

Psychosocial Analysis of Quality Research Competence of the Pakistani Postgraduate Research Scholars

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The present study is based on the investigation of the factors deteriorating quality research competence among research scholars and the relationship of psychosocial factors with the researchers' creativity. Thus, the gaps in self-actualization and research development were elaborated. Data was collected from 459 subjects including 310 scholars, 111 teachers and 38 heads of departments selected from 10 leading universities located in Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Critical analysis of M.Phil and PhD theses was undertaken. The findings were statistically analyzed using Chi-square. The results identified the problem of postgraduate quality research in relation with psychosocial factors and competence affecting researchers' performance. The study recommends for environment conducive for the self and learning, and psychosocial facilitation for Pakistani postgraduate research scholars.

Keywords: psychosocial analysis, quality research competence, the self problem

Researchers are realistic, accurate and critical representatives of their respective institutes. They are expected to be proficient in competencies including sociability, interpersonal skills, and emotional intelligence. They are the pace-setters of socioeconomic development. However, difficulties university level can abort their meaningful efforts.

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Their unique characteristics are to actively interact, intelligently judge, reasonably argue and realistically contribute to the treasure of knowledge. Among other significant factors affecting quality research, the most important determiners are the communicative competence and psychosocial maturities that can work as the benchmark whiskers of a researcher's performance.

All researches are judged for value based on quality. Quality is one of the most fundamental indicators that determine the worth of a research. A quality research reflects the performance as well as the competence of the researchers. According to Hayward (2010), quality in higher education refers to the "fitness for purpose" meeting or conforming to generally accepted standards as defined by an institution, quality assurance bodies and appropriate academic and professional communities.

The self-problem is valued for psychosocial competence and is generally quoted differently in terms of behavioral, cognitive and social or situational orientations. Quality research competence is observed only when the performance is psychosocially valued. Keeping in view the quality research competence, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan is firmly striving to raise the quality of research at the international level. Quality Assurance Agency has been constituted at HEC to attain excellence in quality research. At university level, Quality Enhancement Cells have been established with a view to giving awareness on current theories and practices of quality assurance.

Quality research competence of a researcher is based on an individual's psychological development in a social realm. It means that how a person's mind, emotions, and maturity level work throughout the course of his lifetime. It is developed through biological and environmental elements which constitute an individual's bio psychosocial stature.

Erickson's "psychosocial" term is the combination of two source words i.e. psychological referring to the mind, brain, and personality, and social which reflects relationships of an individual with the external environment where he/she interacts with a society of living human beings (Erickson, 1950). Psychosocial development affects self-image and self-esteem of individuals. Healthy individuals are psychosocially sound who exhibit positive behavioral and intellectual performances. Mental health solely depends on the bio-psychosocial health of an individual. It deals with the biological, psychological and social aspects

of life that affect an individual's faculty to manage and perform daily functions in an effective way. Biological aspects determine the natural aptitude of a person, while psychosocial factors influence his or her family life, relations with friends, and his or her perceptions of health and self.

Quality Research Competence in Pakistan

Research competence is based on the quality of higher education provided by a state, and quality manifests in the worth of its education system. Scott (1998) mentions that, "higher education systems are under great pressure to improve the quality of education they offer. Universities across the globe are redefining their goals and needful steps are being taken to their Ph.D. programmers compatible with greater global competitiveness". According to the Higher Education Commission's Annual Report (2012), Pakistani universities have actively produced PhDs in different disciplines since 1947, such as Social Sciences, Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Biological and Medical Sciences, Business Education, Engineering Technology, Physical Sciences, and Honorary.

According to Hayward (2009), the reform process undertaken by Pakistan since 2002 is praiseworthy as it led to remarkable contributions in the field. Over the last six years, a large number of scholars have been enrolled in PhD programs in Pakistan. More than thousands have studied in foreign PhD programs. Besides, the Higher Education Commission also worked on upgrading laboratories and ICT, rehabilitation of facilities, expansion of research support, and development of one of the best digital libraries in the region. A quality assurance and accreditation process was also established. As per the HEC report submitted in 2011, most universities had become strong proponents of the Higher Education Commission by 2008. Quality had increased significantly, and several institutions were on their way to becoming world-class institutions. About 95 percent of people sent abroad returned, an unusually high result for a developing country in response to improved working conditions at universities.

Despite the massive increase of PhDs in Pakistan, Higher Education Commission criticizes the level of the quality of researches being conducted in the field. There are diverse facets of this problem, yet the problems of language, curriculum and self-esteem are strikingly devouring the quality research competence and their resolution can

delineate quality education. Psychosocial background of a researcher and quality research competence are interdependent. Thus, high quality research competence needs an environment that fulfills the psychosocial demands of the researcher. Consequently, the value assessment is considered to determine quality research competence as much necessary for the overall progress of higher education in Pakistan. Such quality competence is constituted upon psychosocial analysis that is based on the quality of teaching, quality of student evaluation, quality of situation and student satisfaction. Its other determiners are libraries and laboratories, the effective management and good leadership. Therefore, the quality research competence insists on agreement with the desirable human needs and existing valuable standards of education, scholarship, and communication.

Hypotheses

H₀: Opinion is uniform among the university teachers

H₁: Opinion is different among the university teachers

H₀: Opinion is uniform among the university teachers

H₁: Opinion is different among the university teachers

Method

Research Design

A descriptive research design was adopted in carrying out this study. The procedures focused on the psychosocial structure and quality research competence. The survey method was used to explore the competence problems, and to find out their psychosocial impact on quality research competence of the postgraduate research scholars.

Sample

The sample was comprised of 459 subjects including 310 scholars, 111 teachers and 38 heads of departments selected from 10 leading universities located in Islamabad and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa such as NUML, IIUI, AIOU, University of Peshawar, Hazara University, AWKUM, University of Malakand, CUSIT, Abasyn University and Northern University in Pakistan.

Procedure

The study was conducted in a university setting so as to analyze postgraduate research scholars' opinions in research quality context based on psychosocial competence and self-actualization. For this purpose, data was collected from research scholars, their teachers and heads of departments. The respondents were selected only from those Pakistani universities that offered M Phil and PhD programs in different disciplines. Data was gathered using questionnaires and the recorded information was statistically analyzed using correlations and Chi Square. Significance differences were also measured using statistical procedures.

Instruments

Three different pre-structured questionnaires were designed for different groups, and the basic contents focused on the main problem of psychosocial structure and quality research competence of the Pakistani postgraduate research scholars.

Analysis of Data

Data was analyzed by following the required statistical procedures. Comparison of the response frequency was made by percentages for demographic profile. For measuring the psychosocial perspectives and quality research competence, Chi Square was used. Sampling error was calculated to judge the adequacy of the sample. Moreover, descriptive and correlational statistics such as mean differences and percentages were also applied for further analysis.

Results and Discussion

The information gathered from the sample was systematically analyzed using appropriate statistical packages as shown in the given tables.

Table 1

Opinion of Heads of Departments for Maintaining High Degree of Quality Research Among MPhil/PhD Scholars (N=22)

	Level of Agreement							Total
	SA	A	SWA	N	SWDA	DA	SDA	
f_o	0	3	9	4	3	3	0	22
f_e	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	21.98
$f_o - f_e$	-3.14	3.14	5.86	3.14	3.14	3.14	-3.14	12.14
$(f_o - f_e)^2$	9.86	-0.1	10.94	0.86	-0.14	-0.1	9.86	
$(f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$	3.14	0.02	3.48	0.74	0.02	0.02	3.14	$10.56 = \chi^2$

Note: $df = 6$; $p < 0.05$

According to Table 1, the calculated value of χ^2 (10.56) at 0.05 level is less than the table value of χ^2 (12.59) for all responses of the heads of university departments about maintaining high degree of quality research. Therefore, it is concluded that opinion response is less significant.

Table 2

Opinion of Heads of Departments for Psychosocial Problems Affecting Research Quality Among MPhil/PhD Scholars (N=22)

	Level of Agreement							Total
	SA	A	SWA	N	SWDA	DA	SDA	
f_o	0	6	3	3	2	6	2	22
f_e	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	21.98
$f_o - f_e$	-3.14	2.86	-0.14	-0.14	-1.14	2.86	-1.14	0.02
$(f_o - f_e)^2$	9.86	8.18	0.02	0.02	1.30	8.18	1.30	
$(f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$	3.14	2.60	0.01	0.01	0.41	2.60	0.41	$9.18 = \chi^2$

Note: $df = 6$; $p < 0.05$

Table 2 reveals that the calculated value of χ^2 (9.18) at 0.05 level is less than the table value of χ^2 (12.59). Therefore, it is concluded that opinion response for psychosocial problems affecting research quality is not significant.

Table 3

Opinion of Heads of Departments Toward Competence, Self-Actualization and Quality Research (N=22).

	Level of Agreement							Total
	SA	A	SWA	N	SWDA	DA	SDA	
f_o	2	7	3	4	3	3	0	22
f_e	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	21.98
f_o-f_e	-1.14	3.86	3.14	0.86	3.14	3.14	-3.14	9.86
$(f_o-f_e)^2$	1.30	14.90	-0.14	0.74	-0.14	-0.14	9.86	
$(f_o-f_e)^2 / f_e$	0.41	4.75	0.02	0.24	0.02	0.02	3.14	8.60 = χ^2

Note: $df = 6; p < 0.05$

Table 3 shows that the calculated value of χ^2 (8.60) at 0.05 level is less than the table value of χ^2 (12.59), therefore, concluding no significant results for opinion towards competence, self-actualization, and quality research among scholars.

Table 4

Opinion of University Heads of Departments Towards Quality Standards (N=22)

	Level of Agreement							Total
	SA	A	SWA	N	SWDA	DA	SDA	
f_o	2	6	5	4	3	2	0	22
f_e	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	21.98
f_o-f_e	-1.14	2.86	1.86	0.86	3.14	-1.14	-3.14	3.3
$(f_o-f_e)^2$	1.30	8.18	3.46	0.74	-0.14	1.30	9.86	
$(f_o-f_e)^2 / f_e$	0.41	2.60	1.10	0.24	0.02	0.41	3.14	7.92 = χ^2

Note: $df = 6; p < 0.05$

Table 4 shows that the calculated value of χ^2 (7.92) at 0.05 level is less than the table value of χ^2 (12.59) for all responses of the heads of university departments about English for Specific Purpose (ESP) as a

component of research curriculum at postgraduate level. It is concluded that opinion response is less significant.

Table 5

Opinion of University Heads of Departments About Research Students Intelligently Managing the Problem of Self-Actualization (N=22)

	Level of Agreement							Total
	SA	A	SWA	N	SWDA	DA	SDA	
f_o	2	9	7	4	0	0	0	22
f_e	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	21.98
$f_o - f_e$	-1.14	5.86	3.86	0.86	-3.14	-3.14	-3.14	0.02
$(f_o - f_e)^2$	1.30	10.94	14.90	0.74	9.86	9.86	9.86	
$(f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$	0.41	3.48	4.75	0.24	3.14	3.14	3.14	18.30 = χ^2

Note: $df = 6$; $p < 0.05$

According to the findings of Table 5, the calculated value of χ^2 (18.30) at 0.05 level is greater than the table value of χ^2 (12.59), showing significant differences in the responses. Therefore, the relevant research hypothesis is accepted.

Table 6

Opinion of University Heads of Departments for Having Sound Psychological Environment for Research (N=22)

	Level of Agreement							Total
	SA	A	SWA	N	SWDA	DA	SDA	
f_o	1	5	6	4	3	2	1	22
f_e	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	3.14	21.98
$f_o - f_e$	-2.14	1.86	2.86	0.86	3.14	-1.14	-2.14	3.3
$(f_o - f_e)^2$	4.58	3.46	8.18	0.74	-0.14	1.30	4.58	
$(f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$	1.46	1.10	2.60	0.24	0.02	0.41	1.46	7.29 = χ^2

Note: $df = 6$; $p < 0.05$

Table 6 reveals that the calculated value of χ^2 (7.29) at 0.05 level is less than the table value of χ^2 (12.59).

Table 7

Opinion of University Teachers about Psychological Factors Creating Problem for Scholars toward Quality Research (N=100)

	Statement	SA	A	SWA	N	SWDA	DA	SDA	χ^2 and Sig
1	The clashes of Bilingualism with a single language culture	0	20	38	12	12	18	0	71.8 p<.05
2	Symbols and nonverbal communication based on the contexts	4	24	30	22	12	8	0	52.84 p<.05
3	Respect for various types of social norms and morality	3	17	34	24	12	10	0	59.11 p<.05
4	Impact of social sanctions and penalties differ from society to society	0	22	28	20	30	0	0	79.69 p<.05
5	Demand for the reflection of social values in university based research	0	24	26	30	15	5	0	68.07 p<.05
6	A culture of cheating and copy right violation that distort the genuineness	0	30	22	28	15	0	5	69.20 p<.05
7	Pressure group factor and the social structure of the university research writers	4	25	35	16	10	10	0	62.47 p<.05
8	Dominant ideology of powerful social, economic and political interests	6	12	36	22	16	4	4	57.31 p<.05
9	Cultural diffusion because of climate, technology, population and geography	3	15	28	24	5	15	10	36.03 p<.05
10	Multicultural education and globalization	5	36	16	24	10	0	9	63.31 p<.05
11	Ethnocentrism contrasting with cultural clashes and countercultures	4	20	32	20	14	8	2	47.23 p<.05
12	Parents' role in the early socialization of the researchers	9	48	22	0	0	20	0	130.70 p<.05
13	The researchers' self social image and popularity in the society	0	30	45	10	0	15	0	127.37 p<.05

14	Family background and home-centered problems of the researcher	0	48	20	0	12	20	0	127.23 p<.05
15	The social acceptance of race and gender with equality	0	56	24	16	4	0	0	178.7 p<.05
16	Disparities in schooling and teaching approaches regarding values and customs	0	47	23	18	12	0	0	124.3 p<.05
17	Group work association, coordination and cooperation among the researchers	9	43	18	10	20	0	0	92.68 p<.05
18	Group work association, coordination and cooperation among the researchers	6	32	22	15	20	5	0	53.53 p<.05
19	The explosion of population and its impact on the spirit and physique	8	30	32	22	8	0	0	77.46 p<.05
20	The explosion of population and its impact on the spirit and physique	5	20	35	18	15	0	7	57.30 p<.05
21	Extremism and terrorism affecting the mind and act of the researcher	0	28	43	17	0	0	12	114.51 p<.05
22	The impact of religion on the life of course of the researches	0	19	54	0	0	0	7	172.69 p<.05
23	Influence of heredity and environment on the person	0	43	32	15	0	0	10	123.73 p<.05
24	Social injustices and inequalities that demoralize/dishearten the researchers	0	44	20	24	0	0	12	113.81 p<.05
25	The impact of bureaucratization on the university research scholars	8	25	28	25	14	0	0	60.54 p<.05
26	The modern schools of thoughts affecting society, religion, education, family and way of life	5	41	30	20	4	0	0	111.43 p<.05

Note: SDA = Strongly Disagree; DA = Disagree; SWDA = Somewhat Disagree; N= Neutral; SWA = Somewhat Agree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree

Table 7 shows the significant chi square values (average $\chi^2 = 89.73$) at 0.05 level for all responses of university teachers about sociological factors creating problem for scholars toward self-

satisfaction and quality research. It reveals the difference of opinions among the respondents. On generalizing the results, it is concluded that the university research scholars faced problem of the clashes of bilingualism with a single language culture; symbols and nonverbal communication based on the contexts; respect for various types of social norms and morality; impact of social sanctions and penalties differ from society to society; demand for the reflection of social values in university based research; a culture of cheating and copy right violation that distort the genuineness pressure; group factor and the social structure of the university research writers; dominant ideology of powerful social, economic and political interests; cultural diffusion because of climate, technology, population and geography; multicultural education and globalization; ethnocentrism contrasting with cultural clashes and countercultures; parents' role in the early socialization of the researchers; the researchers' self social image and popularity in the society; family background and home-centered problems of the researcher; the social acceptance of race and gender with equality; disparities in schooling and teaching approaches regarding values and customs; the rapid changing role of the mass media and technology; group work association, coordination and cooperation among the researchers; guidance centres with socio-cultural resourcefulness; the explosion of population and its impact on the spirit and physique; extremism and terrorism affecting the mind and act of the researcher; the impact of religion on the life of course of the researches; influence of heredity and environment on the person; social injustices and inequalities that demoralize/dishearten the researchers; the impact of bureaucratization on the university research scholars; the modern schools of thoughts affecting society, religion, education, family and way of life. It reflects that the research hypothesis is accepted.

Table 8

Psychological Factors and the University Research Writers with Reference to Self-Satisfaction and Quality Research in the Opinion of University Research Teachers or Supervisors.

	Statement	SA	A	SWA	N	SWDA	DA	SDA	χ^2 and Sig
1	Mental health affecting their research competence and self	5	34	40	10	0	11	0	110.03 p<.05
2	Attitudes of the supervisors demoralizing their self	0	36	22	32	0	0	0	116.19 p<.05
3	Motivation level and instructional strategies discouraging their performance	6	36	28	20	10	0	0	83.04 p<.05
4	Emotionality and subjectivity deteriorating their reports and self image	3	28	37	22	8	2	0	89.88 p<.05
5	Hereditary differences affecting their research reports and self image	8	20	38	22	6	4	2	71.29 p<.05
6	Socioeconomic stressors deteriorating their competences and self image	7	19	40	24	8	0	2	85.69 p<.05
7	Uncertain future deteriorating their competences and self	4	36	18	25	12	5	0	70.04 p<.05
8	Adjustment level affecting their competence and self	2	43	35	12	4	4	0	124.64 p<.05
9	Intelligence and reflective ability affecting their competence and self	3	28	24	20	13	12	0	45.69 p<.05
10	Personality style, attitude and aptitude affecting their competence and self	0	38	28	18	8	4	4	85.29 p<.05
11	Threats and insecurity deteriorating their competence and self	9	26	32	21	10	2	0	64.74 p<.05
12	Mother tongue and language variation affecting the scholars	6	21	32	20	11	8	2	46.25 p<.05
13	Age and gender deteriorating the university based researches	8	17	32	22	17	4	0	51.58 p<.05
14	Misperceptions/ wrong judgments deteriorating their researches	10	19	30	21	16	0	4	45.14 p<.05

Table 8 shows the significant chi square values (average $\chi^2 = 77.81$) at 0.05 level for all responses of university teachers about psychological factors creating problem for scholars toward self-satisfaction and quality research. It reveals the difference of opinions among the respondents. On generalizing the results, it is concluded that the university research scholars faced problem of self-actualization due to mental health affecting their research competence and self; attitudes of the supervisors demoralizing their self; motivation level and instructional strategies discouraging their performance; emotionality and subjectivity deteriorating their reports and self image; hereditary differences affecting their research reports and self image socioeconomic stressors deteriorating their competences and self image; uncertain future deteriorating their competences and self; adjustment level affecting their competence and self; intelligence and reflective ability affecting their competence and self; personality style, attitude and aptitude affecting their competence and self; threats and insecurity deteriorating their competence and self; mother tongue and language variation affecting the scholars; age and gender deteriorating the university based researches; and, misperceptions/ wrong judgments deteriorating their researches. It implies that the research hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion

The current research carried out the psychosocial analysis of quality research competence of the postgraduate research scholars. The contextual data helped to identify and analyze the opinions of research scholars, their teachers and department heads by eliciting the need for

Psychosocial analysis of the problem quality research competence at postgraduate level in Pakistan. The researcher attempted to present remarkable results by measuring the significant relationship of psychosocial problems with quality while doing research in real situation. The conclusion of this study reflects that an innovative curriculum design for specific purposes may enhance the quality research competence of the postgraduate research scholars.

Implications

To address the embarrassing problem of quality research competence of Pakistani postgraduate research scholars, some applicable recommendations are greatly mandatory to provide here.

- To resolve the problem of quality research competence of the postgraduate research scholars, necessary basic knowledge and facilitation may be given to the MPhil and PhD scholars. The research educators and supervisors may facilitate the knowledge and provide optimum opportunity to their research students regarding research competence.
- The research teachers and supervisors may guide the research students as that communicative ability can be achieved if they may give proper attention to the use of proper contextual language. Moreover, importance may be given to the scholars' needs where they can exploit classroom learning for the real world goals.
- The university departments may plan practical activities on interpretation for developing transcultural abilities in their research scholars. Such abilities can be achieved through specific additional courses offered during their studies.
- The university departments may provide opportunity to motivate their scholars to share their problems; arrange meaningful activities with a focus on communicative ability in English; learn the contextual and situational uses; enjoy a friendly environment with positive feedback.
- Pakistani university departments may organize professional seminars and conferences so that the research students and their teachers could keep pace with the current trends and issues in education, especially in quality research competence of the postgraduate research scholars.
- The university departments may facilitate the authors to prepare learning materials according to the psychosocial needs of their scholars. Research curriculum may be integrated with materials focusing on competence level. Moreover, the research teachers may recommend the available different additional books on technical writing with precise details to the scholars for promoting their academic writing and research reports.
- Research conducting students may attain expertise in specifically organized materials of technical language that can greatly contribute.
- The research educators may guide their students on research methods and also on the use of established standards that decide the quality research competence. They may help them to conduct an inquiry while using its tools and draw conclusions about research ethics and rules.

- The university management may make sure the availability of orientation programs for academicians and their research scholars. It can improve the quality research competence of the postgraduate research scholars if their participation may be made compulsory along with the provision of recreational and financial incentives.
- The university management may extend such a mechanism of supervision that could encourage positive criticism of the academicians and scholars. The department's heads may keep a close eye on the weaknesses that can cause frustration, and they may engage teachers and their scholars for supervising the research activities.
- The university management may guide research students on access to libraries, academicians, information technology, other resources necessary for quality research competence of the postgraduate research scholars. In this regard, a collaborative communication among different universities may be exploited for establishing research quality.

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