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Effect of Demographic Variables of University Teachers on their Perceived Teacher Empowerment

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Abstract

Teacher Empowerment (TE) is not a broadly investigated idea in Educational studies, therefore, this concept is still under examination and indefinable as ever. It is a vibrant component of effective management in universities. The current research is an endeavor to examine the Teacher Empowerment as perceived by the teachers working in Universities by taking into consideration the demographic variables (Gender, Qualification, experience, Rank and type of job). The study was an action research and descriptive in nature which aimed to determine the current status of teacher empowerment as perceived by the teachers working in universities of the Punjab Province, Pakistan. A survey of 415 respondents was carried out in this regard. The sample was consisted of male and female teachers working in 7 general type universities of the Punjab. The instrument used to collect data was "School Participants Empowerment Scale" SPES (Short and Rinehart, 1992), a scale containing 38 items with five point Likert scale, divided into Six dimensions of empowerment i.e. "Decision Making, Professional Growth, Status, Self-Efficacy, Autonomy and Impact". Descriptive and Inferential Statistics including, mean, t-test, correlation and ANOVA were applied to analyze the data. Results of the study showed that teachers have a highly perceived empowerment. The difference of mean exists based on demographic variables except qualification.

Keywords: Teacher empowerment, Decision making, Professional growth, Self-efficacy, autonomy

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Introduction

An organization is a cluster of individuals that are united together in order to achieve the organizational goals. Each organization comprises three basic components i.e. goal, people, and its system. Individuals are operating in system with the objective of having organizational or individual's goals completion (Alvi, Kanwal, & Bilal, 2014). As the chief asset of every organization is human resource, so the organizations must have motivated and inspired human resources to meet the above mentioned challenges (Gholifar, Gholami & Pouya, 2013). It is the efficient human resource in an organization that makes it superior to others. In order to survive in the competitive environment, empowering the human resources in any type of organization is very important (Jofreh, Aghaei, & Nia, 2014). For the reason, employee empowerment is believed to be a necessary ingredient of every organization. Ongori (2009) also argued that there is a need of empowered employees in this globalized age so that they could make immediate and quick decisions and act in response quickly whenever they feel any change in organizational circumstances. According to Sadati (2012), empowerment is a concept where an organization put forward its decision making or approval power to employees. So empowerment can also be identified as a practice in which capacity of an individual and/or group is enhanced to make their own choices and to translate these choices into preferred measures and outcomes (Alsop, Bertelsen, & Holland, 2005).

Teacher Empowerment (TE)

In the twenty-first century, education has gone through extensive changes. Educational reforms are being undertaken by most of the countries regarding curriculum, infrastructure, teaching strategies and assessment processes. And, obviously, the vital ingredient of among all these factors is the teacher. There is an agreement by different societies that “the teacher is not just one of the variables that must be changed if their educational systems are to be improved. Societies are realizing the teacher is also one of the most significant agents of change in such reforms” (Villegas-Reimers, 2003, p. 7). Consequently, development of the teachers has become a challenge and has gained a considerable amount of attention (Fandino, 2010).

Teachers are persons who are more armed with the authority of decision making about their “teaching and learning”. Thus empowerment is considered vital for finding out the circumstances that are necessary for the surety of making the teachers able to perform their jobs effectively (Squire-Kelly, 2012). According to Aliakbari and Amoli (2016), teacher empowerment is affected by factors, e.g. the nature of teaching, the features of teaching as a profession, teacher background knowledge, school organizational features, and its environmental context.

The term Empowerment, as described by Mishra and Mishra (2009), "is used to denote the enhanced involvement of employees in organizational processes and decision-making". "It is the delegation of decision-making prerogatives to employees, along with the discretion to act on one's own" (Samad, 2007). According to Aghayar (2007), empowerment is such a process that enables the employees to use maximum of their ability to assist in the responsibility of their task. It also determines the staff to teach things that they can do to be less reliant on the administrator. Tengland (2008) pointed out that empowerment can be regarded "either as a goal or as a process". When we see it as a goal, it puts emphasis on having control. And as a process, empowerment stresses on defining the goals and resources to maintain professional relations. Further, the empowerment as a process gets individuals into making decisions and as a goal it gives future-oriented leadership rather than dealing with usual things (Balkar, 2015).

Short and Rinehart (1992) recognized following six dimensions of teacher empowerment:

1. *Decision-making:* it deals with the participation of the teachers in decisions that critical in nature and that straightaway influence their job. These include the issues regarding personnel selection, budgets, planning, and curriculum.
2. *Professional growth:* it denotes the teachers' awareness and views regarding provision of opportunities from their organization so that they can professionally grow and develop.
3. *Status:* it is the professional admiration and respect from the colleagues perceived by the teachers.
4. *Self-efficacy:* denotes the "teachers' perception that they are equipped with the skills and ability to help students learn, and are competent to develop curricula for students.
5. *Autonomy:* "refers to the teachers' feeling that they have control over various aspects of their working life, including scheduling, curriculum development, selection of textbooks and planning instruction".
6. *Impact:* includes "the teachers' perception that they can affect and influence school life" (Barge, 2012).

Balkar (2015) has stated that there are numerous researches that mention the benefits of making the teachers empowered. It has been studied with the various organizational and individual related variables like organizational commitment, Organizational Citizenship behavior, Professional development etc.

Bogler and Somech (2003) examined liaison of "teachers' empowerment with the teachers' organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and their professional commitment". Findings of the study indicated that TE is pointedly correlated with teachers' commitment for both their organization and profession and also to organizational citizenship behavior. "Among the six subscales of empowerment, professional growth, status and self-efficacy were significant predictors of organizational and professional commitment, while decision-making, self-efficacy, and status were significant predictors of OCB". Bogler and Somech (2004) directed another sequential research to see the impact of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction and OCB and the findings show that empowered teachers who have the feelings of competence, self-determination, impact, and meaning, exhibit higher satisfaction on their job and express higher OCB.

Lintner (2008) and Sharp (2009) identified an association of teachers' perceptions about empowerment with principal use of power and principal effectiveness respectively. Results showed the positive relationship of TE with both variables.

Squire-Kelly (2012) in his research studied the link of TE with students' achievement by using SPES (School Participant Empowerment Scale) including six subscales; "decision making; professional growth; status; self-efficacy; autonomy; and impact" and finding no relationship at all. Ghaemi and Sabokrouh (2014) explored the relationship of teachers' empowerment with job satisfaction using SPES plus the demographic investigation containing age, gender and qualification. The consequences of the study showed that "significant correlations were found between total teacher empowerment and total teacher job satisfaction. There were found significant differences in the demographic variables of educational background and gender with regards to teacher empowerment and job satisfaction".

A recent study conducted by Aliakbari and Amoli (2016) measured "the effect of teacher empowerment on teachers' commitment and student achievement". Results showed that "the six dimensions of decision making, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, autonomy, and impact which constitute teacher empowerment played a significant role in teacher commitment".

In Pakistan, Saleem, Nisar, and Imran (2017) have worked recently on psychological empowerment in teachers' perspective with its relation to organizational citizenship behavior. Results revealed a strong positive relationship between psychological empowerment of the teachers and their organizational citizenship behavior.

Empowerment is mostly studied in western contexts. In Pakistan, there is a lack of research found in this area. Due to differences in socio cultural contexts, it is not appropriate to generalize their findings in Pakistani Universities. So, the aim of present study was"to obtain the perceptions of teacher empowerment as perceived by the teachers of universities and analyzing this construct on the basis of their demographic factors.

Significance of the Study

Organizations need to be empowered as these are running in a competitive environment. Teacher empowerment is basically an approach or process that makes the teachers work together so that they feel themselves responsible for the performance of entire organization. Employees must be able in organizations to counter with the environmental challenges. In an environment of competition today, teachers' role is shifting day by day. Concept of teacher empowerment gained popularity and attention in last decade. Present study would contribute towards practical input to human resource development as it gave new approach of empowerment of teachers in higher education. This could be helpful in providing empirical support also. The findings of the study could contribute to the understanding the empowerment of teachers that will definitely enhance the teachers' knowledge about their own importance in their performance when they feel empowered and behave in accordance with the organizations' interests. Besides, the findings of this study will also be significant for university leaders and administrators to be aware about the teachers to feel empowered that will lead the overall education system towards improvement. In addition, this will also assist other researchers in analyzing the organizations' performances in the environment of empowerment.

Objectives of Study

Objectives of the present study were:

1. To measure the perceptions of teachers about Empowerment.
2. To analyze the teacher empowerment on the basis of demographic variables (Gender, Qualification, Teaching Experience, Rank, Type of Job).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Following research questions and corresponding null hypotheses were formulated on the basis of research objectives:

Research Question 1: What is the status of teacher empowerment as perceived by the teachers in the Universities of the Punjab?

Research Question 2: Is there any significant effect of demographic variables (Gender, Qualification, Teaching Experience, Rank, and Type of Job) on teacher empowerment?

Following hypotheses address the 2nd research question to provide with the answer:

H01 There is no significant effect of Gender on Perceived teacher Empowerment by university teachers.

H02 There is no significant effect of Qualification on Perceived teacher Empowerment by university teachers.

H03 There is no significant effect of Teaching Experience on Perceived teacher Empowerment by university teachers.

H04 There is no significant effect of Rank on Perceived teacher Empowerment by university teachers.

H05 There is no significant effect of Type of Job on Perceived teacher Empowerment by university teachers.

Methodology

Research Design

This study was descriptive in nature, and survey method was used to identify the perceptions of university teachers about teacher empowerment. Sample of the study consisted of 415 university teachers from 7 general universities of the Punjab Province at Public Sector. Data were collected by using "non-probability convenient sampling method".

Instrumentation

For the purpose of data collection following instruments were used:

Demographic Information Sheet. Demographic information sheet contained the variables of Gender: male and female; Qualification: M.A/M.Sc, MPhil, PhD and Post Doc; Teaching Experience: Less than five years, 5-10 years, 10-15 years, 15-20 years, and 20 or above; Rank: Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Lecturer; and Type of Job: Permanent, On Contract, On Tenure Track and Temporary.

University Participant Empowerment Scale (UPES). Short and Rinehart's (1992) scale was adopted for measuring teacher empowerment. UPES was originally designed to measure the empowerment of teachers at school level but has been used in other educational institutes as well. It consists of 38 items containing five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree to strongly agree". Likert-scale is an ordinal scale that is termed as "the best" especially to assess the "attitudes of respondents to determine their degree of agreement with the close-ended questions and scale is usually ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree" (Okoya, 2013).

Reliability of the Instrument. This scale was used to measure "teacher empowerment" along with its six dimensions: "decision making; professional growth; status; self-efficacy; autonomy; impact". Internal consistency or reliability was calculated and the "value of Cronbach Alpha coefficient of UPES was .94 and ranged from .81 to .89 for the six factor scales". "The Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliabilities for the subscales and total scale as reported by Short and Rinehart (1992) (N = 211 high school teachers) were as follows: decision making, .89; professional growth, .83; status, .86; self-efficacy, .84; autonomy, .81; impact, .82; total scale, .94.".

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS-19. Mean score of responses on *UPES* was calculated to explore the perceptions of teachers about teacher empowerment. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to find out the answers of research questions. Correlation, T-test and ANOVA were applied in this regard depend on nature of research questions.

Teacher Empowerment Perceptions. Descriptive statistics for the demographic characteristics of teachers and their perceptions regarding Overall Teacher Empowerment are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of the sample

Demographic variables	Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	214	51%
	Female	201	48.4%
Qualification	Post Doc	27	6.5%
	PhD	168	40.5%
	M.Phil	201	48.5%
	M.A/M.Sc	19	4.6%
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	111	26.7%
	5-10	206	49.6%
	10-15	88	21.2%
	15-20	5	1.2%
	20 or above	5	1.2%
Rank	Professor	19	4.6%
	Associate Professor	70	16.9%
	Assistant Professor	133	32%
	Lecturer	193	46.5%
Job type	Permanent	289	69.6%
	On contract	33	8%
	On Tenure Track	34	8.2%
	Temporary	59	14.2%

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents regarding Overall Teacher Empowerment

No.	Dimensions of Teacher Empowerment	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Decision Making	3.36	.913
2	Professional Growth	4.07	.353
3	Status	4.18	.331
4	Self-efficacy	4.44	.330
5	Autonomy	3.57	.939
6	Impact	3.91	.653
	Total	3.92	.463

N= 415

Table 2 shows the perceptions of teachers about "overall teacher empowerment". Teacher empowerment scale has six dimensions. It is clear from the data results shown in the table that the domain "*Self-Efficacy"* shown the highest Mean Score (*M* = 4.44) followed by the domains *"Status"* (*M* = 4.18), *"Professional Growth"* (*M* = 4.07), *"Impact"* (*M* = 3.91), and *"Autonomy"* (*M* = 3.57). Whereas, the Least Mean Score was shown by the domain *"Decision Making"* (*M* = 3.36). So, it is concluded from the range of the Mean Score (3.36 to 4.44) that teachers have shown the agreement on the overall teacher empowerment i.e. *Undecided* (3.0) to *strongly Agree* (5.0).

Table 3
Relationship of Overall Teacher Empowerment with its Sub Scales

	Professional Growth	Status	Self-efficacy	Autonomy	Impact	Total TE
Decision Making	.514**	.109*	.362**	.773**	.856**	.912**
Professional Growth		.493**	.230**	.371**	.417**	.606**
Status			.110*	.181**	.117*	.319**
Self-efficacy				.234**	.422**	.559**
Autonomy					.791**	.910**
Impact						.901**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) N=415

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows the Pearson's correlation coefficient and presents the correlation between six dimensions of teacher empowerment and Total Teacher Empowerment at the significant level of $p<.01$ and $p<.05$. Results shows that the value of Pearson's r is .912 which shows a significant and very strong positive relationship between decision making and overall teacher empowerment. Similarly, this table also shows that the value of Pearson's r is .606 which shows a significant moderate positive relationship between professional growth and overall teacher empowerment. The value of Pearson's r = .319 shows a significant positive and moderate relationship between status and overall teacher empowerment. The value of Pearson's r(.559) shows a significant strong positive relationship between self-efficacy and overall teacher empowerment. Results from the Table 3 shows that the value of Pearson's r (.910) shows a significant and very strong positive relationship between autonomy and overall teacher empowerment. And finally, that the value of Pearson's r, .901** shows a significant and a very strong positive relationship between Impact and overall teacher empowerment. To conclude, it is obvious from the Table 3 that a strong positive relationship is found between dimensions of teacher empowerment and overall teacher empowerment.

To test the null hypothesis regrading demographic variables, t-test for gender analysis and One Way ANOVA for other demographics were applied.

H01. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of their perceptions about Teacher Empowerment.

To comparing the scores of Teachers Empowerment for male and female teachers, the independent-sample t-test was applied.

Table 4
Gender-wise Comparison for Overall Teacher Empowerment

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	214	4.01	.395	3.89	.000
Female	201	3.83	.511		

Note: N = 415. df = 412

Table 4.28 shows that there was a significant difference existed in the reported teacher empowerment scores for both male teachers (M=4.01) and female teachers (M=3.83), $t(415) = 3.89$, $p=.000$. So the null hypothesis that "there is no significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of their perceptions about Teacher Empowerment" is rejected.

H_{02} There is no significant difference among on the basis of Qualification in terms of their perceptions about Teacher Empowerment.

H_{03} There is no significant effect of Teaching Experience on Perceived teacher Empowerment by university teachers.

H_{04} There is no significant effect of Rank on Perceived teacher Empowerment by university teachers.

H_{05} There is no significant effect of Type of Job on Perceived teacher Empowerment by university teachers.

To test above hypotheses, One-way ANOVA was applied.

Table 5
Comparison for Teacher Empowerment Based on Qualification, Experience, Rank, and Type of Job

Demographic Variables	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig.
Qualification	Post Doc	27	4.172	.293	3	33.954	0.001
	PhD	168	4.101	.325	411		
	MPhil	201	3.719	.499			
	M.A/ M.Sc	19	3.929	.285			
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 Years	111	3.523	.403	4	47.684	.201
	5-10 Years	206	4.007	.397	410		
	10-15 years	88	4.224	.344			
	15-20 years	5	4.081	.156			
	20or Above	5	4.351	.000			
Rank	Professor	19	4.231	.326	3	53.467	.03
	Associate Professor	70	4.124	.256	411		
	Assistant Professor	133	4.163	.295			
	Lecture	193	3.922	.489			
Type of Job	Permanent	289	4.273	.418	3	69.206	.03
	On Contract	33	4.009	.060	411		
	On Tenure Track	34	4.221	.186			
	Temporary	59	3.284	.356			

Note. Levene's test showed homogeneity of variances

One-way Analysis of Variance was used to compare means of teachers on the basis of their qualification, teaching experience, Rank and type of job. The four groups of teachers based on qualification (Post Doc, PhD, MPhil and M.A/M.Ed), Five groups based on teaching experience (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 10-15 years, 15-20 years and 20 0r above), four groups on the basis of Rank (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Lecturer) and four groups on the basis of job type (Permanent, On contract, On Tenure Track and Temporary). Analysis of the variance shows that four qualification wise groups are statistically different at $p < .05$ level of significance on the scores of overall teacher empowerment; F (3, 5.888) = 33.95, P = .001. So the null hypothesis that "There is no significant difference among teachers on the basis of Qualification in terms of their perceptions about Teacher Empowerment" was rejected.

Similarly, One-way Analysis of Variance was used to determine the group means of teachers on the basis of their teaching experience and their effect on perceptions about Teacher Empowerment. Analysis of the variance shows that these five groups were not statistically different at $p < .05$ level of significance on the scores of overall Teacher Empowerment; F (4, 21.11) = 47.684, P = .201. So the null hypothesis that "There is no significant difference among teachers on the basis of Teaching Experience in terms of their perceptions about Teacher Empowerment" was accepted.

The analysis of the variance of four groups according to Rank shows that they were statistically different at $p < .05$ level of significance on the scores of overall Teacher empowerment; F (3, 8.321) = 53.467, P = .001. So the null hypothesis that "There is no significant difference among teachers on the basis of Rank in terms of their perceptions about Teacher Empowerment" was rejected.

The analysis of the variance of four groups according to job type shows that they were statistically different at $p < .05$ level of significance on the scores of overall Teacher empowerment; F (3, 9.949) = 69.206, P = .001. So the null hypothesis that "There is no significant difference among teachers on the basis of type of job in terms of their perceptions about Teacher Empowerment" was rejected.

Above results show that only the teaching experience have no effect on teacher empowerment, but analysis of covariance showed that there exists difference on perceived teacher empowerment among the groups on the basis of qualification, rank and type of job.

In order to find the difference among groups, Post Hoc test was applied to check where the difference exists.

Table 6
HSD Comparison for Qualification Based Groups

(I) Qualification	(J) Qualification	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Post Doc	PhD	.45285*	.001
	MPhil		
	MA/MSc		
PhD	Post Doc	.38213*	.001
	MPhil		
	MA/MSc		
MPhil	Post Doc	-.38213*	.001
	PhD		
	MA/MSc		
MA/MSc	Post Doc	.55253*	.014
	PhD		
	MPhil		

* $p < 0.05$

Table 7
Tukey HSD Comparison for Rank wise Groups on Teacher Empowerment

(I) Rank	(J) Rank	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Professor	Associate Prof	.10703	.721
	Assistant Prof	.06770	.897
	Lecturer	.56421*	.000
Associate Prof	Professor	.10703	.721
	Assistant Prof	-.03933	.906
	Lecturer	.45718*	.000
Assistant Prof	Professor	-.06770*	.897
	Associate Prof	.03933	.906
	Lecturer	.49651*	.000
Lecturer	Professor	-.56421*	.000
	Associate Prof	-.45718*	.000
	Assistant Prof	-.49651*	.000

Table 8
Tukey HSD Comparison for Job Type wise Groups on Teacher Empowerment

(I) Job Type	(J) Job Type	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Permanent	On contract	.00723	1.00
	On Tenure Track	-.21118*	.012
	Temporary	.73043*	.000
On Contract	Permanent	.00723	1.00
	On Tenure Track	-.21842	.087
	Temporary	.72320*	.000
On Tenure Track	Permanent	.21118*	.012
	On Contract	.21842	.087
	Temporary	.94161*	.000
Temporary	Permanent	-.73043*	.000
	On Contract	-.72320*	.000
	On Tenure Track	-.94161*	.000

Table 6 showed that M.A qualification group is greatly different from other three groups which are not significantly different at p=.05 level. Table 7 shows that group of Lecturers shows highly significant scores for variance on teacher empowerment than other groups at p=.05 level. Table 8 shows that temporary teachers shows highly significant scores for variance on teacher empowerment than other groups at p=.05 level.

Conclusion

The results of study based on the above data analysis depicted the status of teacher empowerment in university of the Punjab. The findings of this study showed that teacher have highly perceived teacher empowerment. Moreover, there are some variances exist among different group of the teacher. It is obvious that a strong positive relationship is found between dimensions of teacher empowerment and overall teacher empowerment. There was found a significant difference in the reported teacher empowerment scores for both male teachers and female teachers, thus rejecting the hypothesis 1. Moreover, Analysis of the variance shows that qualification wise groups, Rank wise groups of teachers and groups on the basis of job type are statistically different and hence rejecting the 2, 4, ad 5 hypotheses. While, the group means of teachers on the basis of their teaching experience show that these five groups were not statistically different. So, the null hypothesis 3 was accepted.

To sum up, the groups on the basis of experience of the teachers have no discrimination in mean score but the groups based on qualification, rank and type of job showed variances in their mean scores.

This study will definitely contribute valuably to the literature. First of all, this study is amongst the very few studies that have been done in the area of teacher empowerment in Pakistan especially in higher education. This study also observes the effect of different demographic factors on employee empowerment. Demographic variables are significantly associated with teacher empowerment as presented by other researchers (Saleem, et al. 2017). Results of the present study would be favorable in inspiring teacher education institutes to provide better opportunities to both teachers and administrators in order to develop their abilities and experiences by feeling empowered.

Limitations and Recommendations

Present study was delimitated to the sample consisted of teachers working in universities only in Punjab province. So the results of the study cannot be generalized to the other provinces. Also it was delimited to only general universities other than technical, medical vocational, engineering etc. Again, from general universities, only the departments coming under faculty of social sciences were chosen in the study based on the area of present research study.

Based on the delimitations and results of the study, it was recommended for future researchers that they can extend this study further in all other type of universities and make comparison also. This construct of teacher empowerment could be studied with other teacher and organization related factors, e.g. job satisfaction, teacher commitment, organizational citizenship behavior etc. Similarly, further studies can be done at school

and college level also. As the working environment of the teachers is varied in different circumstances and sectors, it is also recommended that comparison of perceptions on teacher empowerment can be made working in public and private universities also in order to under the concept better.

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