

# Modeling HRD Practices to Improve Higher Educational Standards, A case on Public Universities of Punjab, Pakistan

**Muhammad Ali Hamza**

University of Veterinary &  
Animal Sciences, Pakistan

**Muhammad Waqas<sup>1</sup>**

Comsats Institute of Information  
Technology, Lahore, Pakistan  
<sup>1</sup>waqas\_chaudhary86@yahoo.com

**Sara Haroon**

The Superior University,  
Pakistan

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## Abstract

Learning is a familiarity, performance, progression, and proficiency of acquisition of knowledge or skill (American Heritage Dictionary), therefore it's an established reality that a learned and unlearned, less learned and more learned can never produce same amount of results. In the academic arena this has been clearly understood that the development of HR is one of the major sources to have continuous growth in academic standards. Though here around has been increasing studies on impact of schooling and training on academic standards in Higher education, but researcher's attention has been mostly limited to the training of higher management. In this study we are going to use the approach to examine the directional relationship between different kinds of trainings for different hierarchal slabs at the public universities with the academic standards.

**Key Words:** Training on Pedagogical tools, Training of Managerial Aptitude, Training on Generic Competencies, Professional Development, University commitment, Academic standards

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## Introduction:

In century of the present, the process and functional knowledge of a business class signifies its possessions and fortune. Not only greatly underlined, but also is viewed as the staple of intellectual investment of an inventively designed business (Lin, 2008). Enterprise is a venture that requires extensive planning and work or a determination to complete a goal (American Heritage Dictionary). Institutions for higher education are also enterprises where a bunch of skilful and determined individuals put their efforts together for the achievement of set objectives and goals and certainly it needs proper management that includes planning, organizing, implementing, controlling, leading, staffing, training, developing, and evaluating etc. Education has always been having a dominating role as an active gadget for large scale feat and transformation in all spheres. Focused education makes individual to comprehend, analyze and respond to real life situation and to develop an opening for generating sureness in minds of successive generation, to provide sturdy base for lucid, value concerned and nation erecting (Myers & Harbison, 1965; Mingat and Tan, 1986). Considering the vital role of educational institutions it is pertinent to mull over the plans and strategies to ensure and enhance the competencies of all employees related to the institution. While designing any Human Resource Development plan, the phrase "all

employees are generally decoded in terms of certain employees at certain levels of hierarchy. Whereas this study proposes that there must be a set of training and development programs that not only deals with the academic faculty but also nourish the skills of other employees i.e. administrative workforce top to bottom, support staff, clerks, office attendants, janitors etc.

In generic, an institution carries three resources, physical resource (classroom structures, machinery, chairs, tables, auditoriums, computer apparatus etc), organizational resource (strategies, objectives, policies, mission, culture, vision goodwill etc), and human resource (all employees). Among these all three resources only one resource enables other resources to be productive and consumable, and that is undeniably human resource. Victory and accomplishment today where competitive markets are all around, controlled mainly by human capital, and not at all the capital of physical strength and intensely promoted better company investments in T&D (training and development) to deliver better knowledge, skills and attitudes for employees instead of their competitors (Upton, 1995). In any organization, enterprise, company, or educational institution, the dependence on human resource is an unavoidable veracity, therefore the up gradation of

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<http://aocrj.org/archive/>

Academy of Contemporary Research Journal  
V II (II), 71-78, ISSN: 2305-865X  
© Resource Mentors (Pvt) Ltd (Publisher)

Received: February 2013

Revised: March 2013

Accepted: March 2013



human capacity, ability, skill, and knowledge is a never ending parallel need to ensure the positive progression and monitory, non-monitory profitability.

To be specific to Higher education institution, it is important to provide well-structured and purposeful training to all the employees' from academic faculty (professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturer, teaching assistants), administrative staff (registrar office, controller of examinations, treasurer office, quality enhancement cell, external linkages, career and placement centre, library, planning and development, of an institution). Drills, workshops, trainings, executive strategies of a business, and many other company features seem to act as an assimilated structure (Nguyen Ngoc Thing & Dirk Buyens, 2008), thus the set of trainings offered to the employees of a firm must be integrated in such a way that they cause to produce high level of synergy. Considering firm a synonym of enterprise and regarding educational institution as an enterprise (as above mentioned) we rationally tend to believe that a profoundly designed, thoroughly thought, well assessed, correctly structured, sensibly splitted and intelligently evaluated training program complemented by learning culture of an institution guarantees high academic standards.

The sole aim of this investigation was to look into the relationship between training programs offered to all levels at the higher education institutions of Punjab and improvement in academic standards. Association and connection between training and business performance has always been fittingly settled in instructive and enlightening fiscal routine (G.S.Becker, 1962). We have also used the third variable with its mediating function, which is learning culture of the institution. We have tried to establish the fact that an impact and influence of set of training to all set of positions amplifies if a learning culture prevails in the institution. Our paper comprises of 3 sections. The first section provides details of theoretical framework i.e. explanation of variables, description of hypothesis, method of research, data collection process, population size. The second section covers the data analysis, interpretation and findings, whereas the third section concludes the paper that includes recommendation and suggestions, future relevance and limitations.

### Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework (fig 1.1) includes 4 independent variables, 1 mediating variable and 1 dependent variable. Description of variables is mentioned below:

- **Training on Pedagogical Tools of Teaching (independent variable 1):** under the impression of struggles to improve students' comprehension of a subject, research lately has focused on preparing before and during service teachers with passable understanding of the subject and its distribution (U.Fayyas, G.Piatetsky-Shapiro, P.Smyth, 1996). So this study used Training on

Pedagogical tools of teaching (teaching methodology, classroom management, and lesson planning) as first independent variable.

- **Training of Managerial Aptitude and Leadership Approaches (independent**

**Variable 2):** In an educational institution, teachers and academic department carry pivotal role, but they cannot perform their function properly unless and until the auxiliary bodies or facilitating departments commonly known as administrative departments do not exist. The administrative portion in a higher education institution takes in Vice Chancellor Secretariat, Registrar office, Treasurer Office, Controller of Examinations, P&D, Engineering Unit, Security, Placement Office. Employees involved in above mentioned administrative departments must be well trained and highly equipped with the managerial competency and leadership.

- **Training on Generic Competencies (independent variable 3):**

IN the ecosystem of business many firms tend to shift to customer centered operations that means the effort has to be ordered in a manner that may permit larger impulsiveness and elasticity."(L.Arthur, J.Brennan, E. de Weert, 2007). Generic competency i.e. interpersonal-intrapersonal skills, level of adaptability etc., so the use of training to strengthen generic competencies contributes toward the academic standards.

- **Professional Development (independent variable 4):**

Work standards mention the hopes employees have regarding their career expansion. These standards are related to other pertinent variables in profession growth, like professional pursuits or occupational character (J.E.Finegan, 2000)(D.Berings, F.de.Fruyt, R.Bouwen, 2004)(N.E.Betz, P.J.Rottinghaus, 2006). The employees expect the institution to plan program that provide development and growth to their personal life as well social and official. Such professional development plans trigger the motivation in the employee and this indirectly but strongly leave its imprints on academic standards.

- **University commitment (mediating variable):**

Firm rules or dogma imitates the will of the bests and seniors of sections to healthier know-how of the instruction method and experiences begun by bands or non-bands instructors. Excellence in instructional outline or skeleton lets institution to screen care, trail teacher and student gratification, and read the influence on the learning course of action (Institutional Management in Higher Education of Malaysia 2006). University commitment toward learning and an effort to institute a learning culture plays a positively vibrant character toward putting in all efforts for the progression of academic standard at an institution.

- **Academic Standard (Dependent variable):**

Criteria for academics stipulate what learners should learn and be capable to perform, what they can be requested to do or to present indication of criteria, and how good they ought to execute. They include substance (stipulate what learners should learn and be capable to perform), Execution (How can they present what they are requested to do), and proficiency standards (*how well* students must perform). (V.L.Akerson, F.Abd-El-Khalick,

N.G.Ledeman, 2000)(L.Arthur, J.Brennan, E. de Weert, 2007)(G.S.Becker, 1962)(R.Benson, T.Palaskas, 2006). All the efforts that are put together in educational institutions are to meet some academic standards.

**Hypothesis:**

We have used 8 Hypothesis and they are:

- H1:** There is positive relationship between Training on Pedagogical tools (IV1) and Academic Standards (DV)
- H2:** There is positive relationship between Training of Managerial Aptitude (IV2) and -Academic standards (DV)
- H3:** There is positive relationship between Training on Generic Competencies (IV3) and Academic standards (DV)

- H4:** There is positive relationship between Professional Development (IV4) and Academic standards (DV)
- H5:** University commitment (INV) mediates relationship between Training on Pedagogical tools (IV1) and Academic Standards (DV)
- H6:** University commitment (INV) mediates relationship between Training of Managerial Aptitude (IV2) and Academic standards (DV)
- H7:** University commitment (INV) mediates relationship between Training on Generic Competencies (IV3) and Academic standards (DV)
- H8:** University commitment (INV) mediates relationship between Professional Development (IV4) and Academic standards (DV)

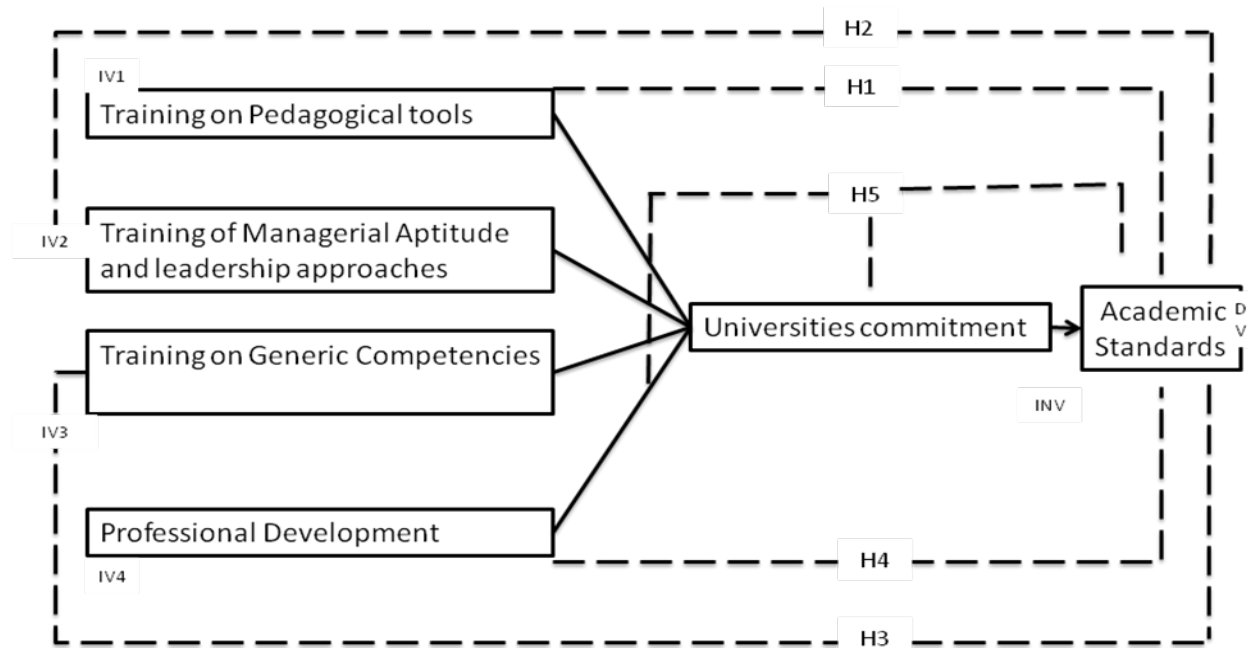


Fig 1.1

- DV = Dependent Variable
- IV = Independent Variable
- INV = Intervening Variable

**Research methodology:**

This research is descriptive and dimensional hypothetical in nature. The study is conducted in non-contrived environment with minimal researcher’s interference. This cross sectional study is conducted on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Data collection and population size:**

A questioner technique was applied and, randomly selected 10 persons from indiscriminately selected 10 universities of Punjab were provided with specifically designed questionnaire. Total 100 responses were recorded for further analysis and testing of hypothesis.

Selected 10 universities from Punjab were:

1. Bahaudin Zikria University Multan
2. University of Agricultural Faisalabad
3. GC University Faisalabad
4. ARID Agricultural University Rawalpindi
5. University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Lahore
6. GC University Lahore
7. University of Education Lahore
8. Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Technology
9. Punjab University Lahore
10. Quid-e-Azam University Islamabad

All the Questionnaire items for variables were developed for this study specifically.

**Data Analysis and Findings:**

Data examination was completed by the mean of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Reliability test was applied to confirm the validity and reliability of data, Pearson correlation was used to test the directional relationship between independent and dependent variables, regression analysis were performed to see the impact of the independent variables on dependent variables and partial correlation was utilized to see the mediating effect over the relationship of independent and dependent variables.

**a) Reliability Testing of the Data and Interpretation:**

According to the (Cuieford, 1965) Cronbach alpha beyond ( $\alpha = .7$ ) are acceptable. All Cronbach's Alpha values given in the table below are above .7 which indicates that the entire data is reliable and its results can be used to validate the hypothesis.

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha
AS	.811
T	.715
TM	.722
TG	.757
D	.809
UC	.798

**FINDINGS:**

Correlation table (Table 2) clearly show a positively strong relation amid the self-governing variables often called independent variable and supported variable often called dependent variable. The noteworthy and substantial link of the relationship is also evident. The results (Mean =

Therefore following hypothesizes are accepted:

<b>H1</b>	There is positive relationship between Training on Pedagogical tools (IV1) and Academic Standards (DV)	Accepted
<b>H2</b>	There is positive relationship between Training of Managerial Aptitude (IV2) and -Academic standards (DV)	Accepted
<b>H3</b>	There is positive relationship between Training on Generic Competencies (IV3) and Academic standards (DV)	Accepted
<b>H4</b>	There is positive relationship between Professional Development (IV4) and Academic standards (DV)	Accepted

**a) Partial Correlation (Mediation) testing of Data and its interpretation:**

**Descriptive Statistics**

**Means, Standard Deviation and Correlations**

	N	Mean	SD	AS	T	TM	TG	D
AS	97	4.3110	.43940	1				
T	97	4.2066	.52133	.766(***)	1			
TM	97	4.1924	.53540	.633(***)		1		
TG	97	4.1959	.55902	.575(***)			1	
D	97	4.2732	.56631	.606(***)				1

\* Correlation is noteworthy and substantial at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)  
 \*\* Correlation is noteworthy and substantial at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)  
 \*\*\* Correlation is noteworthy and substantial at the 0.000 level (2-tailed)

4.2066,  $\sigma = .52133$ ,  $r = .766$ ,  $P > .000$ ) obtained regarding the first hypothesis showed that the relationship amongst the Training on Pedagogical tools and academic standards is positive and highly significant. Results regarding second hypothesis (Mean = 4.1924,  $\sigma = .53540$ ,  $r = .633$ ,  $P > .000$ ) also concluded positive and significant relationship amongst Training of Managerial Aptitude and -Academic standards. Third hypothesis was also supported by the results (Mean = 4.1959,  $\sigma = .55902$ ,  $r = .575$ ,  $P > .000$ ) and the fourth hypothesis under this study was also accepted by the results (Mean = 4.2732,  $\sigma = .56631$ ,  $r = .606$ ,  $P > .000$ ).

Mediation Correlations Table (3)					
	AS	T	TM	TG	D
AS	1				
T	.623(***)	1			
TM	.347(**)		1		
TG	.336(**)			1	
D	.204 (*)				1
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)					
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)					
*** Correlation is significant at the 0.000 level (2-tailed)					

**FINDINGS:**

By observing the significance values provided in above mentioned table and comparing these values with the previous correlation values, it is realized that University Commitment partially mediates the relationship between all the Independent variables and Dependent variable except between Training on Pedagogical tools and dependent variable because after applying the mediation the relationship was still found to be highly significant which showed that university commitment does not mediate the relationship between the Training on Pedagogical tools and Academic standards. In the interpretation of the analysis we can say that University Commitment plays significant role as mediator between the relationships of:

- Training of Managerial Aptitude (IV2) and Academic standards (DV)
- Training on Generic Competencies (IV3) and Academic standards (DV)
- Professional Development (IV4) and Academic standards (DV)

Therefore following hypothesis is accepted:

<b>H6</b>	University commitment (INV) mediates relationship between Training of Managerial Aptitude (IV2) and Academic standards (DV)	Accepted
<b>H7</b>	University commitment (INV) mediates relationship between Training on Generic Competencies (IV3) and Academic standards (DV)	Accepted
<b>H8</b>	University commitment (INV) mediates relationship between Professional Development (IV4) and Academic standards (DV)	Accepted

**RESEARCH LIMITATIONS:**

This research is totally quantitative, by applying qualitative technique as an addition can fetch more reflective and weighty findings. More functions of a third variable i.e. moderating and controlling, could be included to study extra dimensions of the same model.

**PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The model of this study can assist in aligning the strategic formulation pattern of Learning and Innovation Division (LID) and Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC); the two vital wings of Higher Education Commission of Pakistan i.e.

**VALUE:**

Assessing audience (learning patterns, training needs, budgetary and availability constraint), designing objective, developing modules, conducting and evaluating T&D program is time, effort and money consuming exercise, therefore:

- i. All of the employees of institution from all of the departments and positions require certain kind of T&D program, so just offering T&D program to the academic faculty does not suffice the need and is smaller contributor toward rapid and significant success of the institution.
- ii. Blend of training program must be offered to fill the competency gap of all the employees. The T&D program must be audience need specified and the assessment of calculated need must be

thoroughly studied by matching it with the goals and objectives of the institution.

- iii. The institution of higher education must exhibit their institutional commitment by launching the learning as an institutional culture. It optimistically doubles the effect of T&D program over the academic quality standards of the institution.

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**SURVEY RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

Was filled by Admin and Academic staff of the universities.

**1: Strongly Disagree**

**2: Disagree**

**3: Neutral**

**4: Agree**

**5: Strongly Agree**

**Academic Standards**

S No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Human resource is having a pivotal role in enhancing institutions' performance					
2	It is important to take care of the technical aspects of the human resource's competencies as well as it is needed to cater the motivational needs of the same					
3	Personal, professional and career development keeps the employees motivated					
4	Motivated employees are a major factor in upgrading the academic standards and performance					
5	A well analyzed, planned, conducted, evaluated and re-mended human resource development program (or mentoring program) for the entire human resource involved in the university, can guarantee an improvement in the academic standards of the university					
6	Improvement in academic standards and performance is imperative to meet the future challenges					

**Training on pedagogical tools for the faculty**

S No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Teaching is a skill that can be acquired					
2	Holding a degree in any discipline does not guarantee good teaching skill					
3	From the rank of Lecturer to Professor (L-P) , university faculty needs to acquire teaching skills through proper training programs					
4	L-P must have learnt Classroom Management skills in higher education through a formal or informal training programs					
5	L-P must be provided with latest teaching methodologies and tools training					
6	L-P must be equipped with assessment strategies through formal training programs					

**Training for Managerial aptitude**

S No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Administration and Management is a skill that can be learnt					
2	Holding a degree in any management or non management discipline does not guarantee good administrative and managerial skills					
3	High level teaching skills does not guarantee high level administrative and managerial skills					
4	Human resource at Administrative Departments of the university i.e. Registrar office, controller of examination, Facilities, Treasurer office, Purchase office, Department of Management Information system etc must go through a proper formal training on acquiring managerial and administrative competencies					
5	The faculty members who look after the managerial and administrative matters of the academic departments i.e. HODs, Deans etc must learn managerial and administrative skills through adequate training programs					
6	Executive training and mentoring programs must be conducted to develop leadership skills in the human resource mentioned in 4 and 5 of second variable					

**Training for generic competencies**

S No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Our professional life is surrounded and influenced by our social and cultural life					
2	Our personal habits and behaviors have a strong impact over our professional and social life					
3	Skill of developing result oriented relationships within the units of the university and external agencies is essentially important					
4	Skill of developing result oriented relationships is possible through individuals' interpersonal skills (i.e. politeness, empathy, supportive attitude, open mind, sensible communication etc)					
5	A proper evaluations and assessment system is needed to analyze the training needs pertaining to infuse interpersonal skills					
6	A formal and informal mentoring programs are a source to instill interpersonal skills in the employees at all positions in all units of the university					

**Development plan for lower staff**

S No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	All human resource at each position in each department of the university has its role toward achieving the institution's goals					
2	Essential competencies to perform the assigned role to each position are equally important for all grades and tiers working at the university					
3	The absence of support staff (i.e. clerks, office attendant, naib qasid, peons, janitors) effects the work flow					
4	Majority of the support staff works half heartedly because there is no proper system launched in the university that works on the motivational aspect of the support staff					
5	There no such mechanism in the university that handles the career growth and development matters of the support staff					
6	A well designed, humane, and committed personal and career development program needs to be launched at the universities for the support staff					

**University commitment**

S No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Keeping in mind our cultural context the Up to down approach to reach to the successful results of the project is much more viable					
2	Plans do not succeed unless all the stakeholders and approving bodies related to the plan mentally buy them					
3	A successful implementation of any plan very much relies on the continuous and sincere effort of the controlling and approving authorities					
4	Commitment of the university's top management is essential to encourage a participatory and integrated learning approach by the departments					
5	Commitment of competent authorities of the university plays an immensely important role in establishing the writ of any performance improvement program					
6	In university the dedication and loyalty of syndicate, will of the vice chancellor, contribution of the registrar, is important to upgrade academic performance through different projects					