

Institution Building in Universities- A Key to Excellence

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Abstract

Institution building is a continuous process of developing self renewal mechanism of an institution with a purpose to improve and enrich its existing capabilities and resources. Institutions irrespective of their nature play a pivotal role in transforming societies and contributing towards nation development. In this respect, educational institutions, particularly higher academic institutions have far reaching impact on society as compared to other institutions. Therefore, institution building in higher educational institutions is critical towards enhancing the competitiveness of a nation. Keeping this in view, the present research study is aimed to examine the perception of teaching personnel towards institution building in sample selected institutions. The results of the study revealed that teaching personnel have shown favourable perception towards IB practices. However, it has been seen from the data analysis that gender does not significantly influence the perception of teaching personnel towards institution building in sample study institutions. The findings of the study suggest that IB practices needs to be further enriched so that it results in improving the performance of sample select institutions.

Key words: Institution building, universities, excellence, teaching and research

INTRODUCTION

Institutions of any background have got significance in contributing towards nation building and the role of education sector specifically higher academic institutions becomes all more significant. The higher educational institutions (HEI), especially the universities are the agencies of developing human resources of the country and are charged to serve people by developing their knowledge, skills and personality including their values and attitudes. The development of world class educational institutions is debated at local, national and global platforms. Ahmad and Mir (2012) stressed that institutions must be developed for transforming societies and enabling itself to meet global standards. FICCI (2014) reported that a developing country like India needs around 3.3 billion talented and skilled human resources by 2020 who can play active role towards transforming economic competence of the country to higher levels and this requires Indian higher educational institutions to make itself more competitive and relevant in producing capable workforce that meets global expectations and needs.

Over the years various rankings by international agencies on higher education particularly Times Higher Education (2015-2018) and QS World University Ranking (2016-2018) has depicted that Indian universities are lagging behind to their counterparts as they are unable to compete with international universities around the world. The reasons attributed to such low performance are attributed to lack of quality teaching and research, student employability skills and international outlook and as such are not able to attain academic excellence at global level. The institutions particularly universities and policy makers need to relook and revisit their academic practices. The

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focus should be to produce excellent institutions which meet international standards. It calls for enriching institution building process for attaining global academic competitiveness

Institution Building- An Overview

The concept of institution building is continuously evolving and gaining immense relevance and popularity as it has an impact on overall society and nation development. According to Kalro and Sharma (2010) “Institution building is about creating sustainable organizations which overtime continues to be guided by the mission and vision of the organization and have an abiding value system”. Umar (2018) the future belongs to those institutions and universities that can outshine and outrun their competitors by exhibiting and upholding the ethos of academic culture and by contributing towards institutional building and national development.

Rao (1990) advocated that institution building process in educational institution focus towards effectiveness and creativity rather efficiency and uniformity and that former has to be towards institution building practices in terms of teaching and research, performance management system, faculty development, academic culture, and shared values and vision.

Institution Building Practices

1) Quality Teaching:

Quality of teaching is considered as an important pillar of institution building and in achieving academic excellence. The quality of teaching in an institution impacts the employability of students as it helps in developing their skills, abilities, knowledge and mental faculties. The teaching in an institution should match academic quality standards as this has link towards gaining higher ranks among world academic institutions. Every rating agency and institution keeps quality of teaching as an important factor in determining the progress and performance of institution.

2) Quality Research:

Quality Research is gaining immense popularity among academicians and policy makers as it enhances the country’s resource base and results in institutional competitiveness. Higher educational institutions are in a race to outperform each other as quality of research in educational institutions is critical factor in achieving competitive advantage.

3) Academic industry linkages:

Institution building process calls for developing strong ties between academic institutions and industry. Jacob et al., (2000) stressed that organisational design, or more specifically intra- organisational design, must be structured and coordinated to support knowledge exchange between university and industry. Sebuwufuetal (2012) stated that university cannot function in isolation for creating and disseminating knowledge unless academic-industry collaboration is promoted for smooth delivery of academic operations regarding technology transfer and student’s skill upgradation. Academic- industry linkages play a critical role in contributing towards enhancing nation’s global competitiveness by fostering stability and change, improving skill development, and promoting

technology driven sharing of knowledge (Esham, 2008;

4) Performance appraisal system

Performance appraisal performance helps in development of individuals which leads to their commitment towards their organizations. Performance appraisal is perceived degree to which performance appraisal system has attributes, those are right for fair and accurate evaluation of employee job performance (Salleh et al, 2013 and Moulik and Mazumdar, 2012).

5) Training and Development

Rotherberg (2003) opined that training is designed to help the organization to accomplish objectives. Training to employees' means giving them opportunity to learn and increase their efficiency and professional knowledge. Training plays an important role in the development of individual and contributes towards his commitment and satisfaction with work and organization.

6) Organizational Culture (OCTAPACE):

OCTAPACE Culture refers to the extent to which openness, confrontation, trust, autonomy, pro-activity, authenticity, collaboration and experimentation are valued and promoted in an organization (Rao and Abraham 1986 and Ganihar and Nayak, 2007). Organizational culture includes beliefs, views, norms, assumptions and shared values which are available in the organization. In other words, it is the way of performing works by the organization Panagiotis et al., 2014).

7) Graduate Employability:

Employability encompasses the combination of four aspects of higher education: 'understanding of subject matter' (propositional knowledge in the form of mastery of the subject matter of the degree), 'skilful practices' (these can be characterised as procedural knowledge), 'efficacy beliefs' (belief that one generally can make some impact on situations and events) and 'metacognition' (awareness of what one knows and can do, and of how one learns more). Employers pay less importance to academic credentials and more importance to personal attributes and skills when the supply of graduates increases (Brown et al, 2003). Rosenberg et al., (2012) stated that need has been felt by higher educational institutions to provide employment avenues to students by developing their employability skills.

8) Career Planning and Development:

Career planning and development has significant impact in developing employee potentials and improving individual efficiency. Manolescu (2003) defined career planning as a continuous process for an individual to develop his own occupational concept as a result of his own skills and abilities, needs, motivations and aspirations. Rao (1999) viewed career opportunities as an important factor in providing a developmental climate in any organization. Career planning must align individual career needs and aspirations with organizational needs and opportunities.

Research Objectives

On the basis of reviewing past research studies, the following objectives have been formulated:

- i) to examine the perception of teaching personnel of sample study institutions towards institution building (IB) practices
- ii) to assess the perception of teaching personnel towards IB practices across gender, and
- iii) to draw conclusions and suggest measures for improving IB practices for achieving academic excellence.

Research Hypotheses

In view of the above laid down objectives, following hypotheses have been drawn for the present study

- i) Perception of teaching personnel towards IB practices differs significantly across gender

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present research study, a well structured and well designed questionnaire was administered among the faculty members of sample select institutions to get the primary information, regarding the various institution building practices under study. The perception of respondents towards existing institution building practices prevailing in their respective universities was gathered through identification of variables on the basis of past research studies and by collecting information from the subject experts regarding the same. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed among faculty members of four universities from within the state of J&K out of which only 308 questionnaires were received back. Out of the 307 questionnaires returned, 29 responses were found either incomplete or not fit for analysis. Therefore, only 277 questionnaires were used for final analysis representing usable response rate of 79.14%. The data whatsoever collected was tabulated and analyzed. Moreover, interpretations were drawn up from the data after applying statistical tests such as mean, percentage to mean score, standard deviation, ANNOVA, inferential statistics.

Reliability and Validity Test

The reliability of the questionnaire during pilot study was examined by using Cronbach's Alpha. The overall cronbach value was found to be at 0.742 which is higher than acceptable level in social science research (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Further Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed in order to check the consistency and discrimination among study factors. The suitability of data was examined through two tests namely Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity which was found to be higher than 0.50 and 0.000 respectively.

The fit indices of the specified model have yielded good results (CMIN/DF=1.822; GFI=0.925; CFI=.922; RMSEA=0.068; RMR=0.042). Moreover, it was found from the model, that all the factor loadings are well above 0.70 thresholds and hence support EFA findings (Hair *et al.*,

1988).

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Perception of teaching personnel towards IB practices

Constructs	Mean Score	% of Mean Score	Std. Deviation	Ranking
Quality Teaching	3.25	64.80	0.71	2 nd
Academic Industry Linkages	3.05	61.00	0.66	8 th
Career planning and development	3.16	63.20	0.69	5 th
Institution Culture	3.24	64.80	0.77	3 rd
Graduate Employability	3.20	64.00	0.75	4 th
Quality Research	3.11	62.20	0.78	7 th
Performance Management System	3.13	62.60	0.72	6 th
Training and Development	3.29	65.80	0.80	1 st
Institution Building	3.17	63.40		

Note: Higher the mean score, higher the level of satisfaction.

Data compiled by the author for the present study

As is evident from table 1, the teaching personnel of sample study institutions have reported above average satisfaction level towards institution building (IB) practices with overall mean score of 3.17 and % mean score of 63.40%. It is depicted from the table 1 that among IB practices, teaching personnel have showing highest satisfaction level towards training and development with mean score and % mean score of 3.29 and 65.80% respectively. Moreover, institutional culture and quality teaching have been viewed favourably with mean score of 3.27 and 3.25 respectively. However, teaching personnel have reported least satisfaction level towards academic industry linkages with mean score and % mean score of 3.05 and 61.00 % respectively. Similarly, among IB Practices teaching personnel of sample institutions showed low satisfaction level towards quality research and performance management system with mean score and % mean score of 3.11 and 62.20%, and 3.13 and 62.60% respectively. Overall, it can be observed that teaching personnel have showed above average satisfaction level across all IB practices which depicts that they are more or less having favourable attitude towards existing IB practices prevailing in their respective institutions.

Table 2: Institution Building and Gender

Constructs	Mean Score		Total Mean Sore
	Male Teaching Staff (n=171)	Female Teaching Staff (n=106)	
Quality Teaching	3.29	3.21	3.28
Academic-Industry Linkages	3.01	3.09	3.08
Career planning and development	3.11	3.21	3.19
Institution Culture	3.27	3.21	3.27
Graduate Employability	3.23	3.17	3.23

Quality research	3.16	3.06	3.14
Performance Management System	3.16	3.10	3.16
Training and development	3.25	3.33	3.32
Institution Building	3.19	3.17	3.20

Note: Higher the mean score, higher the level of satisfaction. Data compiled by the author for the present study

As is evident from the table 2 the male staff of sample study institutions have showed higher satisfaction towards IB practices with overall mean score of (3.19) as compared to female staff with overall mean score of (3.17). Male teaching staff has viewed quality teaching (3.29), institutional culture (3.27), graduate employability (3.23), quality research (3.16) and performance management system (3.16) more favourable as compared to female teaching staff. However, female staff showed higher perception level towards academic-industry linkages (3.09), career planning and development (3.21), training and development (3.33) as compared to male teaching staff.

To know whether the difference in respondent group 'gender' is statistically significant or not, an independent samples test was employed. The results showed that the difference in the perception of female and male staff towards IB practices is statistically insignificant as the p value is more than .05 (table 3). Therefore hypotheses 1 is not empirically supported and hence rejected.

Table 3: Independent Samples Test (Gender)

Construct	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t- test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Quality Teaching and Research	.550	.378	-1.112	275	.234	0.08234
Academic Industry Linkages	.445	.341	-1.369	275	.345	-0.08566
Career planning and development	.611	.377	-1.167	275	.098	-0.10123
Institution Culture	.508	.260	-1.298	275	.067	0.06211
Graduate Employability	.555	.394	-1.666	275	.123	0.06109
Quality research	.609	.241	-1.345	275	.322	0.10240
Performance Management System	.477	.245	-1.877	275	.333	0.06789
Training and development	.608	.367	-1.758	275	.107	-0.08300
Institution Building	.522	.566	1.279	275	.072ns	0.06016

Source: Data compiled by the author for the present study.

* $p < .05$; ns= not significant)

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The present study was aimed to examine the perception of teaching personnel towards institution

building practices in sample select institutions. On the basis of research evidences, it was revealed that teaching personnel showed above average satisfaction level towards overall IB practices. Moreover, the study aimed to analyze the perception of teaching personnel across demographic variable namely gender. It was seen from the study results that gender did not had a significant effect on institution building practices.

The study findings suggest that sample select institutions need to enrich their academic

research with focus on improving its quality. Further, teaching pedagogy needs to be sounder with focus on experiential teaching and learning. The other implication of the present study highlights that academic –industry partnership needs to be strengthened with sharing of expertise, knowledge, exchange of staff, student internships, which would enhance competencies and capabilities of teaching staff and will also develop employability skills of young graduates. Lastly, the finding of the study also suggests that performance management system needs to be more effective and result oriented.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The present study is faced with some limitations. Firstly, the study targeted only four universities and as such findings of the study cannot be generalized to whole population. Therefore, future research can include more universities from other parts of the country as well in order to cover wider geographical representation. Secondly, the present study gathered information from respondents at only one point time therefore future research can be longitudinal in nature that will provide more holistic picture about the study institutions.

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