

## CONCERNED CONDITIONS IN AFGHAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES AND LOW ACADEMIC OUTCOMES; AN OBSERVATION OF MANAGEMENT AND LECTURERS

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the research was to find and point out the reasons for low academic outcomes and apprehensive conditions in Afghan public universities. This study has a qualitative research methodology. The participants of the study are 20 lecturers and 4 deans of different faculties. Data was collected through online interview questions and email. The collected data was analyzed throughout the project with the content analyzed method and divided into four sub-themes in the finding section. The result of the study figures out the causes and roots that have a strong influence on the phenomena of the concerned condition and low academic outcomes of Afghan public universities. These are the lack of professional development, lack of supervision and proper leadership, problems in work life, curriculum, and textbook issues.

**Keywords:** Afghan public universities, academic, management, lecturers, curriculum, leadership, supervision, and low outcome.

### INTRODUCTION

Lecturers play a key role in a higher education system. In order to improve the quality of national life and the character of the Afghan people, as well as to foster their mastery of science, technology, and the arts in order to achieve prosperity, justice, and morale for all. Higher education has long been recognized as being essential to the advancement of civilization Mustard (1998). According to Muhammed et al. (2011), the emergence of knowledge-based economies and globalization has increased the importance of higher education, and in particular, the quality of education is essential to the success of a country Garwe, E. C. (2014).

National education must fulfill the points, duties, and responsibilities. Lecturers and professors play the main role in determining the standard of higher education's curriculum and graduates. Also, the structure of management is providing direction and guidance to a group of individuals with the aim of achieving organizational goals and actual objectives even in the education system. But honestly, with the long historical background of more than a century continuum of higher education, Afghanistan's educational system hasn't generated many qualified workers because of the lack of evaluation and better performance. "There are many results in modern organizations that are subjected to performance evaluations, and they are widely used in most organizations." (Burkhalter & Buford, 1989; Davis, 2001; DeNisi, 1996; Wanguri, 1995).

Also, if effective communication skills are developed in universities, then interpersonal interactions will be upheld and undoubtedly have an impact on an employee's satisfaction with their job. Additionally, career development plays a significant part in raising the standard of workplace conditions in Afghan universities. Institutions of higher learning are a producer of quality human resources that will serve as the foundation for the implementation of national development Lian, B., & Eddy, S. (2021, July). It is important to offer lecturers the freedom they need to advance their careers. Generally, regarding the practitioners and researchers, lecturers are needed in these three areas of competence: academic, personal, and pedagogical. Thus Afghan instructors and lecturers of public universities need more focus and development in these revealed areas. All of those skills affected their professionalism. Also, the manager or administrator of the educational center should be able to set the institution up for success in the globalization period while maintaining its cultural identity. Higher education has long been recognized as being essential to the advancement of civilization Mustard. (1998). According to Muhammed et al. (2011), the emergence of knowledge-based economies and globalization has increased the importance of higher education, and in particular, the quality of education is essential to the success of a country Garwe, E. C. (2014).

There is no management issue in the class if the students act in accordance with the roles they are intended to play. However, it might be argued that there is a serious issue with classroom management if a teacher frequently observes student activities that interfere with the learning-teaching environment and produce an unfavorable mood in the classroom. In addition to having a negative impact on the learning process, the students' troublesome actions also result in a huge loss of time. The student's educational career is ultimately put to a stop as a result of the observed student behaviors, such as breaking the rules, skipping class, cheating on examinations, and joining gangs. Demir, S. (2009). Thus, the most important factor in a country's growth and prosperity is higher education. It gives people the fortitude and adaptability they need to meet the shifting demands of the moment. All national aspirations are built on a foundation of education. It has the ability to change people into human resources. Without

the growth of our human resources, which is largely dependent on the strength and vitality of higher education, we cannot create a stable and wealthy country.

According to Susilowati (2009: 3), the degree to which an individual is satisfied with the values that apply to him will vary widely from one person to the next. However, according to Armstrong (2006: 264), job satisfaction refers to an individual's views and sentiments toward their work. According to the above-mentioned understanding of job satisfaction, both happy and unpleasant sentiments are related to someone's sense of well-being at work Hamidi, H., Jufri, A. W., & Karta, W. (2019). A system of offering education with possibilities for all students with disabilities who also have the potential intelligence and/or exceptional talents to attend education or learn in the educational environment alongside students, in general, is known as inclusive education. Every student has the right to take part in inclusive education of particular educational units according to their needs and capacities, regardless of their physical, emotional, mental, social, or potential intelligence and/or exceptional capabilities.

Rokhman (2012: 1135) implies that all parts of the organization have a responsibility to provide an excellent workplace. The concept of "quality of work life" encompasses a wide range of factors that can affect an organization's overall success at work Hamidi, H., Jufri, A. W., & Karta, W. (2019). Accordingly, the importance of branding in educational institutions has increased. It is one of the most crucial components of an educational institution's product and adds value to it. Therefore, it made sense that educational institutions would likewise need to have a strong brand identity in order to keep their current clientele and draw in new ones. Mundiri, A. (2017). Higher education institution success is largely dependent on leadership, which is also essential to maintaining and raising universities' standards of excellence and performance. In order to maintain standards and the caliber of educational offerings, university administrators must be able to successfully restructure and grasp emerging issues that affect quality delivery, such as the new regulatory requirements implemented by quality assurance organizations Garwe, E. C. (2014).

Problems arise in every organization, including academic centers. One of the critical areas for observation and improvement is teacher work satisfaction. Enhancing the quality of work life is one strategy that can be used to increase teacher job satisfaction in schools. According to Jofreh's research, employee job satisfaction in the company is positively impacted by the quality of work life (2012: 2513). Having a good job is quite beneficial when performing the work. The quality of the work will improve if the person doing the job enjoys what they are doing. The workplace atmosphere is just one of the many factors that can make employment satisfying. According to Mulyanto (2009: 4), the workplace environment has a significant impact on employees' job satisfaction, which makes the workplace one of the key components in accomplishing organizational objectives Hamidi, H., Jufri, A. W., & Karta, W. (2019).

### Research Questions

1. What are the fundamental reasons for the low academic outcome of education in Afghanistan?
2. What should be the duty of the government, administrative management, and lecturers to sort out the low academic outcome of public universities in Afghanistan?

### METHODOLOGY

The interview approach is one of the qualitative research strategies used in this paper. Research that focuses on meanings, experiences, and definitions and that enables the researcher to lead a qualitative process in discovering the circumstances and perceptions honestly and thoroughly in their natural surroundings is rightly referred to as qualitative research. "Qualitative research enables the researcher to collect information qualitatively by means of observation, interview, and document analysis Demir, S. (2009, P 585)." "A research approach that expresses a particular social situation by describing reality correctly, formed by words based on data collection techniques and analysis of relevant data obtained from natural situations" (Satori & Komariah, 2010)." This study used a semi-structured interview technique to collect the data for this article. The goal of the study and the format of the form has been carefully described in preparation for the interviews. The average length of an online interview is 15 to 20 minutes. The data gathered from the interviews have been documented using the note-taking approach.

### Participants

Participants in the sample of this research study were 24 lecturers who hold academic positions at various universities located in various provinces. Among them, there are four deans of faculties. In this research article, it is argued that the degree of expertise, seniority, and experience in various branches, as well as the various levels and locations of the universities lecturers and deans of faculties they work in, all have enough influence to enable this variability. These lecturers and deans of faculties were from different Afghan Public universities. They are currently teaching and managing in the Language and Literature, Political Science, Agriculture, Economics, and Journalism Faculties.

### **Data Collection**

Two steps for data collection, interviews, and analysis of the data were used throughout the project. As part of the study's initial phase, interviews were conducted in order to identify the main causes of poor and low academic performance in public universities' education systems. The interviews took place online with the participants through WhatsApp calls, and also through email. In order to address the research questions, the semi-structured interview technique was used in which data was gathered with the use of pre-planned interview questions (Karasar, 1998). This method of interviewing allows the researcher to combine both an organized approach and a one-on-one manner. For the interviews, a detailed description of the study's objective and how the form would be filled out has been prepared. Typically, an interview lasts between 15 to 20 minutes. The note-taking method has been used to record the information obtained from the interviews.

### **FINDING**

The finding of this qualitative research is based on two main questions and the main theme, a concerned condition in Afghan Public Universities with low academic outcomes. The researcher analyzed the data and divided it into four sub-themes:

#### **Theme One: *Lack of Lecturers' Professional Development***

The lecturers have five to nine years of teaching experience in different departments. They mentioned during those years, they didn't have workshops or short and long-term fellowships for professional development. All 20 Lecturers and deans say: "It can be frustrating and demoralizing to feel that one's professional development is being neglected or overlooked. Lecturers may feel that they are not being given the support they need to grow and improve in their fields." According to studies, supervisors can have a favorable impact on a teacher education program's strategy for handling applicants by giving university-based supervisors active leadership (e.g. Heafner, Petty & Hartshorne, 2012; Meegan, Dunning, Belton & Woods, 2013) McCormack, B., Baecher, L. H., & Cuenca, A. (2019). Thus, the researcher found that there are no research centers of the science and art departments for practices and improvement, to update the specific knowledge regarding the fields. This can be particularly difficult for people who want to grow in their careers or switch to a different field of expertise. It is the responsibility of the administration and government to conduct professional seminars, workshops, and provides short and long-term fellowships to improve academic professionals.

#### **Theme Two: *Low Quality of Work Life of Lecturers***

Public examination and training institutes, like other sectors, have also experienced a variety of management issues that have had an impact on their growth. Salary management is one of the major issues Jia, M., & Wang, D. (2022). All the Lecturers and deans claim that government pays less salaries which causes many difficulties in life, they used to work in other organizations or even labor jobs to survive. Also, they don't have time to work on their research and promotion requirements. There are many orders and acts to follow for promotions that need expenses and budget, but it is impossible to continuum them with the wage government pays to lecturers. Also, most of the universities do not provide living rooms or houses to lecturers, therefore the lecturers do not have life satisfaction and psychologically they are under stress which has many effects on their work environment, academic development, and being updated. At least the government should rise the salary of lecturers. According to Jofreh's research, employee job satisfaction in the company is positively impacted by the quality of work life (2012: 2513). Thus, there is an imbalance between work life and their personal life the consequence is a low academic outcome. The staff's ability to balance work and personal life has a big impact on how well organizations succeed. This is due to the difficulties and stress-related concerns that employees experience, which have a negative impact on their performance at work and the performance of the firm as a whole Adebayo, A. (2016).

#### **Theme Three: *Lack of Strong Supervision and Leadership***

All the lecturers and deans of faculties agree and have the same notion that evaluation and assessment processes are not suitable for Afghan public universities to get appropriate results. Performance evaluations are a major factor in many decisions made by modern businesses, and they are employed extensively in most of them Burkhalter & Buford, (1989); Davis, (2001); DeNisi, (1996); Wanguri, (1995). Consequently, due to poor evaluation and minor performance, Afghanistan's educational system hasn't produced many skilled workers and this is the result of weak supervision and leadership. There is no fair administration and leadership to support the academic staff and also the communication of leadership with lecturers and other academic employees are not respectable even though some of the lecturers left the public universities and joined other organizations. The highest position of a university or college, the Office of the President, is referred to as leadership. To make the assessment process effective, there must be strong leadership support Cintrón, R., & Flaniken, F. (2011).

#### **Theme four: Curriculum and Text Book Issues**

This is an obvious and recognized objective of this research paper. Afghan public university works under the central government's higher education ministry and since 2016 the ministry promised to develop the curriculum considered by stakeholders, but only a few departments got a new curriculum with no books and study materials. A single textbook is utilized in many countries around the world, and up until quite recently, Pakistan and China were also using this method Mahmood, K. (2010). D1, D3, and D4 mentioned new government wants to review the curriculum again and still has many problems regarding study materials. L2, L5, L7, L6, L9, L13, L15, and L19 mentioned they are using the curriculum and materials of the 1990s and 2000s written by elder professors of public universities in Afghanistan which has negative effects on learning outcomes. They need much work to update and develop them considering the needs of stakeholders. It is commonly established that learning outcomes enhance the educational process, but if used excessively, they may also have unfavorable consequences Maher, A. (2004).

#### **DISCUSSION**

This research exposes that the fundamental tool for development and transformation, aside from basic and secondary education, is higher education. And the crucial task of higher education is to develop leaders for various spheres of life, including social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, and technological. Institutions of higher learning have a moral obligation to foster the values, awareness, and knowledge required to build a just and sustainable future Cortese, A. D. (2003). In the modern academic and knowledge society, which both directly and indirectly increases a nation's wealth, higher education has a specific value. The relevance of higher education has increased due to the emergence of knowledge-based economies and globalization, and in particular, the quality of education is crucial to a nation's prosperity Garwe, E. C. (2014).

The findings show that the administration and Afghan public universities need to take further and additional steps to enhance the quality of higher education. They require standard and reliable administration with a strong management system for assessment and improvement to decrease low academic outcomes. The assessment process needs to have strong leadership support in order to be successful Cintrón, R., & Flaniken, F. (2011). As the lecturers mentioned in the finding section of this study, there is a niche and gap between the lecturers, management, and leadership that gives a stream to discouragement among the lecturers and has a profound effect on higher education systems. The same idea was traced in Pakistan too. Teachers are treated as inferiors and slaves, and supervisors behave like kings. Teachers experience discouragement and mistrust as a result of this behavior while they are there. Teachers are unable to receive constructive criticism because supervisors and principals choose dictatorial leadership styles rather than democratic ones Parveen, K., & Tran, P. Q. B. (2020).

Practitioners and scholars think the curriculum is ongoing and needs an update considering stakeholders' necessities and the participants of this study clearly have the same idea in the finding of this study. The process of establishing a curriculum does not come to an end before entering classrooms, and it does not continue after entering classrooms. The process of creating and changing is ongoing. It involves constant construction and modification. This procedure is supported by a number of groups, including the government, publishers, parents, teachers, and students Lau, D. C. M. (2001). Consequently, Afghan public universities' curriculum desires immediate development and update. It would be an essential step for the internationalization, prosperity, and development of the Afghan nation. The core curriculum equips students with the skills they need to thrive in the workforce and contribute to a dynamic global environment Matus Cánovas, C., & Talburt, S. (2015).

It is a solid thought that national building, prosperity, and development are related to higher education in a country. As mentioned by Arbo, P., & Bennenworth, P. (2007) that higher education has been closely linked to the idea of progress at both an individual and societal level in a country. Humans live in a world in which education systems are always searching for innovative approaches and techniques to boost operational technology performance, acquire a competitive advantage, and enhance teaching and learning. However, Afghan public universities are in opposite idea and have many challenges ahead to reach and remove the distance between them and globalization. Only those who are endowed with the knowledge, skills, talents, and rights necessary to seek their fundamental means of subsistence may contribute to and profit from globalization Bakhtiari, S., & Shajar, H. (2006).

#### **CONCLUSION**

It is clear that higher education is a continuum phenomenon and plays an important role in the development of the country. But unfortunately Afghan public universities prerequisite more attempts to fulfill mentioned idea of development and prosperity in Afghanistan. The government must work on the gaps stated in the finding section of this research study. The finding part of this study figures out the bases and roots of the lower outcomes and concerned conditions of Afghan public universities. Lack of professional development, low quality of work life of the lecturers, lack of strong supervision, and issues of curriculum and textbooks are the themes found in this study.



Still, there is some strong dictatorship behavior among the leaders and administrators which increases discouragement and decreases the performance of lecturers and academic staff. Nearly every field of life has its own problems and challenges, it is the responsibility of every single person to think about the solution. The participants of this study clearly illustrated point-by-point issues and concerns they had related the higher education and inferior outcomes of the universities.

## IMPLICATIONS

This research study highlighted the causes and sources of concerned conditions and low academic outcomes of Afghan public universities. Researchers can profoundly work on every theme of this study individually to find a way how to fix them and give solid solutions.

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