IMPLEMENTATION OF TENURE TRACK SYSTEM REFORM IN PAKISTAN: A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT
Tenure Track System was introduced in Pakistan in the year 2004 following the New Public Management influenced higher education reforms in 2002. Focusing on this intervention, the study aimed to assess and evaluate the Tenure Track System implementation in higher education institutions (HEI's) exploring its implementation status, identifying challenges faced by stakeholders, role of institutional factors in this regard to get an overall idea regarding effectiveness of the performance oriented reform in actually improving teaching and research performance in higher education institutions of Pakistan, and lastly the analysis of the importance of contextual factors involved in reform implementation. A total of 39 interviews were conducted using purposive/stakeholder sampling and a thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative data using NVIVO. Some of the major findings include, ignorance of context and prerequisites of this reform, ambiguities in the statutes, lack of comprehension on part of stakeholders, capacity issues of universities as well as the regulatory body & lack of accountability.
Keywords: New Public Management, Tenure Track System, Context, Capacity Building, Reform Analysis, Institutional Perspective

INTRODUCTION

The generic shift in public sector and public services delivery can be traced in the idea of New Public Management (NPM), a common terminology used since late 1980s to refer to a new dimension that emphasizes the importance of business like management (Wang & Jones, 2020) in public service delivery, often associated to "doctrines of economic rationalism" (Hood, 2001). The idea of new public management came with the promise to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector based on the assumption that private sector is more efficient; therefore its practices should be adopted by the public sector (Funck & Karlsson, 2020).

This diffusion of new public management has instigated universities to give attention to performance and competition, and this competition has been promoted by NPM at both individual as well as institutional levels (Leišytė, 2016). *"Reforms of university governance are in some ways likely to reflect the more general reform trends in the political-administrative system and society"* (Christensen, 2011, p. 504).

The governance history and reforms journey from creation of the country to establishment of the University Grants Commission (UGC) (the first premier body on university governance/regulation) to the new public management led deliberations in the later 1990s and early 2000s have been more or less following the international trends (Zubair et al., 2019). It is significant to explore the idea of governance and sectoral context because Andrews (2008) argues that if the context and environment are ignored then reforms *"end up resembling proverbs that fit poorly in the wrong context and contradict one another"* (p.380). Based on the historical patters and literature, the script concludes that all recommendations or proposals of various committees or taskforces reflected the norms or practices advocated by the new public management philosophy.

Precisely, the report titled as "Peril and Promise" basically triggered reform initiatives in several countries including Pakistan while universities all over the world started moving in similar direction and for legitimization internationally, university governance mechanisms initiated reforms all over (Khan & Jabeen, 2011 ; Yonezawa & Shimmi, 2015).

Following this report, several reform initiatives were taken in Pakistan with an intention to improve the Higher Education Structure in the country. One such initiative after the establishment of Higher Education Commission in 2002 was the introduction of *Tenure Track System (TTS)* that revolves around the basic idea of pay for performance and accountability.

According to well-known ranking system QS World University Rankings (2019) only two universities from Pakistan rank in world top 500 universities, these rankings covers 6 dimensions: *"Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, Faculty/Student Ratio, Citations per faculty, International Faculty Ratio, International Student Ratio"*. As per Pakistan Education Statistics 2016-2017 by Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan (2018), there are approximately 31,819 full time teachers in public universities of Pakistan out of which only 7% (2,955) were on TTS. As of information available on HEC website (2019), there are only 195 Universities and Degree Awarding Institutions in Pakistan (public and private) out of which 116 belong to the public sector.

In this context, the study attempts to examine the promising TTS reform transformation from an implementation perspective with a specific focus on the reform that is being advocated around the globe under the broader new public management philosophy i.e. the Tenure Track System as opposed to the conventional Basic Pay Scale system.

It was identified by Zubair et al. in 2015 that this reform is here to stay, therefore an in-depth understanding, assessment and evaluation of this reform is of critical significance.

Following are the objectives of this study:

i) To assess the effectiveness of TTS reform in terms of meeting its objectives i.e. teaching, research and performance based compensation.

ii) To identify the challenges Higher Education Commission and universities have faced in implementation of TTS reforms.

iii) To evaluate the influence of institutional factors in assisting or hindering reform implementation such as the TTS reform.

1.1 Significance of the Study

The subject of "University Governance" and university reforms has been widely studied and researched upon by various researchers globally. As far as Tenure Track System is concerned, limited amount of work has been done.

Not just the higher education sector, but the idea of pay for performance is new to public sector especially with reference to a developing country like Pakistan. Literature supports the notion that financial incentives are not the only motivators, but are an important part of the compensation package. Higher salaries alone cannot motivate everyone, this notion also calls for taking views of academia that, "is the compensation package designed under TTS" fair enough to keep academicians motivated, a need for review on this idea is worthy of a study.

This study attempts to narrow the gap as far as evaluation of this system is concerned. TTS is being continuously advocated by HEC-Pakistan since it has been introduced. This study promises to have implications at two levels. Firstly, due to limited studies on the subject, this research adds to the existing knowledge, contributing to the idea of entrepreneurial spirit and efficiency in the education sector and informs the literature on reform implementation and analysis in the light of institutional perspective. Secondly, being an implementation study of a key reform, it serves as a ready feedback for HEC and the related policy makers who can use the findings of this research for improvements in the mechanisms associated with tenure track system in Pakistan.

2. Theoretical Framework

The following theoretical framework has been developed for the contextual analysis of Tenure Track System implementation in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan. The theoretical framework has been influenced by a previous study by the researcher with some modifications and is primarily based on the Institutional Perspective (Zubair et al., 2015). Scholars that include, Christensen et al. (2007), Meyer (1997), Scott (1987), DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Selznick (1957) have comprehensively contributed to the development of this perspective. The literature suggests that Resource Dependence Theory and Institutional Perspective together help in explaining the issues related to reform implementation analysis and importance of context in public education sector (Mehari, 2016; Ehresman, 2011). The use of institutional theory for institutional analysis increased in the early 1990s in higher education research (Cia & Mehari, 2015).

With the introduction of any reform, a *Cultural* change is required and resistance is a must outcome of any such initiative. As the organization or a sector ages, certain norms, values and practices get built-in into and as Selznick (1957) says, they get *"Institutionalized"*. These norms, values and behaviors get induced informally into the system of that organization and also the people working in that Organization. Moreover, institutional design helps in achieving what and how the organizational goals are achieved (Strielkowski et al., 2020).
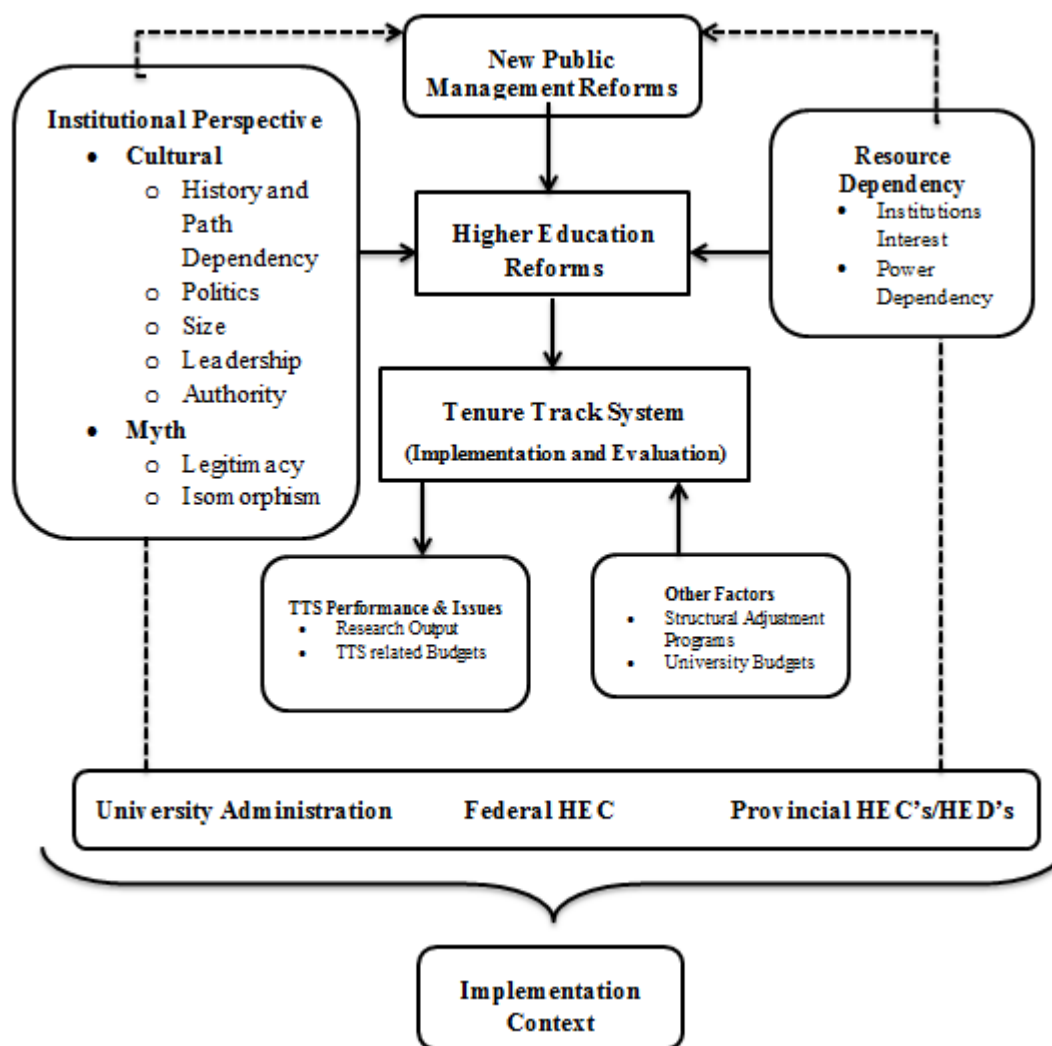
Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

"Path Dependency" is another variable that affects a reform implementation and hinders a policy change, as the organization gets older, it becomes more dependent on its history. As cited in Zubair et al. (2015), according to Christensen et al. (2007) variables that may add to resistance of a reform include:

a. Organizational History and Path Dependency
b. Politics in the organization
c. Size of the Organization
d. Role of Leadership
e. Authority of University

Contextualization of a reform is key to its success, Christensen et al. (2007) also argue many reforms do not succeed or face resistance because they are not "contextualized" or they do not include any say of the local stakeholders "and are merely adopted because of being in "fashion" and NPM led Higher Education Reforms seem to be one such phenomenon (Zubair et al., 2015). Similarly, what Christensen et al. (2007) refer to as *"Myths"* of "Recipes" are another explanation as to how reforms are introduced particularly in developing countries through developmental institutions. Meyer (1997) also concludes that, usually *Efficiency* is not the goal of Organizations or Institutions or even countries (in terms of Structural Adjustment Programs-SAP), sometimes changes are made or practices are modified to seek

legitimacy from the environmental stakeholders and according to (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) even resource dependence theory based legitimacy can help in achieving the goals (Kholmuminov et al., 2019).

Another similar view in this regard is presented by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), which they refer to as *"Isomorphism"*. They regard isomorphism as one of the most important concepts that help in understanding institutional pressures (Ufere et al., 2020) . For them, some "recipes" are adopted due to three reasons; Coercive, Mimetic or Normative. As per the framework, following are also some factors (variables) that lead to initiation or diffusion of a reform and if not taken care of can cause disruptions and problem in the implementation process:

    a. Legitimacy
    b. Environment
    c. Isomorphism (Coercive, Mimetic, Normative)

Furthermore, the resource dependency theory, explains the relation and dependence of the stakeholders (particularly) universities on Federal and Provincial HEC's/HED's (if any). A major concern of the higher education sector in Pakistan and particularly the reform being examined is resource and resource dependence. Hillman et al. (2009) while reviewing RDT theory elaborated that this theory has a broad horizon and helps in assessing how organizations depend on others and how can they attempt to reduce uncertainty and interdependence. According to Davis and Cobb (2009), Resource Dependency Theory explains that institutions have relations with other stakeholders but there are interests of every institution that need to be served first, on the other hand, power is the key variables that help in understanding the relations between organizations and stakeholders. The *"RDT holds that organizations' activities and outcomes depend on the contexts in which the organization is embedded (Pfeffer & Salancik,1978,p. 39)"* (Kornhaber et al., 2016, p.7). Therefore, the organization and its environment, play a key role in determining the activities of that organization, the same can be said for a reform or a policy, during its development as well as implementation phase. One of the key dependencies in the connection to the idea being researched in this study is that of financial dependency and Kholmuminov et al. (2019) concluded that financial dependence on the type of source strongly guides expenditure decisions.

3. Research Methodology

Population for this study involves all public sector higher education institutions that are or were to some extent implementing tenure track system in their universities. For primary data collection, in-depth interviews have been conducted of different stakeholders involved using purposive sampling strategy. Therefore, stakeholders for this study include representatives from universities, and the federal HEC. Within the federating units of Pakistan, 6 universities, one each from provincial capitals of Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, two from the Balochistan province (due to low response rate) and one from the federal capital were selected for this study. Individuals that comprise the sample would be the concerned officials at HEC, university administrators (including the Registrars & Vice-Chancellors) and faculty members (both on TTS and BPS).

Apart from the interviews, observation was also used as a technique while attending meetings of the academic associations of two universities that were held in the light of recommendations and reviews for TTS-BPS Review Committee constituted by HEC on 30th October 2018, the proceedings of these meetings as well as other data received by various stakeholders (as feedback) (also from All Pakistan Tenure Track Faculty Association) were also screened for this study.

With reference to data analysis, thematic analysis has been conducted to understand the views of subjects regarding the topic under study with the help of NVIVO, which involves transcription of interviews followed by generation of themes/codes.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

The descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and counts have been reported for primary interviews to give a snapshot of the profile of some stakeholders in this study. Followed by the primary counts, counts for secondary data or documents have been mentioned, after this brief explanation of the sample involving qualitative data, this section proceeds with the findings and data analysis in the light of research questions and theoretical framework of the study.

4.1 Primary Data Counts

Tables and figures in this section refer to the demographic profile of respondents who were interviewed for this data. It begins with the classification of type of primary data sources.

Table 1
Primary Data

Type of Primary Data Collected	Count/Frequency
Semi-Structured Interviews	39
Participant Observation and/or Minutes of the Meetings	2
Total	41

A total of 39 semi-structured interviews were conducted and 2 meetings of academic staff associations (Unions) of two universities were attended as participant observant.

Table 2
Participant Type-Interviewees

Participant Type	Counts/Frequency
Administrator (Regulator-HEC) (Including two members of HEC TTS vs BPS Review Committee)	3
Administrator (Vice-Chancellor) (Including one member of HEC TTS vs BPS Review Committee)	4
Administrator (Registrar/Dean/HOD)	10
Faculty Member	22
Total	39

As mentioned earlier, in order to get perspectives of all stakeholders associated with TTS, out of a total of 39 respondents, This table summarizes the distribution of individuals interviewed including VCs', Deans, HODs, Faculty members and representatives in HEC.

Table 3
Subject or Discipline of Interviewees

Subject or Discipline	Count/Frequency
Natural Sciences / Applied Sciences	22
Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities, Business Education	17
Total	39

Subject variation or alleged discrimination is one of the serious issues associated with TTS, therefore, an effort was made to include stakeholders from both wide categories of

disciplines. 22 respondents belonged to Natural Sciences and allied disciplines, whereas 17 belonged to Social Sciences and allied disciplines.

Table 4
Secondary Data Documents

Document Type	Count/Frequency
Official Statutes	1
HEC Clarifications	7
All Pakistan Tenure Track Faculty Association Recommendations	2
Other Individual or Joint Recommendations by Faculty	3
Total	13

As shown in the table 4, out of the 13 secondary data documents, 7 were HEC clarifications, 1 was the official statute, 2 were TTS association joint recommendations to HEC and/Education Minister and 3 were non association individual or joint recommendations by TTS faculty.

4.2 Thematic Analysis

Following the transcription of interviews in NVIVO, codes (Saldana, 2015) were generated through open coding (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, the approach suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990) have also been considered to code data and begin with analysis. They categorized coding as being of three types or levels, i.e. Open, Axial and Selected Coding.

5. Results and Discussion

Higher Education Sector in Pakistan experienced major restricting following the new public management led reforms since the start of the new century. The changes ranged from broader governance reforms to institutional reforms to fiscal reforms to curriculum reforms to HR or faculty management system reforms. The idea behind these reforms was to revamp the system in connection with the efficiency and effectiveness based ideology. In this implementation context framework, the first element or theory that complements the findings of the study is the resource dependency theory.

5.1 Resource Dependency

The resource dependence theory or perspective revolves around power interests and institutional interests, all stakeholders play or act keeping in view their interests. No stakeholder has a free lunch. According to Eckersley (2017), if a sub-organization (which in this case are universities) is not able to get required resources from the higher authorities or is not able to generate its own resources, its dependency remarkably increases on the higher authority or regulatory body which is the HEC in this case. The findings highlight that the organizations or universities are dependent on HEC for funds and a huge portion of budget allocated for TTS comes from HEC. In this context, ideally, it seems that the universities must be very much trying to comply with the standards set by HEC, and universities must be fearful of any penalty by the HEC or universities must be cautious of accountability by HEC, but as per this study, the reality is otherwise, despite the fact that funds and grants come from the government and the HEC, but rarely universities are complying the procedures and norms set by HEC regarding TTS particularly.

This issue was acknowledged by the HEC officials, that universities are not following the set procedures, on the contrary, some policy implementers or administrators are of the view that, TTS is a HEC policy, HEC provides funds, if the universities are not following their instructions, being the resource giving body, being the powerful regulatory authority, they should set a mechanism of accountability and control or hold the university administration accountable.

As per the data, lack of political will and ownership by the HEC is resulting in poor implementation of TTS part of university administration, the HEC is not fully exercising its power and authority in an appropriate or desired manner to get the TTS implemented by the universities in a standardized manner. Nunberg (1997) blames lack of political will to be the key barrier in implementation of a policy and a key reason due to which a reform fails.

5.2 Reform Implementation Context and Challenges: The Institutional Perspective

Comprehension of entire governance history of the education sector is important before comprehensively understanding implementation context and challenges associated with any reform initiative in the higher education sector. Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980) define implementation as, "*Implementation is the carrying out of a basic policy decision…. Ideally, that decision identifies the problem(s) to be addressed, stipulates the objective(s) to be pursued, and, in a variety of ways, "structures" the implementation process*" (p.540).

A policy developed without participation of the stakeholders, or those that shall be affected by it, is likely to be faced by issues in the future (Challies et al., 2017). Moreover, Turner et al. (2015) conclude that to develop and implement a public policy, understanding of the political and governance context is important, many policy models and framework might fail to reach their objectives if the context and indigenized circumstances are not addressed or kept in consideration. Sausman et al. (2016), variations and translations in policy implementation are not something to be afraid of, context is an important factor that may require some sorts of adjustments or fine tuning in a policy while it is being implemented.

5.2.1 Path Dependency

The study findings reiterate what literature suggests, that organizations or sectors that become institutionalized are difficult to change and they resist the most when any reform is intended to create a disruption in their routines. As discussed earlier, the path dependency is one of the main causes of resistance or hurdles to reforms, the organizations get institutionalized into their own norms, values and mechanism that they strongly resist any change or reform and the findings of this research very well relate to this idea. Results from all units in the sample indicated the same. One of the senior most representatives of a university rightly accepted this issue and elaborated that any higher education reform launched by the HEC was opposed by his university because of an illusion of superiority complex and being the best due to its good performance in the past and due to its strong historical roots.

A professor referring to the problem of path dependency highlights that,

> ….lethargic attitude is an issue, now this issue is with politicization as well as regardless of BPS and TTS, this is the poor culture and history of PU or maybe in general to some extent our society… most universities are stuck in past, culture of public sector is poor in terms of performance… (Professor).

In this rapidly changing global world, not just higher education institutions but all organizations, regardless of which sector they belong, need to adapt according to changing trends and developing technologies or practices and not live in the past. However, Wilsford (1994) argues that path dependency or history makes difficult to conduct reforms but not impossible, so not all blame can be put to this factor.

5.2.2 Leadership, Politics and Political Will

Another key factor that according to the findings, related to organizations being path dependent is the role of politics and political will in affecting affairs of an organization. Public sector institutions in Pakistan have become very much polarized and politicized over time. This notion was also endorsed by representatives from all universities. Majority of the participants were of the view that with the passage of time a culture of intense self-interested politics has been developed in our universities that is negatively affecting any positive

initiative. The word politics in Pakistan's public sector context is always perceived as something negative or based on interests of some interest groups that serve a certain group of people. The findings draw the conclusion that politics has been observed at all levels and procedures in universities, may it be the role of DTRCs or academic staff associations (unions). For that matter, leadership in organizations plays an important role in curbing politics or in using the politics for strengthening its own roots. The role of leadership is to play an authentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and neutral role and ensuring strengthening of a competitive yet performance oriented culture where all stakeholders are kept on board, however, in this study, some blame has been placed by faculty on university leadership. This blame however, can be related with the issue of capacity (Lynn, 2001), capacity issues have been highlighted as one of the most important issues associated with reform management in higher education institutions as per this data. Unless a political will, commitment and ownership exists, no reform or intervention can be successful in real sense.

5.2.3 Capacity Issues of HEI's and HEC

It has been narrated by several stakeholders that, role of university administration has not been satisfactory in relation to TTS management and the major dilemma that exists is that of capacity. The universities lack resources in terms of capacity, intellectual as well as technical capacity for managing the huge and complex procedures and documentation involved. A serious effort with dedicated units is required for managing TTS related affairs, similar to any reform of change intervention, commitment from leadership and allocation of resources is mandatory (Hayes, 2018). This has been lacking in various public sector institutions in Pakistan and higher education reforms are of no exception to it. Not just capacity building of universities or stakeholders within the universities is required, capacity building and enhancement of the regulatory body is also mandatory. According to the analysis, one of the most cited reasons for challenges associated with reform implementation or TTS in particular is the capacity issue of the regulatory body i.e. HEC. Majority stakeholders, including the regulatory bodies admit that capacity issues exist that need to be curbed.

HEC argues that we are the regulatory body for giving guidelines only and universities are responsible for implementing, this idea or justification given by them refutes their own status of regulation, according to Jarvis (2017), nearly half of the nations around the globe have regulatory bodies particularly Quality Assurance Agencies for higher education and this rise is observable in new public management related reforms (Lægreid & Christensen, 2011), nonetheless, the role of regulatory body cannot be undermined in developing countries. Schacter (2000) refers to a World Bank's report and raises his concern that only "one-third" of the World Banks projects had satisfactory outcomes. One of the prime reasons for such results or outcomes is the initiation of a reform effort without building or strengthening of the real capacity of institutions involved for service delivery as a result of that reform.

5.2.4 Reforms as Myth

Along these and other challenges, the issue of cultural appropriateness and myth or legitimacy as highlighted by Christensen et al. (2007), is of prime concern in the context of Pakistan and has apparently resulted in several issues associated with TTS as a public sector reform in Pakistan. Empirical evidence shows that the reforms in higher education sector in Pakistan were new public management induced and the modern world's best practices induced where context was somewhat ignored (Zubair et al., 2015). In order to seek legitimacy from the modern world or international financial institutions, at a broader or strategic level, various public sector reform recipes were adopted by Pakistan in the early 2000s and TTS in the higher education sector was one such example, where the model statutes were even taken from the University of New Mexico.

Furthermore, at the operational level, the findings of the study suggest that several initiatives that universities took in connection to the regulatory bodies or the government, most of them were for the sake of legitimacy in order to ensure smooth inflow of funds. This finding is very much relevant and has been supported in the literature by being referred to as lack of political will of the key stakeholders in any policy or reform management (Peerenboom, 2017; Rist, 2017). Several scholars argue that while seeking legitimacy in the light of myth perspective, political will is ignored and that results in ignorance of context and resources required for planned and structural implementation of the reform. Adding to it, isomorphism can also be observed in NPM related reforms in the public sector and the data also endorses this idea in connection with the myth perspective. Hood and Peters (2004) inferred that in most of the circumstances, the concept of mimetic isomorphism is being observed instead of local translations as per context. Moreover, they also believe that NPM supporters stress evidence based learning, whereas in reality or in practice it seems to be evidence free. NPM and TTS related reform can be associated with the idea of isomorphism as explained by Dimaggio and Powel (1983), not just in Pakistan, but also in several other economies. A key official from the regulatory body pointed out the issue of legitimacy and isomorphism as,

> …our initial aim was to ensure Pakistani universities get competitive and earn good position in the international academic area… the famous Peril and Promise explains the motivation as well… usually in Pakistan, just for the sake of formality few deliberations are made with stakeholders but major decisions are top down and to some extent I believe some issues need top down approach and strong enforcement governments through their legal power and political will… (HEC Official).

5.2.5 Absence of Context

Talking about lack of context, with reference to TTS reforms in Pakistan, issues like lack of infrastructure and resource for natural sciences disciplines and lack of journals for some disciplines in social sciences was ignored, similarly, the minimum number of publications required in order to sustain or remain part of the system was not kept rational and this resulted in compromised research ethics and it also led to a decrease in teaching quality (Waltman et al., 2012) and this has been unanimously and empirically acknowledged by stakeholders including the policy makers in this regard. Moreover, Pakistan is a pluralistic and family oriented society where the risk taking propensity is low as identified by John Holland. In such a scenario, the basic norm or idea of job security and social security has been ignored in TTS as there is no proper system for social security of the individual or the family in times of any natural crisis. According to Belfield & Heywood (2008), research on pay for performance (PFP) for teachers in particular has been "inconclusive", some studies link positive outcomes such as motivation and job satisfaction and the likes with PFP, while others do not, therefore, the idea of benefits and social security is of key importance in this culture. Similarly, Hulleman and Barron (2010) mention that, particularly for teachers, financial compensation is definitely important, but literature on compensation systems "*has largely ignored teacher well-being and mental health. These variables have important implications for the longevity of teachers in the workforce, the health and well-being of students, and the overall effectiveness of school systems.*"(p.31), they strongly recommend inclusion of these measures as well while developing PFPs.

5.2.6 Uncertainty pertaining to the reform

Adding to the list of dilemmas, the continued and existing uncertainty regarding the future of TTS is another serious issue, an individual may not like to associate itself with a certain practice whose future is unclear. However, Salas et al. (2019) suggest that uncertainty is not an issue when concerned leaders possess more power. Towards the end of 2018, HEC

constituted a new committee that has been mandated to determine the future of TTS and Basic Pay Scale systems in the public higher education sector. The findings revealed that majority of the faculty members serving on TTS had no options to choose from i.e. BPS and TTS, at the time of their first appointment, this also strengthen the argument that uncertainty exists in relation to TTS and TTS is still not attractive enough in comparison to BPS. As mentioned earlier, 17 out of 33 TTS faculty members at university of Peshawar had applied for conversion to BPS from TTS, this is just one example and is a serious call for attention. Another reason for this uncertainty is the duality of the system that is affecting TTS as it was initially planned that over the years, Basic Pay Scale (BPS) system will be removed, however, largely the traditional (BPS) could not be made unattractive (which reflects the free-rider perception) and due to the resistance from institutionalized stakeholders, this change could not be materialized. Nonetheless, Chan and Wei (2019), however in a different context/study about rural-urban divide suggest that sometimes duality of systems can reap positive results or help in achieving desired goals.

5.2.7 Autonomy

Though accountability (despite autonomy) are fundamentals of the managerialism based reform drive globally, but its lack is also among the reasons why reforms are not properly evaluated and analyzed in the light of their intended outcomes (Baraldi, 2014). Kattel et al. (2015) in a project in Estonia concluded that evaluation and performance criteria must be clearly defined and developed otherwise, *"what gets measured is not necessarily what needs to get measured"* (Kattel et al., 2015, p.4), quantity of research being produced or the number of impact factor publications being produced does not necessarily reflect success of TTS reform, and this has been elaborated by change champions within the regulatory body, that the thousands of publications last year, cannot all be associated or credited with tenure track faculty in Pakistan.

Furthermore, the debate of autonomy and control is an age old debate in the public sector since the emergence of new public management. University governance reforms have had various commonalities with reference to NPM but some of them include autonomy, professionalism of stakeholders and performance orientation in all aspects of governance (Gornitzka et al.,2017). Though HEC claims that autonomy or authority exists with reference to TTS as well, as mentioned in the model statute of TTS, however, universities argue that HEC claims of giving autonomy to universities in several matters along with matters of TTS, but in reality, despite following of the proper channel i.e. approvals from Syndicate or BODs, and the VC, any documents or proposals or decisions that are sent to HEC for endorsement are turned down. A vice-chancellor of the university explained autonomy in these words:

> …there is no autonomy, we cannot modify statutes according to our needs and resources…every document we send to HEC is on their discretion to be endorsed or rejected, so what is the authority of VC and his syndicate…. (Vice-Chancellor).

HEC official on the issue of autonomy said,

> …we allow autonomy but at the same time we say that minimum performance criteria should not be compromised, the spirit of TTS should not be compromised. This is not autonomy that you allow people on TTS work on administrative positions… (HEC Official)

A fundamental issue identified in this research is that of trust, a serious trust deficit exists between stakeholders i.e. faculty, university administration and the regulatory body. Studying the NPM related reforms and the public sector, Weiss (2017) argues that trust is one of the key element of strategic management and implementation process. Unless stakeholder ownership exists along with trust and representation, things or reforms are not likely to result in desired successful outcomes.

Lastly, a key finding of this study is the fact that a potentially successful policy or reform is one that has a feature of adaptability in it so that various complexities can be dealt at local level, hence, the context and local culture cannot be undermined (Butler & Allen, 2016).

6. Conclusion & Recommendations

Referring to the idea of reform introduction and implementation, the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan at the World Government Summit 2019 in Dubai in the following simple words remarked, *"...I repeat the reforms are painful. It's like a surgery. When you conduct surgery for a while the patient suffers but that improves...the worst thing that can happen for society is that you keep postponing reforms because of the fear that you would have opposition, the vested interests stand up and you don't do reforms."*

The aforementioned excerpt from the speech is of relevance to the scope of this study where it has been identified that reforms are introduced for seeking legitimacy and then they face serious opposition in the country and many times, because of the fear of change or threat to self-interests, reforms are half-heartedly implemented and lack political will despite resources, and the higher education reforms (including TTS) in Pakistan under the new public management reforms are a key example.

Keeping the context of the higher education sector in Pakistan and in the light of the findings of this research, following are some of the recommendations or steps that can be followed or taken in order to overcome issues associated with TTS in particular or reform management in general:

Policy makers should be a little skeptical about foreign recipes as the only solutions that are suggested in the name of international best practices and reforms should not be implemented hastily or for the sake of legitimacy. They should be implemented keeping in view the local context as well as after analyzing the field completely. For this the stakeholders should be welcoming towards Contextual variation of the reforms as per the cultural requirements. Moreover, a key finding of this study was that serious capacity issues exist at the level of regulatory bodies as well as the universities in terms of handling reforms including TTS. A serious effort is required to develop capacity of state institutions, prior to implementation of a reform, ingredients or prerequisites required for its smooth implementation should be analyzed and made available.

Furthermore, geographical proximity has been identified as an important factor that affects implementation of TTS or other such reforms. Participants from universities geographically distant from the center or the federal regulatory body for higher education have emphasized the need of decentralization of the HEC to ensure fairly equal accessibility of all stakeholders. In addition, the dual system of BPS and TTS should come to an end, a hybrid system may be developed where a minimum pay should be fixed and a major chunk should be associated with performance of the faculty member. Another element associated with the evaluation is that of unified or very similar mechanism for evaluating faculty members from two different disciplines, therefore, customized subject-wise performance based criteria should be developed for natural and social sciences and the necessary resources be provided to the faculty for research i.e infrastructure and other resources for natural sciences and availability and transparency in journals for social sciences. Lastly, one of the basic fundamentals of change or reform management are Political will and commitments, unless there is complete will among change agents or champions, reforms are not likely to succeed. In this context, addressing of some of the issues and challenges regarding a reform can aid in resolution of various public governance problems in the country.

7. Study Limitations

Several initiatives were taken by Higher Education Commission since its establishment, but this research only caters to one reform i.e. Tenure Track System in higher education institutes of Pakistan. Only one university from each province was sampled in this study due to resource constraints, it is likely that within a province, university culture and mechanism if studied at micro level might vary (though this micro analysis was beyond the scope of this study).

8. Future Research Directions

Increasingly public sector management practices are evolving towards the idea of collaboration and coordination or network governance, however, a major finding of the study is that there is a serious lack of trust between different components or organizations within the higher education sector. Therefore, detailed analysis is required in order to identify mechanisms for building this trust deficit within state organs.

In addition to these, the role of provincial governments may also be included on the subject specifically after the 18th constitutional amendment. The devolution or decentralization of higher education to the provinces open new rooms of inquiry, as provinces bring in their own context along and the implementation is likely to vary.

Lastly, the researcher also proposes development of mechanism for enhancing the capacity of the regulatory body is required and of all these future research directions, evidence based policy making should be promoted by policy makers and policy implementers in the public sectors owing to the fact that problems in the public sector are wicked.

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