



Basic pay scale dilemma: Does it reflect discrimination? Case of teaching faculty of Pakistani public sector universities

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Abstract

This study analyzed the perceptions of Basic Pay Scale (BPS) faculty in Pakistan's public sector universities. The aim was to question whether the BPS faculty in public sector universities faced discrimination. A quantitative and non-experimental approach was carried out to conduct this survey research. A survey tool having twenty-four items with a Likert scale of five choices ranged between strongly disagree and strongly agree was used for data collection. The data were collected from 384 sample BPS-teachers out of 35,089 BPS-teachers working in the public sector universities. The google-form was developed, and its link was shared in the Whatsapp groups for "All Pakistan Universities BPS Teachers Association" (APUBTA). The missing data were less than three percent. It was found that the BPS faculty has no service structure regarding promotions. The BPS faculty are promoted with a process by adding posts, in which the in-service teachers are put in competition with the entire country, leaving fewer chances for their promotion. In contrast, it was found that, unlike the BPS faculty, the Tenure Track System (TTS) faculty have a well-defined service structure, facing no selection board. On the other hand, the BPS faculty sent to foreign universities under the faculty project cannot apply to other universities as per university statutes. This situation is creating a sense of discrimination among the BPS faculty, affecting universities' performance. It was suggested that the HEC and the government focus on these issues until they are solved, aiming at better universities' performance.

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Introduction

It is a general perception among university teachers, that they work under two systems, namely, BPS (Basic Pay Scale) and TTS (Tenure Track System). Both these systems were adopted in the same university by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), approved by the university syndicates. In the TTS system, there is a proper structure for the promotions and yearly increase in salaries, while for the BPS system there is no proper system of promotion. In fact, the BPS teachers apply each time for a new advertised post of higher rank and compete with the whole country, and might not necessarily be selected.

This study aimed to determine the universities' Basic Pay Scale (BPS) faculty's perceptions of their fundamental rights such as promotions, service structure, and the perceived discrimination concerning the two systems of BPS and TTS (Tenure Track System) in the same institutes. The constitution of Pakistan (1973) (Articles 25A and Article 18) emphasized fundamental rights and the promotion of Higher Education [Article 37(c)]. The universities play a pivotal role in imparting higher education. Academic staff play a crucial role in assessing the viability of the vision and mission of a university. To protect the civil servant's rights and interests at the national level, Pakistan enacted the civil servant act of 1973 under which all four provinces legislated their service laws and rules.

Under the delegated legislation, universities were granted autonomy to enact their Administrative law in conformity with the respective act of Parliament of provincial assembly as the case may be. These rules and regulations, called Statutes, are made by elected bodies (senate and syndicate) of that university. According to "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Universities (Amendment) Act (2016) the university, by its statutes, prescribes the terms and conditions of their employees' service. These rules may differ from general laws applicable to the Government servants [section 6(iv)]. The university employee shall be treated as a civil servant for a service issue in a service court or tribunal [section 41(1)].

Every university has its service structure (statutes) that regulate the terms and conditions of the employees' service, such as appointment, removal, promotion, salary, retirement, etc. The statutes prescribe and regulate the

university's employees' pay and scale [section 28(d)], but lack of the promotion policy creates discrimination. It was claimed that job performance is dependent on paying and promotion (e.g. Popov et al., 2017).

The laws and statutes for TTS teachers are structured to encourage mental satisfaction and future protection in such a way that TTS is directly promoted to higher positions without advertising and competition. In contrast, the BPS faculty is unlawfully deprived of this promotion status, creating an artificial discrimination atmosphere. The criteria for promotion in both categories are almost the same. Still, the BPS group has been waiting for years for ads and is facing a national rivalry (e.g. Awan, 2020).

Unfortunately, 70 percent of BPS faculty in public universities are in the worst conditions, and they seem frustrated with their work as having no job satisfaction. The researchers (e.g. Yan-Li & Hassan, 2018) claimed motivation-hygiene theory and job satisfaction as essential factors for job performance. The researchers (e.g. Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018) considered promotion one of the most critical job satisfaction factors.

Based on the above-stated claims, this study was conducted to determine whether the BPS faculty of the public universities in Pakistan are Victims of Complex and Nuanced Injustice in Promotions, and to make suggestions based on the findings.

Conceptual Framework

The Tenure Track System (TTS) was created with the goal of attracting talented young people to the academic profession by offering them competitive wages. In 2002, the first draft of TTS was sent to universities. Despite this, only a small number of institutions adopted it until 2005. The introduction of TTS by the HEC resulted in structural modifications in the university appointment system, which were either completely or partly adopted (e.g. Khan & Jabeen, 2019). However, the BPS rules are not mentioned in (1–2.11.1) of the Tenure Track Statutes rule, 2016, and neither are the TTS laws. This discrimination created a perception of negligence in the BPS university teachers in Pakistan (Ahmad, 2020). This study was carried out on the basis of this conceptual framework to find out whether the "BPS and TTS Dilemma" creates a sense of discrimination among the university teachers.

Literature Review

Civil Servant Act, 1973

Bhandari, Bagga and Nadan (2010) suggest that motivation is a transaction process. It is not easy to motivate individuals directly, but only to build an environment conducive to a high degree of motivation. The civil servant act prescribed eligibility for promotion to a higher post of such servants having the required minimum qualifications [section 9(10), Civil Servant Act, 1973] to achieve the above-stated motivation. Under the act, promotion rules were framed from time to time. For example, “Civil Servant Promotion (BPS-18 to BPS-21) Rules 2019” provides a detailed account of the eligibility, conditions, seniority, and Efficiency-Index for promotion, etc. [Rules 6-16, Civil Servant (BPS-18 to BPS-21)]. The civil servant Act is not directly applicable to the faculty of public sector universities but supports the faculty. The “Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Universities (Amendment) Act (2016); section 41(1) explains that the university employees shall be treated as a civil servant for a service issue in a service court or tribunal.

Promotion Under Universities Statutes

The researchers (e.g. Shen & Leggett, 2014; Villanueva-Flores et al., 2017) studied organizational-justice-framework. This framework included assessing results, pay, recruitment, and career growth. Any act of a Legislative Assembly is to establish a university grants autonomy to enact its administrative law to run the institution effectively. As a result, statutes were framed to run the affairs of the respective university. The researchers took the University of Peshawar Statutes 2016, adopted by all the province’s universities. These statutes mentioned the promotion procedure in all categories of employees except teachers. Therefore, the issue of promotion should be discussed in detail.

Status of Promotion of Administrative and Supportive Staff under Statutes

An employee working in the administration of a university in BPS-17 or above is called an Administrative Officer (clause ii of promotion & scales of pay statutes,

2016). This explains how an officer can be promoted to the next higher ranking by considering his eligibility and performance in the previously held position. These stated rules define the terms and conditions required to be promoted to the following scale (Rules 4.1 4.2.19). Statutes of the University are unambiguous on the issue of promotion of supportive staff too. The promotion procedure is seniority-cum-fitness based for the staff (BPS 02-BPS 17), mentioned in rule number 7(ii).

Status of Teaching Faculty

The perception of discrimination necessarily requires distributive inequality, such as by comparing themselves with their fellows. Suppose people feel that their relationship with the organization is not fair; in that case, distributive inequality may be created but not discrimination (e.g. Villanueva-Flores et al., 2014). On the other hand, if one feels that his colleagues get more return, it discriminates (e.g. Khan & Jabeen, 2019).

The lack of BPS faculty’s promotion in public sector universities creates a sense of discrimination because the TTS faculty’s promotion process is based on seniority cum fitness. The researchers (e.g. Popov et al., 2017) found that the universities’ performance depends on pay and employee promotion. The word “Promotion” is not even defined, but it was stated “when a teacher is appointed from a lower post to a higher post” (Rule 2, Teachers Scales of Pay Statutes, 2016). According to this definition, it is more like an initial appointment, made otherwise than by promotion or transfer” [section 2(c), Civil Servant Act, 1973]. The same definition [clause (h)] of the statutes is unauthentic, creating discrimination.

Tenure Track System (TTS) was intended to attract qualified young people to the academic profession through high salaries. The draft of TTS was sent to the universities in 2002. Still, very few universities adopted it till 2005. By introducing TTS, HEC brought structural changes in the universities’ appointment system embraced fully or partially (e.g. Khan & Jabeen, 2019). TTS laws are explained in rule (1–2.11.1) of Tenure Track Statutes, 2016, but not for the BPS.

Methodology

A quantitative research design with a closed-ended survey instrument having 24 items and a Likert scale of five choices was used in this research study. The Likert scale was given as: (1) strongly disagree; (2) disagree; (3) neither agree nor disagree; (4) agree; and (5) strongly agree. The data were analyzed via descriptive statistics. The data were collected from 384 respondents of the BPS faculty from public sector universities.

Participants

The total number of permanent BPS faculty members in public sector universities is 35,089. By excluding the 8 percent TTS faculty (2,984), the remaining BPS faculty is 32,105 (e.g. Khan & Jabeen, 2019). Therefore, the target population was 32,105 BPS faculty members from the universities.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

According to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, the sample size is 384 for the population, size as 35,089. The random sampling technique was used to collect data randomly from the stated number of sample university teachers.

Data Collection Instrument

The data were collected with help of the research tool having twenty four items. These items were developed in the light of the teachers perceptions published from time to time in different newspapers. The instrument was pilot studied and finalized with only twenty four items for the original study. The results for validity and reliability after pilot study are given below.

Pilot Study for Validity and Reliability

To confirm the tool's validity and reliability, a pilot study was conducted and the extracted values were compared to the threshold values, i.e. $CR \geq .60$, $AVE \geq .50$, and Cronbach alpha $\geq .70$ (Hair et al., 2009).

Table 1 shows that the values for CR, AVE and Chronbach alpha are within the threshold values and confirm the validity and reliability of the tool. To get this

reliability and validity, 50 teachers were studied in pilot study.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

For data collection purposes, a google form was developed. The link was shared among the Whatsapp groups of all BPS faculty members (APUBTA) from the public sector universities. The data were analyzed with the help of percentage distribution. The responses were interpreted in terms of percentages for the stated levels.

Results

Table 2 shows that the BPS and TTS systems in public sector universities create discrimination among the faculty. The survey found most respondents disagreed at a high level that the BPS faculty promotion to the next ranks is well-expressed in the university statutes. In comparison, most agreed there was no service structure for BPS promotion as the TTS faculty have. The BPS faculty wait for years concerning their promotion, and taking a five-year bond from BPS staff by the university administration is a deprivation of rights.

Table 3 shows that concerning promotion, when the BPS faculty face a selection board, they mostly find political pressure against them and are not acknowledged with promotions for their best performance. In fact, it was perceived that, the promotion of BPS faculty is not a promotion but a new/re appointment. In contrast, the administrative staff enjoys a proper service structure while the BPS promotion is based on re-appointment, which is an illegal division.

Table 4 shows the HEC may develop model BPS-statutes for BPS-faculty promotion like TTS. The K.P.'s model statues ignored the BPS faculty's time scale promotion. The multifaceted institutionalized discrimination is a source of deep despair and dismay among the BPS faculty. Now it is essential to develop a service structure for the BPS faculty to improve motivation and make effective the universities.

Table 1 Measurement indices for reliability and validity
($n = 384$)

Construct	CR	AVE	Cronbach alpha
Instrument	.73	.79	.88

Table 2 Percentage of response for items 1–6 of discrimination and injustice

		(n = 384)				
No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
		Low		Moderate	High	
1	The dual recruitment system (BPS and TTS) in public sector universities creates discrimination among the faculty.	(3.0%)		(1.0%)	(86.0%)	
		3.0	0.0	1.0	7.0	89.0
2	Like for TTS faculty, there is no service structure for the promotion of BPS faculty.	(3.0%)		(0.3%)	(96.6%)	
		2.0	1.0	0.3	5.0	91.6
3	In almost all public universities' statutes, the BPS faculty's promotion to the next ranks is well-expressed.	(90.0%)		(4.0%)	(6.0%)	
		77.0	13.0	4.0	2.3	3.7
4	The BPS faculty is satisfied and motivated even if there is no promotion policy in this university.	(96.7%)		(1.00%)	(2.3%)	
		85.0	11.7	1.0	1.0	1.3
5	The BPS faculty wait for years concerning their promotion.	(2.3%)		(0.5%)	(97.2%)	
		1.8	0.5	0.5	7.2	90.0
6	In terms of scholarship, signing a five year bond from BPS faculty to provide services and giving no chance of promotion nor NOC meant to apply to other universities is a deprivation of rights.	(2.8%)		(2.9%)	(94.3%)	
		2.3	0.5	2.9	12.3	82.0

Table 3 Percentage of response for items 7–12 of discrimination and injustice

		(n = 384)				
No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
		Low		Moderate	High	
7	Concerning promotion, when the BPS faculty face a selection board, they mostly find political pressure against them regarding someone with low performance.	(0.5%)		(3.7%)	(95.8%)	
		0.0	0.5		13.3	82.5
8	The BPS faculty is not acknowledged with advanced increments and promotion for their outstanding performance as the TTS have.	(0.8%)		(0.8%)	(98.4%)	
		0.3	0.5		11.3	87.1
9	Unlike BPS faculty, the administrative staff in public sector universities enjoy a proper service structure in terms of promotion.	(1.6%)		(0.8%)	(97.6%)	
		0.8	0.8		12.5	85.1
10	The promotion of BPS faculty is based on re-appointment, in which they face competition with all of Pakistan, leaving their chances to be promoted rare.	(0.6%)		(0.0%)	(99.4%)	
		0.3	0.3		10.2	89.2
11	The TTS faculty's one-sided promotion with the same qualification and experience as BPS faculty is an illegal division.	(1.8%)		(6.1%)	(92.1%)	
		1.8	0.0		12.1	80.0
12	Due to power autonomy, some universities had adopted a time scale promotion policy for BPS faculty, which is another form of discrimination varying from university to university.	(2.4%)		(6.3%)	(91.3%)	
		0.3	2.1		16.3	75.0

Table 4 Percentage of response for items 13–18 of discrimination and injustice

		(n = 384)				
No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
		Low		Moderate	High	
13	As TTS exists, the HEC being a regulatory body, may develop model BPS statutes for BPS faculty promotion.	(0.8%)		(1.0%)	(98.2%)	
		0.5	0.3		11.1	87.1
14	Regarding promotion, there is a sense of deprivation in the BPS faculty.	(0.8%)		(1.0%)	(98.2%)	
		0.5	0.3		13.1	85.1
15	The non-availability of proper service structure is a demotivating factor for BPS faculty, affecting their academic performance.	(0.6%)		(0.8%)	(98.6%)	
		0.3	0.3		13.5	85.1
16	The model statues of K. P. has ignored the time scale promotion of the BPS faculty.	(1.3%)		(8.2%)	(90.5%)	
		0.5	0.8		14.4	76.1
17	There is no rule for transfer and mutual-transfer of the BPS faculty from university to university within the country.	(2.1%)		(3.2%)	(94.7%)	
		1.6	0.5		14.3	80.4
18	The multifaceted institutionalized discrimination is a source of deep despair and dismay among the BPS faculty.	(0.3%)		(2.4%)	(97.3%)	
		0.0	0.3		19.2	78.1

The Table 5 shows that the government of Pakistan might give housing schemes to the BPS faculty, and that BPS would be interested in fast track premature fitness-based promotion. Most of them at a high level disagreed that the faculty would prefer the current job in the public universities to any other option. The reason is that, mostly, the BPS faculty feels deprivation of their rights.

Discussion

The majority of the BPS faculty in the public sector universities in Pakistan perceived the dual recruitment system (BPS and TTS) as discrimination. Furthermore, the BPS faculty have no service structure as TTS faculty have, as the next post's promotion is not clearly expressed in the statutes. The BPS faculty are not satisfied with this

Table 5 Percentage of response for items 19–24 of discrimination and injustice

		(n = 384)				
No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
		Low		Moderate	High	
19	The government might give housing schemes to the BPS faculty as in provincial and federal government service.	(0.8%)		(2.1%)	(97.1%)	
		0.5	0.3		12.0	85.1
20	The BPS faculty would prefer the current job in the public universities if they were given a chance to chose any other option.	(38.5%)		(18.4%)	(33.1%)	
		35.4	13.1		10.5	22.6
21	The BPS faculty would be interested in fast track premature fitness-based promotion (similar to TTS).	(2.9%)		(5.2%)	(91.9%)	
		1.6	1.3		16.8	75.1
22	The BPS faculty would prefer the time-scale promotion (i.e. seniority-cum-fitness based promotion system).	(2.1%)		(3.1%)	(94.8%)	
		1.6	0.5		17.3	77.5
23	The administration's appreciation of the BPS faculty is exceptionally satisfying.	(60.1%)		(19.4%)	(20.5%)	
		47.1	13.0		7.4	13.1
24	At all levels, BPS faculty engagement in decision-making is exceptionally Boosted.	(58.2%)		(18.8%)	(23.0%)	
		43.1	15.1		9.0	14.0

situation because they wait for years to be promoted but retire with the same post. The BPS faculty sent to the foreign universities (under the faculty development project) were kept in the same position after completing their PhDs. Even these faculty members cannot get NOC from their respective universities to apply to other universities in Pakistan. This situation with the BPS faculty is creating frustration and demotivation. Hoboubi et al. (2017) proved through an empirical study that promotion is the dimension for job satisfaction, reducing job stress. In contrast, job repetition causes demotivation of the employees. The BPS faculty of public universities is just a single cadre having no promotion and transfer rights in Pakistan. Different researchers (e.g. Flint et al., 2013; Villanueva-Flores, et al., 2017) studied injustice and discrimination in other organizations' employment, affecting the performance. Discrimination and injustice were linked to job attitudes, psychological health, stress, physical health, organizational citizenship behavior, turnover intention, and the perceived climate of diversity (Triana et al., 2015; Villanueva-Flores et al., 2015).

The BPS faculty believed that the HEC of Pakistan should explain a promotion system, the lack of which causes deprivation and demotivation of BPS faculty. There is no rule for faculty transfer from university to university, as shown from the data. This multifaceted discrimination was proved to be a significant source of despair and dismay among the BPS faculty. In a case the employees feel frustrated, their performance could be affected negatively. If there is work satisfaction in public sector universities concerning BPS, the universities could have a world ranking. But in contrast, perceived discrimination's pervasiveness is fundamental to its harmful effects on psychological well-being (Schmitt et al., 2014). The situation with BPS teachers is against the "Motivation to Work" theory of Herzberg (2017). The stated theory considered the promotion of employees as an essential element to motivation. That is why it is essential to study the BPS faculty's discrimination and injustice in public sector universities.

Though most BPS faculty members prefer the current job, they still perceived no housing schemes like the federal servants. The BPS faculty prefer the fast track premature fitness-based promotion and time-scale promotion. They don't believe in the administration's appreciation of their work and their effective engagements in decision making.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Promotion is an essential element in the national civil structure, and the same statutes also provide such for administrative and supportive staff. Teaching faculty have been kept deprived of their legal right. More than 70 percent of BPS faculty are in the worst conditions, and they seem frustrated with their work as having no job satisfaction. The absence of a promotion policy has created an environment of discrimination, affecting a university's overall efficiency. To get high achievements, factors like injustice and discrimination should not be tolerated.

The HEC of Pakistan can handle easily the studied problem by developing a service structure for BPS faculty of universities in Pakistan, as it was developed for TTS, and recommended to the public sector universities. Future research may be conducted on the worst situation with BPS faculty and its impact on the universities performance in global ranking. Also studies may be conducted on the standard of the graduates, who are studying in the stated discriminative atmosphere.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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