

CHALLENGES FACED BY THE FACULTY MEMBERS REGARDING ACCREDITATION PROCESS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the issues that the faculty members of the education departments from university face when going through accreditation process with emphasis on data collection, analysis, and writing of reports to be submitted to external accreditation agencies by the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE). The process of accreditation is very important in providing quality and standardization in higher education but it offers numerous challenges to faculty. With the help of a qualitative, phenomenological methodology, semi-structured interviews with ten faculty members of three public universities in Lahore were carried out. Thematic analysis showed the major problems, such as the inability to achieve fragmented and poorly structured data, lack of understanding to keep records in time, the absence of knowledge about the accreditation requirements, and the problems with the data alignment with the existing quality measures. In addition, members of the faculty cited a lack of institutional support, shortage of human resources, and internal politics as being a major hindrance. In spite of these challenges, the accreditation process improves the professional growth and builds cooperation among the faculty. The results highlight that there is need to have systematic training programs, better institutional arrangements and support mechanisms to facilitate the accreditation process. By meeting these needs, institutions would make faculty ready and foster ongoing quality enhancement which would eventually lead to the development of standards of higher education in Pakistan.

Keywords: Accreditation, Quality assurance, NACTE.

INTRODUCTION

The significance of education has been a universally accepted fact throughout the human history. It serves as a key driver of socioeconomic and cultural development for both individuals and societies (Sywelem, 2009). Teacher education and its improvement are the focal concerns of all societies as the improvement of any education system is impossible without the involvement of its teachers (Timperly, 2011). To ensure stakeholder satisfaction and foster national development, it is vital to enhance program quality, institutional standards, academic excellence, and teacher competency by implementing fundamental reforms within the Teacher Education System (NACTE. 2009a). The competition to achieve excellence and superiority in the higher education system is steadily increasing (Knight, 2010). Globalization is the process of unifying regional, national, and international principles for educational sector to attain a comprehensive perspective (Vander Wende, 2007).

Structures of standard compliance were established by European and Asian countries so the requirement of internationalization and globalization in higher education institutions can be addressed. These systems assist management in improving university education to achieve greater global proficiency (Salmi, 2011; Hazelkorn, 2015). "International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN), and the

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)" are organizations that are concern about standardizing processes and are paying strengthened attention to the relationship between rankings and academic performance (Hou, 2012).

In 1954 the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), USA, was established, inspired similar organizations globally. In Pakistan, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) was founded in 2002 to ensure the quality of education across various disciplines. Within HEC, the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) was established in 2007 to uphold instructional excellence in public and private institutions using international standards (Batool & Qureshi, 2007).

Higher education in Pakistan is considered of worse quality in comparison to Western countries, necessitating well-organized hard work for the assurance of quality as well as improvement (Akhtar, 2007). There has long been a need in Pakistan for an accreditation authority to periodically evaluate and monitor teacher education programs, leading the government to establish an authority to ensure quality assurance for these programs (Mirza, 2015).

The primary aim of NACTE is:

"To guarantee top-tier teacher training programs as a core component of higher education via continuous skilled internal academic audits and external accreditation." (p. 6).

NACTE defines and promotes processes to enhance the quality of teacher education programs as they pursue accreditation (NACTE, 2016). Quality education relies on the standards of trainers and teaching qualification programs ought to emphasize on prioritizing their skills enhancement. (Khizar, 2012; UNESCO, 2008).

Program accreditation by professional bodies is seen as a proficient, holistic approach to attaining educational objectives and enhancing quality (Germaine & Spencer, 2016). Accreditation is the process that entails the external peer review and internal evaluation aimed at facilitating continuous enhancement of the educational programs (Ewell, 2010). Through the established standards, the accreditation process guarantees the quality of academic programs and graduate preparation by engaging the stakeholders in communications and assessment in order to promote continuous improvement (Peterson, L.M., 2022).

Mirza (2015) reported that NACTE has put in place seven National Accreditation Standards (NAS) to affirm educator training standards and the development of developmental education to sustainability in the hope of informing organizations on the best practices to follow and the provision of quality education (Krishnaveni ve Anitha, 2007). Preliminary and ongoing accreditation with seven standards measured by the use of certain indicators requires a framework of concepts that are developed as a result of the collaboration between NACTE, HEC, and the USAID program, the STEP program (Huma, 2013). Within the context of higher education, institutional and program quality is assured through accreditation that maintains standards that are relevant to the educational community and society in general (Smith, 2020).

The accreditation procedures vary greatly among the constituencies and nation-states, which is the complexity of the global higher education system, as Jones (2018) puts forward insights of educational staffs, which have undergone the accreditation process. Current paper investigates obstacles that can occur to faculty of university education in accreditation procedure, such as problem with report writing, data gathering, data analysis, participant awareness, and self-development program to satisfy QEC and NACTE demands. Accreditation plays an important role in terms of the rankings of universities because it confirms the quality of the institutions and

adherence to standards, which determines the above-mentioned position in the ranking systems (Kayani 2014).

Accreditation plays an important role in terms of quality assurance and uniformity in institutions of higher education. In measuring learning pathways it serves as a standard, educational staff qualifications, educational support services, and framework. By promoting responsibility and transparency, accreditation assists in upholding excellent standards as well as promoting continuous improvement (Mulimani, 2024). The process of generating the output requires a long accreditation process which entails filling of many documents which are submitted by NACTE. The faculty members in the education department in the university level collect and analyze these documents and thus, they had certain challenges in gathering and reporting the necessary documents. Once this hectic accreditation the process enhances the power of the organization, as well as its public perception, enabling a student to acquire a wide range of educational experiences, opening up a wider range of opportunities, and getting their qualifications accepted by other organizations and employers (Naikar, 2024).

In accreditation of universities rankings, accreditation occupies a very important role, where a number of reputation score systems also take it into account in evaluating the quality of the institutions. The accreditation effect on university rankings is eclectic and prepared to influence how organizations are perceived besides evaluated in the various organizational structures. Accreditation helps to substantiate the superiority of an association along with adherence to the postulated principles and consequently they are able to manipulate the position of the entity in rankings.

Although the current study aims at reporting the issues and requirements around faculty involvement and its significant influence on their professional development, and their possible role in assessment and accreditation activities. It is important to concentrate on their support and mentoring needs. Support and mentoring needs of the faculty members should be prioritized and well addressed because it is essential to support faculty in the development of their professional competence, the increased involvement in the major academic processes, and the successful acculturation into the scope of responsibilities in the assessment and accreditation. Specifically supporting and mentoring the faculty does not only empower them but also enhances the overall performance and quality of the educational structure of the institution.

Research objectives

Objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore the challenges faced by faculty members in preparing accreditation files for external evaluation by NACTE evaluators.
2. Identify the needs of faculty members in preparing accreditation files for external evaluation by NACTE evaluators.
3. Investigate the impact of participation in the accreditation process on the professional development of faculty members.

Research Questions

Research questions of the study were:

1. What challenges do faculty members face when preparing accreditation files for NACTE external evaluation?
2. What are the needs of faculty members in preparing accreditation files for NACTE external evaluation?

3. How does participation in the accreditation process impact the professional development of faculty members?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational Quality Concept

“Assessing the quality of education is one of the most challenging and delicate tasks. Education is not a singular event but an ongoing practice which evolves as time goes on. The excellence of education is largely influenced by means of elements comparing staff motivation, building resources, institutional oversight, and curriculum framework. Prior to addressing policy-related concerns, it is essential to grasp the multifaceted nature of quality assessment as well as the distinctive nature of education. From a definitional standpoint, quality ought to be an intrinsic attribute within any pedagogical system.” (Kumar 2010).

Concept of Accreditation

Accreditation is widely recognized as being the prominent method aimed at making sure the standards of organizations or curricula. Main purpose of educator’s accreditation is to confirm that those completing a designated teacher education program are proficient, capable and certified to teach. Accreditation assesses if a given Teacher Education curricula is worthy of being recognized as a "School of Education." In the past decades, the petition for highly skilled academic professionals has intensified. Therefore, this is essential to concentrate on all elements that guarantee the uppermost standards pertaining to teaching planning (Dubash et al., 2020).

Accreditation is essentially a “mechanism” and a “status level”. “Mechanism” refers to assessment as well as improvement of quality of education by advancement and verifying principles. The “status level” guarantees the environment that academic organizations offer courses which adhere to established principles (Satyanarayana & Srivastava, 2009).

Barriers in achieving accreditation

Several past events play a role towards the barriers and lack of correspondence in tracking validation and conforming to its regulations (Fester, 2012). Fester et al. explored the outcome of accrediting Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), focusing on the times gone by of Southern states in 2012. These establishments were frequently set apart within 'Black' accrediting bodies, and on the top of that after being integrated within the bounds of dominant bodies, they continued to be evaluated applying alternative metrics up to 1961 (p. 807).

Correspondingly, Anderson (1988) argued that "African American colleges regardless of discrimination were incapable of functioning self-reliantly, given the impactfulness and oversight of mainly white regulating bodies."(p. 251). Moreover in 2012, Fester et al. explored the implications of instituting equal standards across all colleges, regardless of differences in financial assistance and student statistics. They highlighted that institutions serving marginalized groups face the struggle of educating underprivileged students with insufficient means, while still being obliged to adhere the alike accreditation guidelines as respected all organizations (p. 816).

Additionally, Fernandez and Burnett (2020) made similar observations within the scope of their research, pointing out that Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) frequently encounter undue scrutiny when policy influencers evaluate the entities conforming to standards created for newly established, identical institutions (p. 855). Accreditation is not an easy process which poses a rather significant barrier to financially strained institutions that cater to marginalized students. Accrediting agencies have very high requirements, and the financial implications associated with them may be discouraging. The previous premises of accreditation reveal the imbalances around

which these principles were initially constructed, which is continuing to create the consistent reluctance of various institutions to engage in such developments.

The problem of the quality of education remains an issue in the context of Pakistan. In response to this issue, the National Accreditation Council of Teacher Education (NACTE) was established whose role is to certify that quality standards are achieved through the accreditation process of different teacher education programs in the country (Shakoor, & Farrukh, 2016).

Pakistan and accreditation framework

Teacher training became an important agenda in the higher education sector. Improving teaching certification programs are essential on behalf of strengthening educational framework of a nation (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2017). In higher education, teacher training has become a central focus. Enhancing the quality of teacher education is crucial for reinforcing the education system in any nation (Orland-Barak & Wang, 2020).

In Pakistan, thousands of teachers graduate annually from institutions in Pakistan. These institutions provide a range of degrees, from education undergraduate to doctoral level. However, numerous scholars, mentors, analysts, and policymakers have raised considerations regarding educational effectiveness of teacher training (Jalal et al., 2020).

Challenges in accreditation process

Maintaining teaching proficiency presents several challenges. To address this, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has launched various actions aimed at improving standards of educational training for teachers. As part of collaboration in conjunction with HEC, the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) was founded to affirm as well as maintain the teacher education standards in Pakistan (Abiodullah, Shakoor & Farrukh, 2017).

Since its establishment in 2007, NACTE has functioned as an independent and proactive body tasked with administering plus improving teacher professional development programs in Pakistan. Organizations providing teacher training in the country go through accreditation through self-assessment or outside review ensure they meet the standards of quality set by NACTE (Bourke, Ryan, & Lloyd, 2016).

In 2016, Germaine and Spencer carried out research to gain clarity from teaching staff on the autonomous learning process in accreditation procedures. Their goal was to facilitate the path for others pursuing initial accreditation by focusing on continuous improvement in their college (p. 68). Over the course of seven years, they conducted annual investigations with all full-time employees. The survey results indicated that faculty members generally had favorable opinions of the accreditation process that promoted teamwork both within the academic community and within unique programs. On the basis of results, the social analysts made several recommendations to improve the process: holding on-site meetings for accreditation duties, incorporating standards into everyday goings-on moreover, providing sufficient allocated time for accreditation functions to reduce impressions of being overwhelmed (Germaine & Spencer, 2016, p. 90). In the end, the accreditation cannot rely on only a handful of personalities at any point of the evaluation stages; it is important to be integrated throughout the regular work of all contributing members in program that seek to either sustain or improve the effectiveness of accreditation.

Similarly, Salto (2017) has carried out a research to examine the perceptions of faculty members towards the accreditation processes with regard to how higher education institutions adapted to the new policies. The study mainly included interviews with the administrators and directors who were involved in imposing policies and accreditation audits. Salto found that accreditation did not result in much change in the continuous improvement, and it even suppressed

processes, resulting in very few changes being recorded in the programs. Also, the research noted that faculty members found leaders and managers to use accreditation results in the preservation of rankings, rather than in the introduction of a radical change (Salto, 2017, p. 83). It was also implied by the results that internal evaluation procedures could be more rigid than accrediting organizations ones. On the same note the paper emphasizes the importance of questioning rankings during accreditation processes and illustrates how organizations often lay more stress on the aspect of meeting legal obligations as opposed to encouraging radical overhaul.

Moreover, another research also highlighted the significance of motivation in academic performance in the university setting. Specifically, the authors found that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation have a considerable effect on academic productivity (Horodnic and Zait, 2015) and the correlation between extrinsic and teacher motivation (Rasheed et al., 2016). This means that there is a way to improve the performance in postsecondary education by increasing the levels of motivation and engagement throughout the board. The relationship that exists between motivation and accreditation is also reaffirmed in the study. As an example, scholars have found motivation to be one of the key elements of improving quality and encouraging employee participation in accreditation process in healthcare organizations (Greenfield et al., 2011).

Another study revealed that faculty members regarded the accreditation process as an extra burden unless its importance was recognized despite its critical role in enhancing the status and reputation of the academic programs (Hail et al., 2019). On the same note, another study concluded that the faculty members perceived the accreditation process as an extra burden unless its significance was felt despite the fact that it was essential in enhancing the status and prestige of academic programs.

Furthermore, another study conducted by Khurram et al. (2020) studied the faculty perceptions of the NACTE standards. This qualitative research was done in order to find out what the faculty of the education department of a public university in Karachi, Sindh believed about accreditation and quality assurance processes established by NACTE, which is one of the branches of the Higher Education Commission (HEC). The research assessed the willingness of the faculty members to initiate the accreditation process of their department. The results indicated that faculty members were ill equipped in several aspects to be able to receive national accreditation and were minimally aware of the quality standards and accreditation procedures. They however, showed a strong interest in knowing more about accreditation process. The authors offered that NACTE develop new goals and conduct seminars and workshops to inform faculty members on the worth and benefits of accreditation.

In a similar manner, Nelson Duarte and Ricardo Vardasca (2023) analyzed higher education accreditation mechanisms, examining the practice of accreditation of new courses in various countries and concentrating on the challenges of accreditation that are bureaucratic and time-consuming. The research indicates that the Japan Accreditation Board of Engineering Education (JABEE) is the body that oversees the accreditation process in Japan. Higher education courses are evaluated based on Japanese University Quality Assessment System (JUQAS). JABEE provides the courses with accreditation of six years, provided they meet the required needs (Lucander et al., 2016). Overall, the accreditation in Japan, the process may be considered as effective and most courses are accredited within reasonable time. Nevertheless, the authors observed that the process might be more complicated and time-consuming in the case of institutions seeking first accreditation or in case they have new or innovative courses. The new

course should not only meet all the JUQAS requirements but also the institution should be able to have the necessary paperwork submitted on time so that it can fast track the accreditation process.

Moreover, the paper authored by Drs. Aishah Khojah and Amal Shousha (2020) titled Academic Accreditation Process of English Language Institute: Challenges and Rewards revealed the challenges that English Language Institutes (ELIs) face when trying to implement a new system that would meet the norms of Commission on English Language Accreditation (CEA). The project required the creation of a database starting with the laying of the basics, acquiring the already existing documents and developing new ones, consolidating large files, and maintaining updated database on the faculty. According to the research, which pointed at documentation as one of the significant challenges of the accreditation process, many participants struggled to properly report or document their efforts to comply with CEA requirements (Khojah et al., 2020).

Innumerable barriers are offering during the process of accreditation (*Ryhan, 2013*). Ryhan's investigation highlights the challenges faced by institutions because of resistance of faculty. Only technical changes are not enough to attain the improvement in this process. A common reason for ineffective quality initiatives are that many organizations and individuals are fail to report the changes in behaviors and attitude. While preparing the Self Study Report, it is highlighted that faculty were not interested in doing extra work which leads them towards delay of process. Moreover, resistance to change is commonly observed (*Ryhan E., 2013*).

Ryhan's investigation revealed that the challenges are mostly technical and are related to set and measure the standards moreover associated with employing meaningful change is primarily communal and supervisory. Providing education regarding accreditation to staff, students, and administrators has constantly been a difficult task. These challenges could be grouped in three key areas: technological, social, and administrative, as outlined in Ryhan's research (2013). Computational challenges encompass evaluating and measuring ELI practices against CEA standards, defining a mission, organizing the structure, as well as evaluating performance of faculty.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This scholarly work employed a qualitative methodology to understand the problems faced by faculty members' during the process of accreditation, following the interpretivist research paradigm. To investigate the challenges encountered by faculty members in the accreditation process scholars used semi-structured interviews. This approach was selected to understand how participants interpret and assign meaning to the phenomena being studied. The study's population consisted of faculty members from public universities in the Lahore district. The study sampled 10 faculty members from education department in Lahore's public universities, chosen through criterion sampling to reach data saturation and based on their prior accreditation experience. The researcher created a "Semi-Structured Interview Guide" following McGrath, Palmgren, and Liljedahl's (2019) guidelines, initially including too many questions. Each interview was conducted individually. The interview lasted between 30 to 40 minutes, the research instrument, a semi-structured interview guide, was validated by three experts to ensure its relevance, clarity, and effectiveness. The scholar took moral obligations into account during collecting the data to ensure that respondents' were in safe hands. The privacy as well as well-being of the respondents were prioritized. The procedure of selection of the participants was voluntarily, with their confidentiality being strictly maintained. Thematic analysis was used for the correct analysis of the data.. Themes were extracted from the data and organized or presented accordingly.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study's results have been described below

Analysis of Challenges in the Accreditation Process for “Data Collection”

There are numerous and serious difficulties with the accreditation process for data collection. Faculty members usually find it difficult to collect the necessary data because of resources' constraints, time restraints and not providing directions.

1. Accessibility and Organization of data

“It can be difficult to reorganize the desired information while making sure it adheres to the required structure. Accessibility and organization are challenging because sometimes the necessary information is easily accessible and other times it is not.” Claims R1.

2. Fragmented information

“The required documents were not arranged properly and it caused problem for staff as this is not an easy task and also take a lot of time”

3. Record keeping

R10 stated that “It is a complex task to ask for papers held few years before for this process because it is required for accreditation and sometime it's difficult to find them. Although it is a process where record should align beforehand”

4. Unavailability of documents

R3 shared the experience by stating that “It was a smooth process for me as all the departments helped us out but there was a document which we didn't receive because of its confidentiality and they were not willing to share that document with us.”

5. Unawareness

R4 described that “During this evaluation by NACTE, out of nowhere they started taking interviews with faculty members. As we were totally unaware of this interview it creates panic among the members.”

Correspondingly, R8 added that “It was a process when involved members' were uninformed of the requirements it create mismanagement in collecting data techniques or sometimes leads towards delays in submitting the documents.”

6. Cooperation

R5 notes that “A major challenge is the time-consuming process of gathering documents from multiple offices and organizing them. Furthermore, tracking down these documents takes a lot of time due to their dispersed nature.”

7. Limited human resource

R1 explained that “We were dependent on several people during the process of accreditation and those people were not giving us required data. Although we were anxious for this too, and I admitted that this is impossible for me to complete this challenge.”

8. Internal politics

Additionally, R10 described that “I consider internal politics as major obstacles in accessing documents as seniors feel insecure with the coming of new persons in institution. They don't want to give all authority and information to new member.”

9. Challenge of Alignment data with quality standards

Furthermore, R6 highlighted that “A gap exists between the benchmarks established by NACTE and HEC. Moreover, NACTE has started evaluating postgraduate programs using criteria originally designed for undergraduate programs.”

10. Excessive Burden

Similarly, R8 noted that “Documents pertaining to medical facilities and career counseling services are unnecessary because these departments do not track student usage by specific departments. This poses a major challenge, as it becomes difficult to identify which students from among the hundreds or thousands utilizing these services belong to the education department.”

11. Challenge in understanding Rules and regulations

“The majority of the accreditation task was covered in the self-assessment report (SAR), At present, single person is responsible for this report, rest of the members were totally uninformed of the data that needs to be included. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that QEC processes are communicated to the faculty. For instance, while course evaluation is an important document, many faculty members are unaware of how to carry it out.”

Analysis of Challenges in the Accreditation Process for “Data Analysis”

1. Limited Human resources

R5 stated that “We noticed a significant lack of office support during data analysis. We spent a lot of time on tasks like formatting and table alignment, which distracted us from more important work.”

According to R2, “Gathering the data was difficult but we gathered it but the main issue we faced was limited human resources to make sure the collected data was analyzed properly or not.”

2. Cooperation

In a similar vein, R6 disclosed, “I had trouble analyzing the data because I didn't have enough office support for data alignment and formatting. Additionally, staff members lacked training and experience in sophisticated data analysis techniques.”

According to R10, “Enhancement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the self-assessment process required tools for managing the data to analyze the process smoothly but unfortunately we didn't receive any cooperation.”

Analysis of Challenges in the Accreditation Process for “Report writing”

1. Clarity and Coherence

R1 explained the difficulty of writing reports, saying, “After consulting, we reorganized some documents that contained ambiguity based on our understanding. This was our internal process. However, other aspects were mandatory and fell under the responsibility of the NACTE team. The required documents was completed and somehow guided by seniors.”

According to R10 “Delays were majorly occurred because of self-assessment report. As we were unable to finish the Performa until all the data was gathered. Since it is the longest and most comprehensive, it required a significant amount of time.”

Analysis of needs in accreditation process for ‘Data collection’

1. Timely record keeping

R1 emphasized that “Proper record-keeping is crucial in preventing many issues, and therefore, it is necessary for departments and other offices to maintain data or begin collecting stakeholder information in advance.”

Additionally, R6 stated that “Consistent record-keeping is vital for preventing many issues, underscoring the importance of organizing all documents ahead of time. The office of accounts should ensure correct records of documents related to finance, well as similar level of attention is needed from other departments, such as the registrar and library.”

2. Training and awareness

R5 emphasized the importance of training, stating, “Communicating QEC processes to the faculty is crucial. The success of such procedures depends on how effective each institution has incorporated them in its institution. Also, it is important to ensure that the process is taken seriously by the participants as opposed to being unmoved”.

In a similar vein, R8 stated, “Workshop only addressed materials available on their website was given. In my opinion, workshop ought to be detailed and comprehensive which should discuss how to manage the paperwork.”

3. Stakeholders’ engagement

Additionally, R5 underlined the significance of “involving all faculty members in the process, rather than assigning the task to just one person. Because it guarantees that accreditation procedures take into account a variety of viewpoints and priorities, this method is advantageous for education. Better decision-making, ongoing development, and eventually improved educational outcomes and the institution’s reputation follow as a result.”

Analysis of needs in accreditation process for ‘Data Analysis’

1. Usage of systematic tools and software

R3 stated that “The self-assessment process can be made more effective and efficient by streamlining data collection and analysis through the use of technology and data management tools.”

In a similar vein, R5 recommended that “Institutions and concerned department must inculcate new technologies and methodologies to cater the need of data analysis as it is the way more difficult for people involved in this process to first gather the data and then analyze it.”

Similarly, R6 said that “Software tools must be provided to faculty members for accurate analysis of gathered data as it’ll save time and also help to manage the tasks.”

2. Paper-less policy

According to R3, “Institutions are facing problem in the usage of large amount of papers for documentation. NACTE should take step to reduce the number of documents or should take initiative to let the institute submit the documents’ online”

Additionally, R6 emphasizes the importance of adopting a paperless policy, stating that “Switching to a paperless approach is really necessary for the sustainability in the form of less consumption of carbon. NACTE should take steps towards this approach as it is considered as the reliable option.”

Analysis of needs in accreditation process for ‘Report Writing’

1. Clear guidelines

R1 stated that “Certain documents were ambiguous, highlighting the importance of ensuring clarity to make data reporting easier.”

R7 suggested that “Clear guidelines should be provided at the beginning of the process to help members more easily identify areas where they may need assistance.”

Impact of Participation in accreditation process

1. Skill enhancement

“Despite the difficulties, the process fosters significant professional development”, according to R1. Faculty members gain the abilities and self-assurance necessary to take on any task after overcoming these challenges.

Furthermore, R2 stated that “Even though it is challenging, it offers worthwhile chances for learning and development.”

Similarly, R3 stated that “The process offers a great opportunity for faculty members looking to transition into administrative roles, enabling them to develop a broad range of management skills.”

Accordingly, R4 made the observation that “It helps me to learn new things regardless of workload.”

Additionally, R5 emphasized that “Every member should involve in this process to learn several approaches like logical reasoning skills is required in every day matters and is reliable and effective to involve in this process.”

DISCUSSION

Learning about the faculty difficulties is essential in improving the quality of accreditation. The research shows that the process of accreditation should not involve a small number of individuals but all people and should be part of the routine work (Germaine and Spencer, 2016, p. 90). In his study of faculty perceptions in 2017, Salto concluded that accreditation can be counterproductive to continuous improvement, and that few changes have been reported. Faculty considered administrators to use the results of this process to maintain the status quo rather than to lead to some changes (Salto, 2017, p. 83). The current research did not consider any views on the implementation of new policies, whereas Salto was able to do so in his study, but instead addressed specific challenges faced by the faculty regarding the accreditation files.

In another study, it was established that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have a significant impact on performance and productivity in higher education (Rasheed et al., 2016). Interest and ambition stimulation on all levels enhance educational performance in the higher education and motivation is paramount in improving quality as well as the participation of staff in the accreditation practices (Greenfield et al., 2011). The research indicates that compensation on tasks related to accreditation is a strong motivator among faculty members and can decrease the stress and burden felt by the faculty. They indicated that they needed more training, and as a result, the National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education was advised to conduct workshops and seminars to enhance the knowledge and willingness of the faculty to go through the accreditation process (Khurram et.al, 2020).

The paper highlighted the importance of keeping records systematically and in time so that there are no last minute problems when accreditation is being done. It has also drawn attention to the effective accreditation system in Japan, which is operated by the JABEE and whose foundation is on JUQAS (Lucander et al., 2016). The research of Ryhan (2013) emphasizes that the resistance and unwillingness of the faculty to participate in the accreditation process may be a barrier to improving the quality of education. To be successful in accreditation, institutions must cover both the technical and behavioral changes (Ryhan E., 2013). According to Wilson-Hail et al. (2019), it is important that faculty efforts and resources should be identified to enhance perceptions related to the CAEP accreditation process among teacher education programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the results it is put forward that:

1. The quality of institutional members’ training can be considerably strengthened through appropriate mentorship from NACTE.

2. Enhancing collaboration between teaching and non-teaching staff is essential; therefore, the institution must create a supportive atmosphere.
3. NACTE ought to streamline the number of extensive documents and remove irrelevant content. Additionally, it is recommended that only academic-related documents be collected from faculty, and other required documents be sought from the respective institutional departments.
4. At the moment, proper regulations for post-graduate program accreditation are lacking. Therefore, NACTE should introduce specific rules and guidelines for post-graduate accreditation to resolve any confusion.
5. Subsequent studies may be carried out on a broader scale, covering additional districts of Punjab.

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