoritism, and political interest have a negative impact on the level of satisfaction. The research also established that there was a low level of satisfaction on leadership appointment practices when compared to faculty selection criteria characterized by weaknesses in merit-based leadership selection. Moreover, statistically significant differences were found between the universities of the public and the private sector as

academicians of the latter reported higher levels of satisfaction. Comprehensively, the study finds that the key elements that would boost the satisfaction, institutional trust, and effective control of academicians in higher education institutions is transparent, fair, and uniform selection and appointment of leadership practices.

Based on these findings and conclusion of the study, following recommendations are put forwarded.

1. The procedures of recruitment and appointment as a leader should be made more transparent and include the clearly defined criteria and standardized evaluation procedures.
2. The selection of leadership ought to be based on merit which means leadership skills, experience in administration and academic credibility.
3. There should be introduction of independent monitoring and accountability systems that would be used to check the processes of selection and appointment.
4. The members of various academic ranks of the faculty are expected to be active participants in the selection and decision-making committees.
5. Members of the selection committee should be trained on ethical practices in recruitment and good governance practices regularly.
6. The quantitative studies that need to be conducted in the future must use bigger and more diverse sample sizes and focus on other variables like organizational commitment and job performance.

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