

Quality assurance with its multiplying manifestations around the world has become an integral part of higher education. The present study aimed to explore the impact of communication climate- which refers to individuals' perceptions regarding communication events within the organization and managerial communication styles, which refers to the pattern or way a manager verbally or non-verbally interacts, upon quality assurance in higher education in Pakistan. An attempt was made to identify the communication climate(s) present in higher education institutions and to compare and contrast the communication climate(s) across the sector and rank.

The study also sought the answers to the questions about what are the major communication styles academic managers of higher education institutions in Pakistan do possess and whether these styles vary according to the sector and ranking of these institutions as well as according to the personal characteristics of the academic managers. All the 58 ranked universities constituted the population of the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. At the first stage 8 high ranked universities (5 public sector and 3 private sector) and 8 low ranked universities (5 public sector and 3 private sector) were selected. At the second stage faculty members and academic managers from these universities were selected randomly.

For measuring communication climate through Communication Climate Inventory, 500 faculty members (academicians) out of 3049 serving in selected universities/ Higher education institutions of Pakistan were selected by using simple random sampling technique. For measuring communication styles of the academic managers of higher education institutions through the administration of Communicator Styles Inventory 250 out of 332 Deans and Heads of the Departments of the selected universities were randomly selected by applying simple random sampling technique. Instruments were re validated through pilot testing before administration.

Data were collected through personal visits, email and with the help of some colleagues. For data analysis both descriptive and inferential statistics were applied. The study findings revealed that supportive communication climate, characterized by provisionalism, empathy, spontaneity; equality; problem orientation and description was found to be prevalent in public and private sector high ranked universities of Pakistan. Low ranked universities exhibited the prevalence of defensive communication climate characterized by evaluation; control; certainty; superiority; strategy and neutrality.

Most common communication styles of the academic managers working in high ranked universities of Pakistan, both public and private sector were open, relax, friendly and attentive. Academic managers of low ranked universities, both public and private sector were having argumentative; precise; impression leaving and dominant communication styles. It was concluded that most of the communication styles did not vary on the basis of gender, age and experience of the academic managers. Based upon the generalizable conclusions, some plausible implications and recommendations were made for the stakeholders of higher education including those research scholars who are interested to conduct research studies in this area.