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Challenges of Contextualizing Tenure Track System in a New Professional University in Pakistan: Context, Content, Implementation and Outcomes

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Challenges of Contextualizing Tenure Track System in a New Professional University in Pakistan: Context, Content, Implementation and Outcomes

Tayyeb Ali *

Abstract: The article narrated the experiences of teachers, managers, and leaders of a public university in Pakistan regarding implementing the US-based tenure track system (TTS). This institute was established in 1882 by the British Raj and was among the pioneer institution of vetinerrary sciences in Asia. The higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan, initiated TTS to make the profession attractive for talented PhD graduates. This study highlighted the pre-implementation, implementation, and post-implementation phases of TTS and the underlying tensions among faculty, university managers, and leaders of the Central Ministry. The findings discuss organization theory's structural, cultural, and institutional lenses. This is an interesting case study for a cross-cultural comparison of the implementation of neo-liberal reforms in developing countries with developed countries. It explains how the international academic reward system (TTS) translates into local realities of the higher education sector. The findings emphasized that the local version of TTS decoupled from the intended objectives of TTS and did not integrate with the local culture and structure of the university.

Keywords: Higher Education, Reforms in Academic Rewards, Implementation of public policy, developing countries.

Introduction

The last two decades witnessed the spreading of new public management (NPM) paradigm or NPM-style reform away from the traditional public management style (Turner, Hulme, Turner, & Hulme, 1997). NPM reforms focused on efficiency and a mixture of management and Institutional economic theories. As a result, the nature of Public administration was significantly changed in the last ten years. These changes have occurred in different ways in different countries. However, there was enough cohesion for critics to talk about the NPM. The concept of NPM brought a managerial revolution to the public sector. NPM has dominated the developed countries' Public Management scenario since the concept's origin. The central theme of NPM, if stated in a single sentence, would be to steer the ship rather than row it (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). The basic premise of NPM reforms stated that the performance of public sector universities could be improved, and stable

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business identities could be created by introducing business-like practices. During the last two decades, educational reforms in developing countries were based on the NPM philosophy. These reforms tried to 'transform' the collegial culture of the university into an entrepreneurial and corporate identity.

De Boer, Enders, and Leisyte (2007) argued that the dimension of governance in higher education shifted and tilted towards strengthening public universities as corporate identities. This trend was shared among European universities where the traditional governance model – state regulation and academic self-governance- lost some ground to New Public Management approaches and steering at a distance. Concepts and values underpinning the US-based tenure track were exported worldwide (Crainer & Dearlove, 1999; Engwall, 2004). However, tenure as the primary form of employment for academic positions is declining in the U.S. (Bowden, 2009); TTS was not widely adopted across Europe.

Paradeise et al. (2009) compared some recent European reform experiences; their analysis focused on the role of the nation-state and the relationship between state and universities. Paradeise et al. (2009) concluded three basic assumptions about the sequence of events driving the reform process in European countries. First, a managerial approach to universities was quite dominant in the 1990s. This kind of approach was shared among governments. Second, the standard governance model did not emerge even though there are similarities in discourse. Third, the rise of management in universities was recent and incomplete. This rise of "managerialism" in universities springs from a different social and political interaction with civil society and the state. They defined managerialism as "stronger multilevel steering in one local context, withdrawal of the state in another and democratic revitalization in another." (p104). There was a similarity with the higher education reform process in Pakistan, where the focus was more on the top-down implementation of reforms.

There is a less academic representation of faculty and leaders' experiences with the implementation of NPM-related reforms in the context of developing countries. This case study is a fascinating account of the experiences of faculty members, leaders, and managers regarding the implementation of U.S. based academic employment system in the context of a professional university in developing countries. This case study is unique in highlighting the tensions and challenges of interactions of local culture with the global movement of reforms. The research aims to improve the quality of implementing higher education policy to create a linkage between policy and its outcomes. There is a gap in research on how these changes are experienced and perceived by the faculty and management of public sector universities in Pakistan.

Significance and Motivation of the Study

The main contribution of this study lies in conducting an in-depth empirical analysis of the process, content, and implementation of the Tenure Track System (TTS) in a professional university in Pakistan, and analyzing these findings in light of applied theoretical perspectives. The study aims to identify how teachers and leaders make sense of their experiences regarding changes in academic reward practices. Furthermore, it contributes to the existing literature on the implementation of public policies or programs, academic

performance and reward programs and practices, and reforms in developing countries. Additionally, the study sheds light on institutional leadership, organizational leadership, departmental leadership, and how management and leaders tackle external and internal challenges when implementing change programs. The main motivation was to explore and understand the new performance and reward system for academics in a public university of Pakistan.

Context

The Task Force on Higher Education and Society was convened by the World Bank and UNESCO, which brought together experts from 13 countries to explore the future of higher education in the developing world. Their discussions found that it was difficult for developing countries to benefit from the global knowledge-based economy. They suggested improving the quality of higher education in these countries so that they can participate in the knowledge-based economy. The report commented on higher education in Pakistan. It asserted that Pakistan provides an example of a country whose higher education system has traditionally been dominated by a stifling set of public institutions and oversight bodies. It stated that the "current emoluments of faculty in public universities of Pakistan are grossly inadequate to recruit and retain good quality faculty and staff. The report recommended that emoluments should be delinked from the Government's Basic Pay Scales and should be appropriate for the recruitment and retention of quality teachers and staff. In addition, in-service training provision should be considered a critical requirement for improved performance (Khan & Jabeen, 2011).

This report triggered the Government of Pakistan to initiate a process of reforms in the higher education sector in 2001. The President of Pakistan formed a task force with a mandate to analyze the higher education sector's current condition and recommend necessary changes. Objectives assigned to the task force were "to review higher education in Pakistan and recommend ways of improving qualities." (The Task Force Report on Higher Education 2002). They mentioned in the first draft of the report that the purpose of their report was to advance discussions on ideas previously presented in the 2000 World Bank report.

This report recommended the implementation of a tenure system for faculty appointments. They also asserted that faculty evaluations should be based on their performance in i) research, ii) teaching and iii) service, which committees of the senior faculty should carry out. This report laid the foundations of several educational policies and programs introduced by HEC in the following years. The report clearly stated that the permanent appointment of the faculty members should be strictly based on the tenure system used in United States universities.

TTS was one of the significant interventions in academic performance and rewards introduced by Higher Education. According to Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF) 2011-15 by HEC, all new appointments at Assistant Professor Level holding a PhD degree were made through TTS. This clearly showed the government's intent to support this scheme as a future performance and reward system for university faculty. MTDF claim that 90% of public universities/HEIs have adopted TTS.

Traditionally, teachers in public universities are considered government employees. Their compensation is linked with central pay scales of Pakistan's civil service, commonly known as Basic Pay Scales (BPS), 1 being the lowest grade, and 22 is the highest. BPS is implemented across all government departments of Pakistan, and universities have adopted BPS since its beginning in 1972. BPS was influenced by the Indian Civil Service, the system developed by British Empire for the sub-continent. After the partition in 1947, it was modified but kept its primary character in some form. TTS is a U.S.-based academic reward system introduced to improve academic faculty compensation and performance and delink academic compensation with the Civil Service of Pakistan. The interactions of both systems developed political and structural tensions in public universities. The question about the role and identity of a university has been raised to the consciousness of people working in these organizations. As a result, public universities in Pakistan have become a crossroads of British Colonial and American systems of employment arrangement.

The present case study is about the University of Veterinary & Animal Sciences (UVAS), Lahore. It comes under the category of a professional university. Great Britain established it in 1882, one of the oldest veterinary institutes in Asia. It was upgraded to a university in 2002. UVAS has 23 departments in five faculties, three institutes, one constituent college and a school, and seven affiliated institutes. This university offers 20 undergraduates, 30 M.Phil. and 22 PhD degree programs in the following areas: veterinary & animal sciences, animal production & technology, biotechnology, microbiology, pharmaceutical sciences, food sciences, environmental sciences, zoological sciences, economics & business management. UVAS has over 300 faculty members, including 160 PhD in areas. This university has over 5000 students studying various disciplines and more than 7500 graduates.

Literature Review and Theoretical Perspectives

European universities have passed a series of NPM-related reforms during the last two decades. These reforms challenged universities' governance model based on solid-state regulations and academic governance ([Lekka-Kowalik, 2022](#)). As a result, there were fundamental changes that took place in the universities and transformed the identity of universities into organizational actors. That means universities are like corporate entities which are competing for resources. The Bologna Declaration of 1999 and the Lisbon Strategy of 2000 aim to increase European universities' global competitiveness ([Krücken, Kosmützky, & Torka, 2006](#)).

[De Boer et al. \(2007\)](#) highlighted the problems of reforms in Dutch universities by stating that it was not easy to design reforms which get accepted quickly. Further, the implementation of reforms was not an easy task. Reformers must rely on those who are used to working in old structures and, most of the time, protecting their interests. These people are not always to challenge the old way of doing things. Therefore, the outcome of reforms is sometimes disappointing; they have no intended outcomes of reforms. This case study narrated how it happened in Pakistan's newly formed public university.

[Amano and Poole \(2005\)](#) concluded that crises in Japanese universities are deep-rooted

and require immediate and quick reforms, which may be termed a revolution. When we talk of reforms, then these reforms are not only linked with policies, but it has a link with the internal structure of universities as well. That means real reform can occur if there is congruence between internal structure and university reforms. This change requires a fundamental shift in consciousness and a paradigm shift in how professors view their roles within universities. So, when the revolution comes into full force, various kinds of opposition will bear, and confusion will arise about this revolution. A new image of the university will arise after this period of confusion, disorder, and fear. The important thing for Japanese universities and professors was not to fear this phase of confusion but to grab the day and convert this crisis into opportunity; this was how Japanese universities could move forward. These lessons from Japanese University experiences are also linked to the present study. Although these institutional changes inculcated some confusion, this was an opportunity for the university's faculty to convert this confusion into opportunity. The role of HEC was also to support the efforts of University Management and Faculty to bring positive changes. This was quite important to understand how all these changes affect the attitudes and behaviours of faculty in the university.

The case of Romanian Higher Education reflects the problem in the policymaking process, both at macro and micro levels. There are many problems at the level of implementation, where implementing universities do not understand the real cause and the effects of the reforms. This ambiguity during implementation also arises due to the lack of a clear link between these higher education reforms and learning and teaching. This confusion brought a burden on implementers to have a clear understanding of these reforms and how they make use of these reforms. This happened in this case where there was an inconsistency of perceptions between the central agency and the university's actors about quality enhancement and accountability for these reforms. Many university actors fail to see the purpose of these reforms; thus, actors on the ground were passively engaged in the process of reforms. That was why they performed the functions superficially. Experience of Romanian Higher Education Reforms provided evidence that there would be no improvement in the Quality Enhancement Process without the direct involvement and support of people affected by these reforms in Higher Education Institutions (Geven, Sârbu, Santa, Maricuț, & Sabic, 2015).

The experience of reforms in Kazakhstan's higher education has similarities with the experience of reforms in Pakistan. Their system was trying to align their educational standards with international standards, even though they were too far from reaching that level. The reforms also required adequate university structural and management changes. There was a need for a paradigm shift from instruction to learning, making their students develop professionally and meet the challenges of the global workplace and their developing country's needs.

Farazmand (2004) proposed considering three approaches—top-down or elitist, bottom-up or participative, and institutional or cultural—in explaining reforms in the South Asian context. The reforms in South Asia have been elitist and served to uphold the interests of the country's dominant political and bureaucratic elite. While the problems were deeply rooted in the colonial legacy, traditional social structure, emerging political configurations, and weak economic performance, the solutions were sought by reorganizing

agencies and reformulating rules and procedures. There were hardly any efforts made to understand the complex relationships that governed the principles, practices, and consequences of the operation of the public sector. This mismatch of identified causes and expected outcomes is responsible for the myth of reforms in South Asia. In the years after independence, Pakistan neglected the vital task of strengthening the existing institutions and creating new public institutions for effective operations. Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan had passed through a series of ambitious reform initiatives. However, the reform process, spurred by the World Bank Reports, which began in the 2000s, is not linear.

I utilized the following three theoretical perspectives: i) Instrumental Perspective, ii) Cultural Perspective and iii) a Myth perspective to provide insights into explaining participants' experiences about this change process. In addition, these perspectives help understand public sector reforms in general as well ([Christensen, Læg Reid, & Røvik, 2020](#)). A brief overview of the three perspectives has been provided below:

The instrumental perspective consists of instrumental-hierarchical and instrumental negotiation perspectives. These two perspectives focused on organization and assumed that the logic of consequences guides political and administrative behaviour. Instrumental-hierarchical perspective asserted that organizational leaders design formal organizations and direct human behaviour towards achieving organizational goals. Hierarchy, division of labour and routines are three essential components of bureaucracy ([Christensen et al., 2020](#)), and the 'structure determines what authority and resources can be legitimately used, how, when, where, and by whom' instrumental-negotiation perspective assumed that organizations do not consist of 'unified actors'. These actors may follow different goals and interests and form coalitions to serve the interests of different groups. Heterogeneity, power, scarce resources and plurality are essential concepts in this perspective.

The institutional perspective consists of cultural and myth perspectives. From an institutional, cultural perspective, the informal norm may strengthen or weak formal norms in the organization by introducing 'institutional features' ([Christensen et al., 2020](#)). Normative institutionalism and historical institutionalism explains the unanticipated consequences of reforms. This perspective focuses on institutions; some organizations may take some time to develop institutional features. It is easy to change the structure but difficult to change the culture. Cultural change is evolutionary, and change happens in incremental steps. Even if some radical change happens in the organization, it takes some time to infuse the values and norms of the organization.

The institutional myth perspective uses sociological institutionalism, which highlights processes and isomorphism. The institutional environment affects the design and structure of organizations ([Meyer & Rowan, 1977](#)). 'A key concept is that organizations operate within institutional environments where they are confronted with socially created norms for how they should be designed and function'. These three perspectives help understand the relationships between content and the process of implementing higher education policy in this university. Of course, there are many other ways to explain these reforms, but these three perspectives provide a comprehensive explanation of the components of reforms.

Methodology

Both primary and secondary sources of information have been used to collect data. Secondary sources of information included examining documents and reports about Higher Education Reforms in Pakistan, the TTS program, and written correspondence of HEC with universities. In contrast, primary sources consist of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The focus of the study is to understand the essence of the experiences of faculty and senior management who have been part of this educational reform, TTS.

A single case study design was selected to focus on the experience of the Vice Chancellor, Deans, faculty members, and university administrative staff regarding implementing the Tenure Track System (TTS). Case analysis involved organizing the data by specific cases for in-depth study and comparison. Cases can be individuals, groups, neighbourhoods, programs, organizations, cultures, regions, or nation-states. The case study approach to qualitative analysis constitutes a specific way of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data; in that sense, it represents an analysis process. The purpose is to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest. The analysis process results in a product: a case study. This case study can refer to either the process of analysis, the product of analysis, or both. Individual participant case studies at project sites have been used to make up projected site case studies. Data were collected at the lowest level of analysis: Individuals who experienced the tenure track system. The project case study presented answers to the specific research questions on the subject under study.

Three elite interviews and one focus group discussion were conducted at this case study site. The total number of participants was eleven, and details of titles are as follows: Vice-Chancellor (1), Deans (2), Associate Professor (2), Assistant Professor(5), Deputy Registrar and Focal Person for Administration of TTS (1). (parentheses show the number of participants). The cases were selected by qualitative sampling technique – maximum variation. Then criterion sampling was used to select only those cases which met the criteria of experiencing this phenomenon for at least three years. Vice Chancellors and Deans (Full tenured professors) presented the TTS's academic and administrative aspects. The Deputy registrar highlighted the administrative challenges and faculty members highlighted the academic and administrative challenges of the TTS. The interview protocol remains almost the same for all participants except for minor modifications and added questions for participants dealing with the administrative component of TTS. All interviews and focus group discussions were semi-structured and recorded on the voice recorder. Interviews were a dominant method for data collection supplemented by the relevant documents. Documents included reports, TTS statutes, Statistics about TTS faculty, HEC notifications, and HEC correspondence with universities.

Interviewing procedures of this research study were influenced by procedures mentioned by Creswell, 2017. First, research questions were decided, which can be addressed through interviews. The study focused on capturing tenure-track faculty experiences and university management, which would not be best explained with a survey questionnaire. Interview questions probed participants to give detailed narratives about the experience

phenomenon. Second, case study sites and interviewees were identified through purposeful sampling procedures. Third, different types of interviews were utilized during this study. These interviews were used keeping in mind the convenience of participants. These interviews were conducted at the workplace of the interviewees. Participants were relaxed and open to interviewing questions. Focus group discussions posed different challenges during data collection. The researcher brought together participants at the case study site with the help of a collaborator. A Focus group allows the researcher to question several individuals systematically and simultaneously. Inexpensive, generating speedy results, offer flexibility for probing are advantages of a focus group. Moreover, sometimes new aspects of topics emerge due to group dynamics. However, there are a few disadvantages, such as questionable representativeness of participants, the influence of group dynamics to pressure people to say things that do not accurately reflect what they believe or do, and the difficulty in analyzing the voluminous data generated.

The tape recorder was used to ensure verbatim recording and freed the interviewer to give full attention to the respondents. Third, the interview guide was used during all types of interviews. Fourth, questions were pilot tested to refine data collection procedures. A significant challenge of the interview was gaining access to case study sites. There were numerous follow-up calls and emails to the Vice Chancellor. Once the researcher got a positive reply; then, he contacted the collaborator of the case study site to arrange interviews. Interview time and focus group discussion time were scheduled as per the convenience of respondents. Focus group discussion topics were sent to the collaborator. Focus group participants were recruited through a collaborator in the university. The researcher communicated the criteria of participants to the collaborator. (Kindly see the appendix for procedures of data analysis).

Findings

Purpose of Introduction of TTS

Participants explained multiple reasons, like reforms in Pakistan were part of the international movement of higher education reforms and to stop brain drainage from Pakistan. The Vice-Chancellor said,

The first chairman of HEC and Executive Director was the architect of TTS. They had a clear idea about the vision and direction of TTS. So, they got TTS approved by the Finance Ministry (F.M.). The FM approved TTS due to its contractual nature, as it did not have pension benefits. Therefore, TTS relieved the ministry from its long-term financial obligation to public sector employees. Further, the TTS was financed under a loan by the World Bank.

Faculty members elaborated that the Leaders of Higher education considered that the conventional reward system (BPS) was not motivating faculty members for research work. Therefore, they introduced a better financial package in the form of TTS. Additionally, HEC sent thousands of PhD scholars to different countries, and they wanted to

create employment opportunities for them in public universities. TTS is suited to young PhDs who want to enter the academic labour market. The resistance came from existing PhD faculty members, who wanted to have a higher financial compensation of TTS, but did not want to sacrifice their seniority and pension benefit of the previous service in the same university. Some participants expressed that HEC could not stop the brain drain from a public university, as many PhD faculty members left the system due to tension between TTS and BPS faculty members. Many participants said that the HEC approach of carrot and stick was successful in motivating faculty for research publications.

Content of TTS Guidelines

Participants said that HEC did not develop a coherent and integrated document. That resulted in different interpretations of the same guidelines. TTS guidelines were based on TTS guidelines of U.S. universities, and they did not develop by keeping in the realities of public universities. TTS guidelines are a legal and steering document, and problems of implementation of raised. A participant said, HEC came up with hundreds of clarifications about TTS guidelines. Then clarification of clarification came to clarify - this further confused and complicated situation at public universities. HEC leaders were not flexible in making any major revision of guidelines as per the context of the university. If university leadership recommended any change, then HEC considered it against the spirit of TTS. However, the spirit of TTS remains an ambiguous term, and people interpret it differently. A participant said, *"time arrived for major changes in sections of TTS guidelines, which affected teacher's promotion, seniority, and reward equity."*

HEC's notification restricted TTS faculty from having an administrative office in the university. So, at the beginning of their academic career, faculty members focus their efforts on research and teaching work. Many participants were adamant about having administrative positions at the university, as they would get more resources for their research work. Many participants considered that the HEC notification, which barred TTS faculty from having administrative positions in the university, gave administrative power to BPS faculty members. A Vice-Chancellor said that HEC was not consistent in implementing TTS statutes across all Pakistan public universities. He said, Large universities got some flexibility, and new universities' V.C.s tried not to argue with leaders of HEC and implemented it per their guidelines. Small universities are financially dependent on HEC for the salaries of TTS; therefore, it provides room for Leaders of HEC to intervene in governance and management matters of small public universities, whereas large and old universities resist any intervention. Many participants said that TTS was half cooked system, and leaders of HEC implemented the system in haste. Therefore, it did not seem to be clear about what would be the consequences of the implementation of TTS in public universities. Often, general notifications of HEC to all public universities spread confusion among faculty members. Moreover, many terms have not been defined in TTS guidelines, for instance, tenure, tenure track, and many universities interpret as per their convenience. The outcome of the implementation of TTS was confused and insecure faculty.

Implementation Process and Challenges

A Chairman, HEC, sent letters to the Vice Chancellors of a public university and tried to convince them to implement TTS in their respective universities. As a result, the university implemented this scheme in 2008. The explicit purpose of TTS was to motivate faculty members for research work. TTS came up with higher salaries than BPS, and HEC provided extra funding for TTS. Therefore, university leadership considered it a logical decision to implement TTS.

University management assumed that nobody would leave their permanent BPS job and join TTS for financial reward. However, this new university converted from college might wish to impress HEC leaders with the number of faculty on TTS. As they lack PhD-qualified faculty, they forced the new PhD faculty and lecturers to shift to TTS to get the position of Assistant Professor. Many faculty members considered it a violation of academic freedom and developed resentment for the coercive action of management. Many faculty members resisted joining the TTS due to the absence of pension, absence of medical allowance, job insecurity, and ambiguous performance evaluation processes and criteria. Faculty members raised questions like how the university incorporated their previous university service in TTS. What would happen to their job if they failed to meet performance criteria on TTS? University management did not consider the previous service of teachers as any advantage on TTS and put them at the start of the tenure track. Later, many faculty members felt that the university management violated the principles of seniority and justice. A participant said, *"My eight years of university service have been lost; who is responsible for this? My junior became my senior, and these are the fruits of implementing TTS in this university."*

Many teachers joined TTS as it was presented to replace BPS, but it did not happen. University management later advertised faculty positions on BPS. It weakened trust between university management and TTS faculty members. A Vice-Chancellor said, *"HEC leaders intend to replace BPS with TTS, but this did not happen."* Faculty members expressed that teachers have a pension and job security mindset, whereas TTS introduced job insecurity in the public sector.

Faculty members asserted that TTS as an idea was not bad. However, it has issues of lack of accountability, lack of proper evaluation, and lack of trained people to implement and evaluate the system. Therefore, the implementation of TTS was not congruent with the expectations of faculty and the culture of public universities. [Ydesen and Bomholt \(2020\)](#) argued that the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) economistic approach to accountability developed asymmetry, which is not feasible for building of trust. This coincide with the experience of teachers in this university, where output focus in terms of research papers is more important than input focus on improving quality of undergraduate teaching in the university.

Role of HEC during the Implementation of TTS

Participants said that present HEC leadership lost the momentum of change initiated by the founder team of HEC. The founder team of HEC was responsive to concerns of Uni-

versity management, but the capacity of university leaders and managers was not built to address all matters of TTS. Further, genuine autonomy to decide matters of TTS has not been given to the Syndicate of the University (Hashmi, 2015). A Vice Chancellor said, *"we understand our matters better and have better solutions to our problems. Therefore, leaders of HEC shall give real autonomy to University leaders to decide their matters."*

As the number of TTS faculty members grew, HEC managers responded slowly. A participant said, *"HEC did not have the required administrative capacity and skills to process all queries of TTS faculty from more than 130 public universities across the country. As a result, many grey areas emerged during implementation, and clerks at HEC did not have answers to these queries."* In addition, HEC management did not give clear solutions to problems of implementation, and University management did not have the autonomy to decide matters of TTS without the consent of HEC. Therefore, the system remains stalled.

HEC has the power to endorse all selection and promotion cases of TTS faculty. After the endorsement of HEC, financial funds would be released to the university. Participants said that HEC took about 6-8 months to respond in any case. A Vice Chancellor said, Tenure track is a time-bound system, and delayed response affected TTS faculty members' promotion cases. Despite delays at HEC, they did not approve cases of promotion retrospectively. Consequently, faculty members incurred a loss of time and money. A deputy registrar added, *"HEC management rejected the decision of the university's syndicate for performance-based increments of faculty on TTS."*

A Vice Chancellor appreciated the role of founding chairman HEC and its team in initiating many reforms in the higher education sector of Pakistan. After HEC, the compensation of faculty members was revised and improved. Leaders of HEC assumed that better financial compensation for faculty would motivate them for research work. So HEC started the process of reforms, but TTS did not achieve their intended goals. A Vice Chancellor said,

When we were in an affiliated college, the cheque for our salaries reached in the second week of the month. However, after becoming a university, we get our salaries every first of the month. This was a blessing of the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan.

Participants appreciated the leadership of HEC for providing financial support for conferences, research work, and seminars. However, a manager said that HEC provided minimal support for TTS and asked the university to provide additional financial support for increments on TTS. A Vice Chancellor said, *"we do not have any financial capacity to sustain TTS from our financial resources."*

Role of University Administration during the Implementation of TTS

Faculty members and Administration (Registrar's office) were not on the same page about interpreting TTS guidelines and their implementation. Many participants said that University Administration used fear to silence the voices of faculty members. A participant said, *"The Administration advised Vice Chancellor to not go beyond the rules and regulations of*

the university to solve the problems of TTS faculty. A Vice Chancellor listened to them, as he did not want any legal repercussions for himself. Otherwise, he listened to our grievances."

Participants said that University management now wanted to implement TTS half-heartedly due to the pressure of HEC. Many times did not have answers to queries of TTS faculty and shifted the responsibility to the Management of HEC that they did not provide funds. As a result, TTS is moving in circles and remains an orphan at this university. A participant said, *"high compensation for faculty developed envy among the administration. Therefore, their actions speak that they do not want faculty members to join TTS. Therefore, there is a need to build the capacity of Registrar's office to implement TTS."*

Effects of TTS on the University Culture

The work of the faculty members in this university has three dimensions - clinical practice, teaching, and research. HEC reform programs focused on promoting research work and gave less weight to their teaching and clinical work. Primarily, criteria for promotion of tenure depend on publications of research papers. A participant said, *"TTS promoted selfishness among teachers, and they were not inclined to engage in activities, which did not reflect on their performance evaluation criteria form."* A dean said, *TTS still is an 'orphan' scheme; university management, leaders of HEC, and faculty members did not take ownership of the scheme. Nevertheless, TTS is like a new bride, which looks beautiful due to its expensive dress and jewellery."* A Deputy Registrar said that an intrinsically motivated researcher published in impact factor journals before the introduction of TTS. There are a large number of faculty members on BPS who engaged in research work and did not seek financial rewards for publishing research papers. Now, TTS has monetized the research work at the university.

An Academic Association of Faculty did not play any role in resolving matters of TTS faculty. A participant from the administration said, *Generally, academics are scared and comply with the instructions of the university administration. Faculty members did not have a collective voice and could not impress university management to address their concerns. Primarily, the faculty association remains docile in asserting the demands of TTS faculty members.*

Many participants said that Academic Staff Association was not an influential voice for faculty members. Some participants said that their senior colleagues considered TTS the short-term contractual arrangement of making money in a public university. Many participants felt that TTS had job insecurity, and many of their senior colleagues kept reminding them that they did not have any job security on TTS. They gave them the advice to leave TTS and come back on BPS. A participant said, *"our seniors treated us like a victim of the system and considered us like a poor wretch who was motivated to do research for the sake of getting money."* A participant highlighted the society's values and said, *"Pakistan is a country where nobody objects to salaries of Judges, Army Officers, Civil Bureaucracy, but objection raised on increasing salaries of university teachers."* A woman participant expressed, *"there was no inherent bias in TTS for women, but there was a bias in the profession. There were few women at higher academic posts whereas she denied that few women on TTS were not due to job insecurity."*

Post Implementation

There are intended and unintended consequences of implementing TTS in public universities. A Vice Chancellor said that reforms of HEC energized the higher education sector and helped the universities to develop basic infrastructure. He explained that TTS is a private sector contractual job in the public sector, focusing on performance.

A Dean was dissatisfied with how faculty members have been engaged in the rat race to increase their research papers. He said, *"TTS brought cosmetics and number games into the university's culture."* Faculty members engaged in this race as the publication of research papers is a significant criterion for promotion and getting an increment on TTS. Therefore, many faculty members took many PhD students to get financial and research benefits. A Dean said that the trend of taking too many PhD students under supervision is similar to the supervision practice of Professors in Chinese universities. He said, *"For each student, the faculty gets the monthly incentive; more students mean more money. It is normal for Professors in China to have many MPhil and PhD students under their supervision, and this trend is repeated here."*

Professors were more satisfied with the implementation of TTS compared to Assistant professors. Many Professors were shifted from university service to tenure track; therefore, they did not pass through tenure track requirements as laid down for incumbents. Many participants agreed that TTS is a feasible option at the Associate Professor and Professor level. A participant said, *"A salary difference with a similar BPS scale was significant at Associate Professor and Professor level, whereas the difference is negligible at the Assistant Professor level. Therefore, the most difficulties were in the Assistant Professor track."* An administrative team member said, *"TTS is a sheer wastage of public exchequer, wastage of resources. It would be far better for the government shut down this program as they wasted enough money."*

Many participants expressed that TTS positively affected their teaching and research performance. On the other hand, some participants said that TTS created stress for them, which affected their health. A participant said, *"there is an insignificant difference in salaries of Assistant Professors on TTS with Assistant Professors on BPS. They do not have the pressure to produce research papers as we have, so why does one exert so much."* They were passing through the stress of the new system, and sometimes they aggravated trivial matters of tenure (See appendix C for advantages and disadvantages of TTS). Participants wanted to remain on TTS; as they passed the probation period, they expected to be promoted on track. A Vice Chancellor said, *"TTS passed through its evolutionary phase, and initial anomalies were addressed, and the system got strength due to new recruitment of PhD faculty."*

Challenges of Performance Evaluation

Participants highlighted the evaluation criteria focused on research papers and less on the application of research, clinical, and administrative work. Many participants said that the evaluation criteria of TTS were suited to natural science disciplines. Therefore, faculty members got frustrated as they found incongruence between their work and what is considered work on evaluation criteria. A participant said, *"you could see any discipline,*

engineering, veterinary, medical and social sciences were quite unhappy from Chairman HEC, at that time." A participant from the administration said,

HEC did not provide any evaluation performance form, I visited different universities, and to my surprise, every university is evaluating in their way. This led to variations in performance evaluation Performa of different universities, and later faculty members of different universities compared each other performance evaluation forms.

HEC did not mention impact factor journals for evaluation during the initial phase of implementation. They toughened the criteria as the number of TTS faculty increased. Faculty members engaged in surgical work, and attending clinics, considered these evaluation criteria superfluous, putting them in a disadvantageous position.

TTS faculty's evaluation process consisted of annual, three-year, mid-probationary, and end-term reviews. In addition, each faculty member was expected to submit at least two research projects annually. There was lots of paperwork and duplications involved in the performance evaluation of a faculty member, annual evaluation reports, mid-term evaluation reports, annual confidential reports (ACRs), end term reviews. An administrative team member said, *"Since TTS faculty were getting higher salaries; therefore, we kept an eye on the performance of TTS faculty. There is no concept of stopping a tenure clock for any reason. This kind of performance standards did not prevail for BPS faculty."*

TTS guidelines were developed in the U.S., where many faculty members were tenured. Here, the system was new, and there were no tenured faculty members when the evaluation of TTS faculty came at the hands of BPS faculty, creating conflict between evaluating and evaluator. A participant said, *"Evaluate is doing better research than an evaluator, but the evaluator ridiculed TTS faculty for not publishing enough research papers."* The act of measuring the performance of the faculty has a political dimension. The evaluator, in case of unfavourable evaluation, may question the intention of the evaluator. The measuring changes the available properties and interpretation of the assessment process and procedures.

Discussion

TTS was implemented through established routines of the university; no separate cell/department was created for the implementation of TTS. No specialization existed for the implementation of TTS in the university, and horizontal specialization and horizontal coordination were missing at the university level and led to confusion about the implementation of TTS. Misunderstandings were developed initially due to a lack of coordination among university management, faculty, and HEC. HEC could not address all implementation concerns of implementing university; moreover supportive structure for implementation of TTS was missing in the university. As a result, there were gaps in vertical coordination between university management and HEC. This gap became widened after the initial leadership left the HEC. The vertical specialization of leaders, who started the process of reforms, was not shifted to the university leaders.

Instrumental Perspective - Negotiation describes that different individuals and parts of organizations have different goals. The organization consisted of coalitions built around their interests. HEC provided TTS statutes, but the real challenge was implementing TTS in the context of public universities. Faculty members were not as powerful a group as the university administration. In research from Barrett-Tatum and Ashworth also highlighted the issues of inequities and imbalance of power experienced by academics in educational reform movement (2020). The number of TTS faculty increased, and now they want to open negotiations to resolve matters of TTS. From a Cultural Perspective, it was essential to understand the organization's informal norms and values and how the reforms' outcomes get affected by established cultural factors (Grunert & Ludwig, 2022). The culture of the University values teaching, industrial research, and clinical practices. Academic research was there, but not the dominant activity. The faculty members and university administration were socialized in BPS and developed their mental maps about BPS. From a cultural perspective, the concept of TTS was decontextualized, and many participants considered this an imported system. Herbert and Tienari (2013) asserted that local context needs to be considered during the implementation of the tenure track. The origin of TTS is in the U.S., where faculty members started a movement to protect their employees from the whimsical decisions of the university administration. These trends of protection of academic freedom are reflected in the present TTS in the U.S. In the context of Pakistan, TTS did not provide that kind of employment security.

Trust was the main component of cultural perspective, and here faculty mistrusted HEC for support for the program. Faculty mistrusted the Registrar's office for fair and smooth implementation of TTS, and this mistrust slows down the speed of implementation of TTS. University was new, and TTS was adapted due to the external pressure of HEC. In the words of DiMaggio and Powell (1983), the implementation of tenure-track in this university is an example of coercive isomorphism. The central concept of the Institutional Myth Perspective was that organizations operate within an institutional environment where they are confronted with socially created norms for how they should be designed and function (Christensen et al., 2020) After ten years, the myth about TTS was busted. There was a need for high salaries for academics. Initially, TTS addressed this need because the difference between TTS and BPS salaries was significant at the initial stage. However, these differences in salaries were gradually reduced at the assistant professor level. As a result, the level of dissatisfaction and frustration increased at Assistant Professor Level.

A New rationalized myth was created about TTS that it was for experienced professors. They could join directly as Associate Professor or Professor and enjoy huge salaries. Broadly, Assistant Professors were dissatisfied, and they struggled under TTS. The HEC and University are still struggling to make TTS a profession of choice for young PhD. HEC came up with the idea that all young PhDs should be selected for TTS, and the legitimacy of TTS may increase. TTS did not become the dominant reward system as intended by leaders of HEC. It remained decoupled from the main structure and culture of the university. If the university continues with two parallel reward systems, TTS will remain a surface idea in the university. In the words of Meyer and Rowan (1977), TTS remained decoupled from the culture of public universities. Though public universities formally

adapted TTS, they could not succeed in effectively implementing the new system. As Meyer and Rowan (1977), "...decoupling enables organizations to maintain standardized, legitimating, formal structures while their activities vary in response to practical considerations." It may succeed if the system moves towards congruence with the culture and structure of public universities.

TTS was presented as a rationalized symbol for producing more research. This recipe was rationalized to give a better economic incentive to teachers. The scheme promised to raise the financial standard of university teachers. This norm of self-interest was aligned with the spread of materialism in society. TTS was slowly penetrating the dominant culture of public universities. The TTS guidelines were not contextualized as per university and as per discipline, even though it mentioned in the guideline that the university can make changes without violating the essential spirit of TTS. The underlying essence of TTS remained vague term and led to multiple interpretations. TTS guidelines ignored that the performance requirement of every discipline was different, and it cannot be measured on the evaluation criteria of science disciplines. On grounds, HEC did not let universities make effective changes per their requirements. HEC argued that allowing universities to make changes in guidelines will open a Pandora box. The question raised whether universities have the competency and skill to make any changes in guidelines.

Therefore, universities can use their discretion to decide on tenure-track or tenure status. The newly formed universities' leadership did not discuss these statutes. In contrast, the leadership of large universities did not implement every notification of HEC. Initially, HEC was flexible with large and old universities, so they could start implementing TTS. However, the requirements of TTS get stringent as time pass.

Conclusion

There is a need to highlight the context of public universities. One centralized state-led policy for all public universities would not improve the country's overall conditions of higher education. UVAS is a newly established university and faced less resistance from its faculty during the implementation of TTS. This is a small university in terms of faculty and students compared to other General Universities. It was previously an affiliated college, and the newly appointed Vice Chancellor was not inclined to challenge any educational programs initiated by HEC nor by faculty members of this university as they did not have any unified political voice. Moreover, faculty members were interested in maximizing their monetary and professional benefits from TTS, as many have passed their initial six years of probation. They considered that the main problem is TTS's ineffective and slow implementation. They considered that University management was not consistent in implementing TTS guidelines, and HEC remained non-responsive at large to concerns of TTS faculty. Moreover, HEC policy clarification notices created confusion and ambiguities in implementing TTS, as, generally, these notifications were not coherent and aligned with previous policy guidelines. In addition, there were problems with TTS's content guidelines, which were not coherent and aligned with the socio-cultural realities of public universities in Pakistan.

TTS's road to implementation is filled with many obstacles, and the system is still struggling in this university. Therefore, there is a need for alignment among different educational reforms and within educational reforms across various public universities. However, this alignment may not build the capacity of organizations to implement but lessen confusion, anxieties, and doubts about these programs.

Recommendations and Implications

The guidelines for the Tenure Track System (TTS) need to be revised to align with the specific context and requirements of implementing these systems in public universities. To accomplish this, a task force consisting of legal consultants, HR specialists in reward and performance, senior university academics, and senior university management can be formed. This task force can work together to develop comprehensive guidelines tailored to their respective universities.

Taking into account the experiences with TTS, it is crucial to foster a dialogue between university management, all groups of teachers, and the Higher Education Commission (HEC). This dialogue should prioritize respectful systems of management and governance, promoting a culture based on mutual respect. It is important to avoid labeling any group as "dead wood" or "non-performers," as well as refraining from derogatory terms like "greedy," "elite," or "money mongers." Constructive dialogues that establish mutually agreed-upon goals are essential for achieving the objectives of a public university.

There is a need for trained middle management at the Registrar's office who can effectively implement higher educational programs. A separate section, cell, or designated personnel should be assigned to handle the processing of TTS cases, providing administrative support to the Head of Department, Deans, and DTRC for the evaluation of TTS cases. Overall, the culture of the Registrar's office needs to be transformed to function as a professional human resource and development office (Waseem, Frooghi, & Afshan, 2013).

TTS faculty shall take responsibility for actively pursuing tenure and advancing their careers within the TTS framework. University management and HEC should provide Assistant Professors with a one-time option for an honorable exit from TTS, where their title and seniority will not be affected.

HEC shall demonstrate greater responsiveness to the concerns of university management and faculty. To facilitate this, the establishment of a feedback cell dedicated to TTS at HEC, staffed with an adequate number of personnel to address concerns from all over Pakistan, is necessary.

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