



## A Study on the Contribution of Non-Academics in Performance of Institutions of Higher Learning

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### Abstract

*Internationalization of the higher learning is no longer a luxury today. Institution of higher learning in simple terms is defined as a stage of learning that occurs after secondary education at the universities and colleges. The aim of Institutions of higher learning is to prepare a person to play his part well as an enlightened member of society. This study focuses on involvement of the non-academic staff members in the performance of institutions of higher learning. Moreover, the objective of an effective institution to be is well translated and articulated through a set of goals to be achieved throughout the whole non-academic body with substantial participation in administrative responsibilities. In this study, non-academic staff members were selected and through self-structured questionnaire, their responses regarding accuracy in information, administrative responsibility, professional development, personal attention and facilities about the performance of institutions were analyzed. Through the application of one way ANOVA, demographic wise the perception of non-academic staff members were measured.*

**Keywords:** *Performance of Institutions, Administrative Responsibilities, Accuracy, Professional Development, Personal Attention and Facilities*

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### Introduction

Institutions of higher learning must provide academic and career counseling programmes as a central function to assist students in preparing for their life work, employment and careers beyond higher education. Information technology must be used only as tools or means in the student learning process, not necessarily ends in and of, themselves. Professionals conduct research and develop practice to find ways that technology can enhance student learning and promote positive usage by students through advising, counseling, development of appropriate systems and training for students. Student affairs and services professionals expect students to engage their institution and the learning process. This is done consistent with principles of non-academic responsibilities and personal integrity, responsible behaviour in a community setting, and the exercise of appropriate freedoms developed in a national as well as a local and institutional framework. Good practices in student affairs and services build supportive and inclusive communities locally and globally.

Quality teaching in Institutions of higher learning matters for student learning outcomes. But fostering quality teaching presents Institutions of higher learning with a range of challenges at a time when the higher education sector is coming under pressure from many different directions. Institutions of higher learning need to ensure that the education they offer meets the expectations of students and the requirements of employers, both today and for the future. Yet institutions of higher learning are complex organizations where the institution-wide vision and strategy needs to be well-aligned with bottom-up practices and innovations in teaching and learning. Developing Institutions of higher learning as effective learning communities where excellent pedagogical practices are developed and shared also requires leadership, collaboration and ways to address tensions between innovators and those reluctant to change.



Institutions of higher learning engage in fostering quality teaching essentially for the following reasons:

To respond the growing demand for meaningful and relevant teaching. Students as well as employers want to ensure that their education will lead to gainful employment and will equip them with the skills needed to evolve professionally over a lifetime.

To demonstrate that they are reliable providers of good quality higher education, while—operating in a complex setting, with multiple stakeholders, each with their own expectations (ministries, funding agencies, local authorities, employers etc.

To balance performance on teaching and learning achievements along with research performance, since even for elite, world-class universities, research performance is no longer sufficient to maintain the reputation of the institution.

To more effectively compete for students against the backdrop of higher tuition fees and greater student mobility.

Around the world higher education is under pressure to change. It is growing fast and its contribution to economic success is seen as vital. The universities and other institutions of higher learning are expected to create knowledge; to improve equity; and to respond to student needs and to do so more efficiently. They are increasingly competing for students, research funds and academic staff both with the private sector and internationally. In this more complex environment direct management by government is no longer appropriate. Today, on the one hand, governments have a greater interest than ever in ensuring that educational institutions help to meet economic and social needs, given their importance in knowledge-oriented societies. On the other hand, they accept that central planning of knowledge creation, teaching and learning is often inefficient, and that a thriving society and economy require institutions to operate with a degree of independence, while market mechanisms are often more effective than administrators in regulating supply and demand for diverse forms of learning delivered to diverse client groups. Thus the governance of institutions of higher learning faces some difficult challenges. If higher education is indeed an important strategic lever for governments in seeking to pursue national objectives, can governments achieve those ends without compromising the independence of universities, or their dynamism in catering for new markets?

In order to ensure clarity of purpose and transparency of procedures, external quality assurance methods should be designed and developed through a process involving key stakeholders, including institutions of higher learning. The procedures that are finally agreed should be published and should contain explicit statements of the aims and objectives of the processes as well as a description of the procedures to be used. As external quality assurance makes demands on the institutions involved, a preliminary impact assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the procedures to be adopted are appropriate and do not interfere more than necessary with the normal work of institutions of higher learning.

### Public/Private Partnership Model

Indian higher education system has undergone massive expansion in post-independent India with a national resolve to establish several universities, Technical institutes, research institutions and professional / non-professional colleges all over the country to generate and disseminate knowledge coupled with the noble intention of providing easy access to higher education for the common Indian. The Public initiatives played a dominant and controlling role in this phase. Most of the universities have powers to regulate academic activities on their campuses as well as in their areas of jurisdiction through the affiliating system. Even the private institutions enjoyed large-scale financial support in the form of grants from the public exchequer.

Private funds as well as individuals played key roles in the cause of higher education. With the public funding being no more in a position to take-up the challenging task of expansion and diversification of the higher education system in the country to meet the continuously growing



demands at present, there is little option other than bringing in private initiatives in a massive way to meet the various challenges. The deregulating mechanism of controls started with the granting of 'Autonomous Status' to identified colleges in the 1970s. Some of these colleges have graduated further to receive the 'Deemed to be University' status in later years. Now, the country is on the threshold of the establishment of private universities in different States.

Educational opportunities and traditions that Indian Universities have built up, since independence have been able to produce graduates, capable only of pursuing limited careers, but, in the new globally competitive environment that is emerging in the country, the Indian student is now required to develop a multifaceted personality to cope up with the rapid changes in the world at large. This calls for the development of body, mind and spirit, through the educational processes in the institutions of higher learning.

### Performance of Institutions of Higher Learning

India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world. Despite having the largest higher education system, the quality of education, in general, cannot be claimed to be the best. Technical and vocational education in India has seen enormous growth in recent years with a large increase in total number of institutions imparting higher education. On one hand, this growth promises to produce more skilled youth to fulfill needs of ever growing Indian industry and on the other hand it poses a huge challenge for the governing bodies like UGC, AICTE, NCVT, NCTE, PCI, MCI, INC, DCI etc and state technical education boards to maintain & improve the quality of education being imparted through these new & existing technical and vocational institutions. But as has been reported by NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) in its 2004 report, out of 3 million graduates and post-graduates added to the workforce in India every year only 25% of technical and 10- 15% of non-technical graduates are employable by growing IT, and other sector points to is a very serious situation. This lack of knowledge, qualities & skills desired by the employers, from the youth, may lead to the problems like unemployment/under employment, which detain will lead to their disapproval and hence their offense that will be reflected in terms of an increase in crime and other antisocial activities.

The study has focused on performance regulated by the non-academic staff of institutions of higher learning so that they can assist in imparting the various services. If critically analyzed institutions of higher learning lists various roles in the society. It is the source or feeder system in all walks of life and therefore supplies the much-needed human resources in management, planning, design, teaching, and research. Scientific and technological advancement and economic growth of a country are as dependent on the higher education system as they are on the working class. Development of indigenous technology and capabilities in agriculture, food security and other industrial areas are possible because of our world- class higher education infrastructure. Higher education also provides opportunities for lifelong learning, allowing people to upgrade their knowledge and skills from time to time based on the societal needs. The advancements in the information technologies, internet and the mobile communication provide opportunities to transform the relationship between administration and students in a new way, thus contributing to the achievement of the good education goals.

There are so many goals for the effective implementation of performance:

1. Improve the internal processes of system
2. Provide better information and service delivery
3. Increase transparency in order to reduce discrepancies
4. Better access to information and quality services for students.
5. Simplicity, efficiency and accountability

It is an integrated solution in the education sector that facilitates the processing and maintenance of large volumes of information such as: registration, admission, student



information, classes, time table, transport, attendance, library, salary, expenses, examinations, performance, grades, hostels, security, reports, management, transport, staff details and fees among various departments in an institution of higher learning.

## Literature Review

There has been minimal research on non-academic professional staff in higher education. Non-academic professional staff are responsible for the day-to-day operations of a university (Smerek & Peterson, 2007). In Liebmann's (1986) study of non-academic employees in higher education, he found that non-academic employees outnumbered faculty members nationally and 'could be considered chiefly responsible for the successful daily operation of every institution of higher learning'. Because of the bureaucratic nature of higher education, Liebmann (1986) pointed out that higher education management will always require large numbers of professional staff to maintain functioning. Given that non-academic professional staff members are recognized as key components of today's higher education, it is surprising that there is limited scholarly research on empowerment focusing on non-academic professional employees in colleges and universities. Although several studies have found important differences between administrator and faculty perceptions of their institutions (Austin & Gamson, 1983; Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Peterson & White, 1992), non-academic professional employees in higher education have received little attention in the scholarly literature. The current study may expand the knowledge base regarding empowerment as it relates to non-academic professional staff in higher education.

## Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to measure the factors associated with the performance of institutions of higher learning with respect to non-academic staff members. For this purpose following objectives were chosen for the study.

To study the effect of age, qualification and working experience of non-academic staff on the factors of performance of institutions of higher learning.

To suggest measures for improving the performance of institutions of higher learning.

## Hypotheses of the Study

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Age wise there is no significant difference in the perception of non-academic staff members towards the performance of institutions of higher learning.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Qualification wise there is no significant difference in the perception of non-academic staff members towards the performance of institutions of higher learning.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** Working experience wise there is no significant difference in the perception of non-academic staff members towards the performance of institutions of higher learning.

## Research Methodology

The various steps are enumerated here under :

Research Type : The study is both exploratory and descriptive Research.

Research Area : The study was carried out in Indore city.

Universe: Population in the study refers to group of Institutions of higher learning from Private, Run by Trust and Government Institutions in Indore City.

Sampling Unit : For the purpose of the study the questionnaires were distributed to the Non-Academic Staff of Private, Run by Trust and Government Institutions of higher learning.

Sampling Method : For the purpose of this research, convenience sampling has been used. It involves selecting sample elements that are most readily available to participate in the research and who can provide the information required to support the research according to the convenience.

Sample Size: Sample is the subset of the population. Sample size selected for the purpose of this study is comprised of 100 Non-Academic Staff members.

Tools for data collection



Only primary data has been used for the study. The tool used for the primary data collection is a self-designed questionnaire, which has been made after studying the literature review and consulting with experts of educational field. Both mode (online and offline) of collecting the responses from the respondents used. For the collection of reviews, the researcher has studied national and international journals, articles, books and internet.

Statistical Tools : For the data analysis, Independent T-Test and One Way ANOVA were applied on SPSS 20.0 to conclude the concrete results.

Pilot Study : The main purpose of pilot study in our research is to validate the measurement instrument to be used in the main study. Hence, before conducting the main study, the researcher has used a pilot study. In our study, Non-Academic Staff members judge factors as they are the sources of telling the whole information about the performance of institutions of higher learning. In the pilot test, those questions have less than .5 score were eliminated from the study.

### Results on Hypotheses

H<sub>01</sub>: Age wise there is no significant difference in the perception of non-academic staff members towards the performance of institutions of higher learning.

Age wise Analysis of Variance towards

Dimension		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Administrative Responsibility	Between Groups	142.043	3	47.348	11.536	.010
	Within Groups	2958.467	96	30.817		
	Total	3100.510	99			
Accessibility	Between Groups	175.099	3	58.366	12.371	.015
	Within Groups	2362.861	96	24.613		
	Total	2537.960	99			
Accuracy in Information	Between Groups	71.316	3	23.772	1.586	.198
	Within Groups	1424.320	95	14.993		
	Total	1495.636	98			
Professional Development	Between Groups	147.242	3	49.081	2.360	.066
	Within Groups	1080.598	96	11.256		
	Total	1227.840	99			
Personal Attention	Between Groups	63.046	3	21.015	3.182	.057
	Within Groups	633.944	96	6.604		
	Total	696.990	99			
Facilities	Between Groups	162.103	3	54.034	7.632	.000
	Within Groups	679.657	96	7.080		
	Total	841.760	99			

For the factor of administrative responsibility age wise there was significant difference was found. As P value came out .010 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected. For the factor of accessibility age wise there was significant difference found. As P value came out .015 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected. For the factor of accuracy in information age wise there was no significant difference found. As P value came out .198 which is greater than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was rejected.



For the factor of professional development age wise there was significant difference found. As P value came out .006 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected. For the factor of personal attention age wise there was no significant difference was found. As P value came out .288 which is greater than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was rejected. For the factor of facilities age wise there was significant difference was found. As P value came out .113 which is greater than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was rejected.

H<sub>02</sub>: Qualification wise there is no significant difference in the perception of non-academic staff members towards the performance of institutions of higher learning.

Qualification wise Analysis of Variance towards

Dimension		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Administrative Responsibility	Between Groups	29.822	3	9.941	.311	.818
	Within Groups	3070.688	96	31.986		
	Total	3100.510	99			
Accessibility	Between Groups	44.060	3	14.687	.565	.639
	Within Groups	2493.900	96	25.978		
	Total	2537.960	99			
Accuracy in Information	Between Groups	78.270	3	26.090	1.749	.162
	Within Groups	1417.367	95	14.920		
	Total	1495.636	98			
Professional Development	Between Groups	171.160	3	57.053	5.183	.002
	Within Groups	1056.680	96	11.007		
	Total	1227.840	99			
Personal Attention	Between Groups	47.563	3	15.854	2.344	.078
	Within Groups	649.427	96	6.765		
	Total	696.990	99			
Facilities	Between Groups	131.322	3	43.774	5.915	.001
	Within Groups	710.438	96	7.400		
	Total	841.760	99			

For the factor of administrative responsibility qualification wise there was no significant difference was found. As P value came out .818 which is greater than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was rejected. For the factor of accessibility qualification wise there was no significant difference found. As P value came out .639 which is greater than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was rejected. For the factor of accuracy in information qualification wise there was no significant difference found. As P value came out .162 which is greater than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was rejected.

For the factor of professional development qualification wise there was significant difference found. As P value came out .002 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected. For the factor of personal attention qualification wise there was no significant difference was found. As P value came out .078 which is greater than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was rejected. For the factor of facilities qualification wise there was significant difference was found. As P value came out .001 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected.



H<sub>03</sub>: Working experience wise there is no significant difference in the perception of non-academic staff members towards the performance of institutions of higher learning.

Experience wise Analysis of Variance towards

Dimension		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Administrative Responsibility	Between Groups	109.856	3	36.619	11.175	.023
	Within Groups	2990.654	96	31.153		
	Total	3100.510	99			
Accessibility	Between Groups	144.643	3	48.214	9.934	.029
	Within Groups	2393.317	96	24.930		
	Total	2537.960	99			
Accuracy in Information	Between Groups	42.324	3	14.108	11.922	.033
	Within Groups	1453.312	95	15.298		
	Total	1495.636	98			
Professional Development	Between Groups	125.742	3	41.914	3.651	.015
	Within Groups	1102.098	96	11.480		
	Total	1227.840	99			
Personal Attention	Between Groups	53.586	3	17.862	2.665	.032
	Within Groups	643.404	96	6.702		
	Total	696.990	99			
Facilities	Between Groups	101.106	3	33.702	4.368	.006
	Within Groups	740.654	96	7.715		
	Total	841.760	99			

For the factor of administrative responsibility Working experience wise there was significant difference was found. As P value came out .023 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected. For the factor of accessibility Working experience wise there was significant difference found. As P value came out .029 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected. For the factor of accuracy in information, Working experience wise there was significant difference found. As P value came out .033 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected.

For the factor of professional development Working experience wise there was significant difference found. As P value came out .015 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected. For the factor of personal attention Working experience wise there was significant difference found. As P value came out .032 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected. For the factor of facilities Working experience wise there was significant difference was found. As P value came out .006 which is less than .05, hence the alternate hypothesis was not rejected.

### Findings of the Study

The questionnaire was related to Non-Academic Staff found the reliability i.e. .937 comprised of 30 statements. The result reveals the KMO value is .806. Total 30 items reduced into seven factors have been found which have been associated with the performance of institutions of higher learning from the perspective of non-academic staff. Factors explored were administrative responsibility, accessibility, accuracy in information, professional development, personal attention and facilities.



The first hypothesis based on age wise difference found that those who are 55 and above they feel that professional development, personal attention and facilities contributed in performance of institutions of higher learning. They are in view that mainly facilities provided to students, faculty and staff, a key to retain them for a long time association and this reflects in increasing admissions, brand image and trust. But in other factors age wise no differences were observed so it is concluded that null hypothesis stands accepted at 5% level of significance.

Qualification wise it is observed from the hypothesis that in only two factors namely; professional development and personal attention, the respondents perceive differently as Post Graduate qualified non-academic staff are positive towards the contribution of these two factors in the performance of institutions of higher learning but in other factors education wise they have similarities. So in all it is concluded that qualification wise the null hypothesis stands accepted.

Working Experience is also one of the important parameters to examine the perception towards performance of institutions of higher learning. The hypothesis found that experience wise they have differences for the factors of professional development and personal attention. On the other hand, for the factor of accuracy in information, administrative responsibility, accessibility and facilities, they have similar perceptions. Hence, the null hypothesis stands rejected.

#### Conclusion

The main purpose of the study is that the institution demonstrating strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes student learning and student achievement. The institution demonstrates integrity in all policies, actions, and communication. The administration, faculty, staff, and governing board members act honestly, ethically, and fairly in the performance of their duties. The mission describes the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, the types of degrees and other credentials it offers, and its commitment to student learning and student achievement. Institutional leaders, including board members and faculty, are continuously engaged in fulfilling the institutional mission, which focuses on the success of students pursuing their educational goals. Grounded by the mission, a sustained focus on student learning and achievement is practiced by all stakeholders and demonstrably informs the development of policies, procedures, and practices. The institution regularly evaluates and improves the quality and currency of all instructional programs offered in the name of the institution, including collegiate, pre-collegiate, career-technical, and continuing and community education courses and programs, regardless of delivery mode or location. The institution systematically strives to improve programs and courses to enhance learning outcomes and achievement for students.

The non-academic staff also perceives performance of institutions of higher learning in terms of administrative responsibility, accessibility, accuracy in information, professional development, personal attention and facilities differently according to their demographic attributes. They have been assigned various tasks by their institutes and they feel proud in competing the same in return they have been given monetary benefits, promotions and other incentives. Hence, institutes play a major part in developing their administrative staff to meet the requirement of students.

#### Suggestions

The study has suggested some measures for the improvements of performance of institutions of higher learning. These are as follows:

Staff at higher institutions are by and large enthusiastically engaged and dedicated to the overall mission of the university. We need to value this strength and enable staff to achieve maximum productivity.

Efforts should be made to improve non-academic staff satisfaction through further engagement; they have an expertise and a knowledge of the university that should be used, where appropriate, to inform policy decisions.





This requires that the non-academic staff be supported as a crucial human resource for improving the performance of institutions of higher learning. Careful attention needs to be paid to the creation and maintenance of a healthy workplace. Career development should be fostered through advancement opportunities and training as outlined in our Educational Equity Policy. Internal mobility should be actively encouraged.

We recommend that a transparent formula be developed to determine how university-supported staff be allocated to academic and non-academic units, and at what salary levels.

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