RELATIONSHIP AMONG DECISION MAKING STYLES OF ACADEMIC MANAGERS, FACULTY COMMITMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES OF THE PUNJAB

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Abstract

The study was aimed to find out the relationship of decision making styles of academic managers with faculty commitment and quality assurance in public sector universities of the Punjab province of Pakistan. The sample of the study was comprised of 186 academic managers and 940 teachers (lecturers and assistant professors) teaching at university level. Multi stage random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Three instruments were used for data collection named as Decision Making Styles Questionnaire (DMSQ), Quality Assurance Questionnaire (QAQ) and Faculty Commitment Questionnaire (FCQ). The data were collected through correlation research method and were analyzed by applying Pearson r technique. The results of the study showed that (i) decision making style of *academic managers* were *highly correlated with all components of faculty commitment and quality assurance. The major implication of the study is to develop a balanced rapport between academic managers and faculty. Fair exchange of ideas for decision making may positively strengthen the level of trust of faculty on universities to become more committed for the long-term growth and success of the universities.*

Introduction

Educational institutes are functioning under the leadership, direction and vision of their academic managers. Academic managers (heads of departments) are continuously involved in taking decisions during planning, implementing and evaluation of routine tasks. Every institute has a management structure that decides the faculty responsibilities and distribution of resources to meet the targets and necessary power to carry out the different tasks (Sandes, 2013). Decision making is the most significant function and primary activity of management. Decisions are the choices that management selects every day. Academic managers make decisions about the organization regarding how departments should be organized, who should lead different workforce, how to evaluate the faculty performance, commitment and motivation, work schedule of faculty, vacation time, job rotation schedule and control on individuals for problematic behaviors (Bratton, Callinan, Forshaw, & Sawchuk, 2007).

Decision making is embedded in the process of management, spreads overall the managerial function and covers all areas of organization. Management and decision making process go side by side in every activity performed by managers. Decision making is appropriate blend of thinking, deciding and action. It also involves the time factor such as the time taken by a manager to think about alternatives, collect information and wait for consensus on decision and then after making decision, monitoring it whether the decision is good or bad (Pal, 2008).

The success of any organization mostly depends upon the quality of decisions made by its managers. The difference of institute's culture and personality traits directly affects the decision

making styles of academic managers (Jabeen & Akhtar, n.d). Decision making styles with alternatives are chosen by managers. Vroom-Yetton (1973) decision making styles are focused on such circumstances and conditions in which mangers collaborate with others in decision making. These styles present the matter of participation of subordinates in a more complex way and also assist the managers to judge the situation and determine the style of decision making which may be currently useful to resolve issue (Chitpin & Evers, 2015). The concept of decision making is very broad. In a study of decision making, it reveals that decision making styles of academic managers may closely link the faculty commitment towards their institute and quality assurance because decision making styles of academic managers have a direct significant concern with faculty and institute. Various studies involved different samples of staff and have summarized that group decision making style always makes faculty more committed with their task and make an institute more quality oriented. As highlighted in the decision making literature, the faculty involvement in decision making will make them more creative and valuable for an institution with high loyalty and commitment. If faculty has low work pressure at their workplace then they become contended and will try to accomplish institutional objectives with higher quality of work. This sense of satisfaction and appreciation develops commitment among them (Pareek, 2004).

Commitment is an ongoing process through which faculty expresses their concerns for the organization and its well being (Luthans, 2008). Faculty commitment is considered as a faculty emotional attachment with institute based on the sense of work involvement, loyalty and trust on the standards of the institute. It develops the desire in faculty to remain associated with the institute. In order to develop commitment in faculty, the organizations should involve them in decisions, facilitate them with favorable resources leading to success, giving education and offering valuable rewards (Daft, 2008). A clear perception of both personal and institutional values develops highest degree of commitment in a faculty (Kouzes & Posner, 2010). Han, Chiang and Chang (2010) investigated the employee participation in decision making and mediating role of organizational commitment. The results illustrated a positive link between employee participation and psychological ownership that is positively related with the organizational commitment (Miller & Lee, 2001).

The term quality assurance was introduced in higher education after the great success of many institutes that improved their overall performance and products (students) by applying quality assurance (QA). The implementation of this concept depends significantly on full commitment of faculty. Quality assurance is the systematic and organized review process of a university program and is generally applied as an instrument to enhance the quality of higher education. Shahid and Wahab (2015) stated that quality assurance is a joined activity and it is not only the liability of universities but a cooperative responsibility of academic society and university stakeholders. In universities the idea of quality assurance provides the bases of continuous learning and progress in education. It applies such procedures that improve the quality of education and satisfy the demands of teachers, parents, students, society and other stakeholders. This concept helps the academic managers to improve their management functions, helps in selecting the appropriate decision making styles, enhances the quality of academic programs, teaching process, meaningful learning and manage all possible ways through which the needs of the students and faculty can be best served.

There are always numerous factors that may contribute in the success of management of any institute such as skill, knowledge, experience, motivation and decision making power.

Decision making is one of the most primary responsibilities of management but it varies on the bases of individual differences because every person has different thinking and information processing style that makes a difference among their decision making styles. Universities are functioning under the supervision, leadership, and vision of their academic managers. Academic mangers need the abilities to take a right decision at the right time and frame a set up of quality assurance in their real essence in universities with their committed faculty.

Method and Procedure
Research Design
This study was quantitative in nature and correlation research method was used to conduct the study.

Population and Sample
All heads of public sector universities of the Punjab constituted the population of the study. Total number of heads is 337 in ten general public sector universities of the Central Zone of Punjab. The data with respect to heads and teachers were taken from each university prospectus. Multi stage random sampling technique was used to select the sample.

Instrument of the Study
Three instruments were used for data collection and two questionnaires named as Decision Making Styles Questionnaire (DMSQ) and Quality Assurance Questionnaire were developed by the researcher. Pilot study of the instruments was also conducted. The .89 reliability was found for questionnaire of decision making styles and .93 reliability was found for questionnaire of Quality Assurance (QAQ). The .79 reliability was found of Faculty Commitment Questionnaire (FAQ) after conducting pilot study to check its accuracy in Pakistani perspective. Likert type scale was used in above mentioned scale to measure the respondent attitude on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data analysis
Inferential statistical analysis technique (Pearson r) was used to analyze the collected data.

Table 1
Relationship between Decision Making Styles with Overall Faculty Commitment and its Components

	N	Pearson Correlation *r*	Sig

Decision Making Styles

	N	Pearson Correlation r	Sig
Overall Faculty Commitment	186	.35	.000***
Affective Commitment	186	.23	.001***
Continuance Commitment	186	.38	.000***
Normative Commitment	186	.27	.000***

*p<.05 and ***p< .001

The table 1 indicated, that there was a significant relationship between independent variable (decision making styles) and dependent variable (faculty commitment) i.e. $r = 0.35$, p = 0.000 (.000 is less than .05). Analysis of components showed that strong relationship exists between decision making styles and continuance commitment. This revealed that decision making styles were best correlated with continuance commitment which means that faculty was better aware about the worth associated within the organization. Therefore the null hypothesis stating that '*There is no significant relationship between decision making styles of academic managers with overall faculty commitment and its components*' was rejected.

Table 2
Relationship between Decision Making Styles with overall Quality Assurance and its Components

	N	Pearson Correlation r	Sig
Decision Making Styles			
Overall Quality Assurance	186	.29	.000***
Mission and Goal	186	.21	.004*
Planning and Evaluation	186	.26	.000***
Organization and Governance	186	.15	.030**
Integrity	186	.21	.004*
Faculty	186	.18	.010*
Students	186	.07	.300

Institutional Resources	186	.26	.000***
Academic Programs and Curricula	186	.16	.022*
Public Disclosure and Transparency	186	.22	.002**
Assessment and Quality Assurance	186	.17	.017*
Student Support Services	186	.02	.715

*p<.05 and ***p< .001

The table 2 indicated, that there was a significant relationship between independent variable (decision making styles) and dependent variable (quality assurance) i.e. $r = 0.29$, p = 0.000 (.000 is less than .05). Analysis of components showed that the strong relationship exists between decision making styles of academic managers with two components, planning and evaluation and institutional resources. This referred that decision making styles were best correlated with planning and evaluation practices of university and it also highly correlate with management of institutional resources. Therefore the null hypothesis stating that *'There is no significant relationship between decision making styles of academic managers with overall quality assurance and its components'* was rejected.

Discussion

The results of the present study support the proposition that decision making styles have positive relationship with faculty commitment and quality assurance practices. Teachers' commitment and quality assurance practices of universities are affected by the decision making styles being practiced by the academic managers. Results of the present study have highlighted the significance of decision making behavior of academic managers holding a mediator position between the faculty and upper management in any institute. The success of an institute highly depends on its management, so it is important for academic managers to understand their decision making styles and choose them properly.

The major objective of the study was to see the relationship of three variables that are decision making styles, faculty commitment and quality assurance. In this study, the relationship of decision making styles with faculty commitment and quality assurance found significant. All components of decision making styles were highly correlated with all components of faculty commitment and quality assurance. The results are in line with Bogler (2001) who conducted research on teacher commitment and its relationship with principal decision making styles and found the significant positive relationship between decision making styles and faculty commitment. Hengpiya (2006) studied the teachers' commitment and its relationship with principal decision making styles. The result of the study showed that a participative decision making style by principal had the strongest predictor of teacher commitment. Participative decision making style gained a practical importance in finding of the study rather than other decision making styles were delegation, spontaneous and avoidant decision making styles. The

researches done by (Rosenholtz, 1989; Singh & Billingsley, 1998; Yu, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2002; John & Taylor, 1999) examining the relationship of decision making styles and faculty commitment showed a significant results in their relationship (as cited in Hengpiya, 2006).

Kuye and Sulaimon (2011) concluded that those employees who were deeply involved in decision making directly affected the performance of the organization. It was suggested in this study that organizations highly involved their employees in decision making process for effectiveness of organization. Akdere (2011) studied the decision making process in organizations and as a result he found a strong link between decision making and other organizational processes such as systematic planning, quality decision making and organization learning and performance.

Javaherizadeh, Mehrabi, Haery, and Naie (2013) investigated the relationship between employees' partnership and their organizational commitment. In this study, the researchers linked employees' partnership with involvement of employees in making decisions. The result found that employees' partnership in making decision had an influence on organizational commitment of employees. When employees had information and control over things than they were more committed, this was also supported by the result of different researches conducted by Lok, Westwood, and Crawford (2005), Trimble (2006) and Dnaham-Taylor (2000).

The researches had indicated that the employees highly committed towards their job were more productive and efficient to ensure quality assurance practices of university (Dixit & Bhati, 2012). The results also endorsed the selection of best decision making style lead towards quality work and ensure quality assurance that should be put into practice in universities. It was also verified by Olayo (2005) that if employees got less opportunities of participation in decision making process, it reduced their work performance which, in turn have an effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of university. It is the responsibility of academic managers to create such environment that is reciprocal, fair sharing of ideas, and fulfills the expectations of faculty, as well as the quality assurance practices of institute as a whole. So, it is concluded that a balanced rapport between academic managers and faculty is essential because enhancing fair exchange of ideas for decision making may positively strengthen their level of trust on institute and teachers become more committed for the long-term growth and success of the institute.

Recommendation

It is confirmed by literature that a high level of faculty involvement in decision making build their commitment towards university that will ultimately leads university towards quality assurance practices. For this purpose, universities should develop and provide material about decision making styles, its effects upon commitment of personnel in order to create a balance rapport by academic managers with their faculty members and initiate a new era of management.

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