

MS RESEARCH THESIS
IMPLEMENTATION OF HEC UNDERGRADUATE
POLICY 2023: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS



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POLICY 2023: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**



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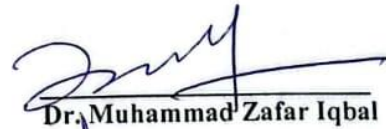
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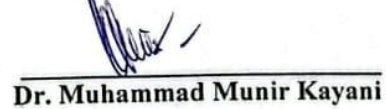
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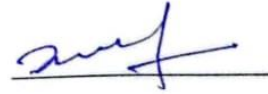
I Uzama Akbar, Registration. No. 3-FOE/MSEDU/S23 as a student of MS in Education, Department of Teacher Education, Faculty of Education at International Islamic University Islamabad, do hereby declare that the thesis entitled "Implementation of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023:Challenges and Prospects" submitted for the partial fulfillment of MS degree in Education is my original work, except where otherwise acknowledged in the text and has not been submitted or published earlier and shall not, be submitted by researchers for obtaining any degree from this or any other university or institutions in future.


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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

The thesis entitled "Implementation of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023: Challenges and Prospects" submitted by Ms. Uzama Akbar Reg. No.3-FOE/MSEDU/S23 in partial fulfillment of MS degree in Teacher Education, has been completed under my guidance and supervision. I am satisfied with the quality of the student's research work and allow her to submit this thesis for further process as per IIUI rules and regulations.



Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal

Dedication

TO

MY PARENTS & MY FAMILY,

(WHO MADE ME BELIEVE IN MYSELF)

&

MY SUPERVISOR DR. MUHAMMAD ZAFAR IQBAL

(WHO INSPIRED ME TO KEEP LEARNING)

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May Allah Almighty bless all of them! (Ameen)

Uzama Akbar

Abstract

This research aimed to identify the challenges faced by faculty members, program coordinators, and chairpersons/HODs of the International Islamic University, Islamabad, and the National University of Modern Languages to implement the undergraduate policy 2023 launched by the Higher Education Commission in 2023. This research employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the challenges associated with implementing the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. The objectives of the study were to identify the key challenges faced by program coordinators at the administration level during the implementation of HEC undergraduate policy 2023 and to identify the challenges faced by teachers at the academic level during the implementation of HEC undergraduate policy 2023. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique in the case of teachers and a universal sampling technique in the case of chairpersons/HODs and program coordinators to select the sample. The population of the study was 680 teachers, 18 program coordinators, and 16 chairpersons/HODs of IIUI and NUML. The self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires from program coordinators and teachers of selected departments (English, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Teacher Education, Education Leadership & Management, Media & Communication Studies, Economics & Finance, Mathematics & Statistics). Qualitative data were collected through interviews with chairpersons/HODs of the selected departments. The collected data were analyzed by calculating mean, mode, median, and inferential statistics to conclude the results through SPSS version 21. Teachers faced challenges in integrating program learning outcomes, creating a friendly environment, and managing grading pressures. Overall, the findings highlight the need for addressing financial, communication, and coordination challenges to ensure successful policy implementation. This study contributes to the academic discourse on higher education policy implementation by analyzing practices within Pakistani universities, offering evidence-based insights to support more effective and context-sensitive educational reforms. Results of the study will be beneficial for trainers, educators, teachers, and Chairpersons/HODs. Program coordinators identified challenges in implementing the HEC undergraduate policy 2023, including limited financial resources, managing program data/evaluation, effective communication with faculty members, and coordinating with other

departments. Chairpersons struggled with lack of transparency and communication, resistance to change, limited resources, and time-consuming evaluation processes.

Keywords: *Quality education, Undergraduate policy, Learning environment, Problem-solving skills, Mismanagement*

TABLE OF CONTENT

| | |
|--|----|
| CHAPTER 1 | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Background and the Context of Study | 2 |
| 1.2 Implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy | 3 |
| 1.3 Problem Statement | 3 |
| 1.4 Objectives of the Study | 4 |
| 1.5 Research Questions | 4 |
| 1.6 Significance of Study | 4 |
| 1.7 Delimitations of Study | 5 |
| 1.8 Operational Definitions | 5 |
| 1.8.1 Challenges | 5 |
| 1.8.2 Implementation | 5 |
| 1.8.3 Prospects | 5 |
| 1.8.4 Quality Education | 5 |
| 1.9 Conceptual Framework | 6 |
| CHAPTER 2 | 7 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW | 7 |
| 2.1 Review of Related Literature | 7 |
| 2.2 Background on HEC Undergraduate Education Policy 2023 | 8 |
| 2.3 Challenges and prospects of implementing the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 | 8 |
| 2.3.1 Administrative Challenges | 10 |
| 2.3.2 Academic Challenges | 10 |
| 2.3.3 Socio-Cultural Challenges | 10 |
| 2.3.4 Mentorship Programs | 10 |
| 2.4 Key Components and Objectives of the 2023 Policy | 11 |
| 2.4.1 Objectives of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 | 11 |
| 2.5 Review of Higher Education in Pakistan | 11 |
| 2.6 Role of HEC in Strengthening Higher Education in Pakistan | 13 |
| 2.7 Faculty development and capacity building | 15 |
| 2.8 Infrastructure and resource-related constraints | 17 |
| 2.9 Resistance to change and institutional barriers | 19 |
| 2.10 Quality Assurance and Assessment | 21 |

| | | |
|---|--|----|
| 2.11 | Indicators of Quality Education | 21 |
| 2.12 | Quality Education | 22 |
| 2.13 | Academia and Industry Partnerships | 25 |
| 2.14 | Success and Equality in Higher Education | 26 |
| 2.15 | Faculty Research and Innovations | 26 |
| 2.16 | Comparison between Previous Policies | 27 |
| 2.17 | Comparison of CBE (Competency Based Education) Theory with other Education Policies | 28 |
| 2.18 | Review of Higher Education Policy UK, USA, SWEDEN, NORWAY | 29 |
| 2.19 | Comparison between QEC and QACS | 32 |
| 2.20 | Challenges Related to Physical, Financial, Human Resources, and Academic Challenges..... | 34 |
| | Financial Challenges..... | 35 |
| | Human Resources Challenges | 35 |
| | Academic Challenges | 36 |
| 2.21 | Critical Summary of Literature Review | 36 |
| CHAPTER 3 | | 38 |
| RESEARCH METHODOLOGY..... | | 38 |
| 3.1 | Research Design | 38 |
| 3.2 | Population | 38 |
| 3.3 | Sample and Sampling Technique | 40 |
| 3.4 | Instruments | 40 |
| 3.5 | Procedure (validity, reliability, pilot testing)..... | 41 |
| 3.6 | Data Collection | 41 |
| 3.7 | Data Analysis..... | 42 |
| 3.8 | Ethical Considerations | 42 |
| CHAPTER 4 | | 43 |
| DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS..... | | 43 |
| 4.1 | Analysis of Questionnaires | 44 |
| | Challenges of Program coordinators | 44 |
| 4.2 | Thematic Analysis | 58 |
| 4.3 | Summary of the chapter..... | 62 |
| CHAPTER 5 | | 64 |
| SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | | 64 |
| 5.1 | Summary | 64 |

| | | |
|-------------------|--|----|
| 5.2 | Findings of the Quantitative Data | 65 |
| 5.4 | Discussion | 68 |
| 5.5 | Conclusions | 71 |
| 5.6 | Recommendations | 75 |
| 5.7 | Recommendations for Future Studies | 78 |
| REFERENCES | | 80 |
| Appendix I..... | | 88 |
| Appendix II | | 91 |
| Appendix III..... | | 93 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|------------|--|----|
| Table 3.1 | Population of the study | 39 |
| Table 3.2 | Sample of the study..... | 40 |
| Table 4.1 | Limited financial resources..... | 44 |
| Table 4.2 | Managing program evaluation is challenging..... | 44 |
| Table 4.3 | Effective communication with faculty members is challenging..... | 45 |
| Table 4.4 | Coordinating with other departments is difficult to discuss..... | 46 |
| Table 4.5 | Faculty members are aware of the requirements..... | 46 |
| Table 4.6 | The credit hour requirements outlined in HEC Undergraduate policy... | 47 |
| Table 4.7 | The entrance test marks as per HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023..... | 48 |
| Table 4.8 | The HEC 2023 policy curriculum requirements are clear..... | 48 |
| Table 4.9 | Mismanagement affects the implementation of HEC Policy 2023..... | 49 |
| Table 4.10 | HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 verifies program adherence..... | 49 |
| Table 4.11 | Assessment methodologies used in our program..... | 50 |
| Table 4.12 | Programs are designed according to HEC Undergraduate Policy..... | 51 |
| Table 4.13 | The faculty training programs enhance your teaching and mentoring... | 51 |
| Table 4.14 | The student assessment methodologies used in our program..... | 52 |
| Table 4.15 | Our program monitoring and evaluation process are effective..... | 52 |
| Table 4.16 | Lack of collaboration among teachers hinders the effective | 53 |
| Table 4.17 | Communication among teachers..... | 53 |
| Table 4.18 | Departmental meetings facilitate discussions..... | 54 |
| Table 4.19 | Integrating PLOs into course objectives remained challenging | 55 |
| Table 4.20 | The HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 structured breakdown of masks. | 55 |
| Table 4.21 | You are familiar with the course registration requirements | 56 |
| Table 4.22 | Creating a friendly environment for students is necessary..... | 57 |
| Table 4.23 | Focusing on research and innovation skills is required..... | 57 |

| | | |
|------------|--|----|
| Table 4.24 | Creating a creative environment is necessary for students..... | 58 |
|------------|--|----|

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Conceptual Framework..... | 06 |
|---------------------------|----|

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---------------|---|
| AD | Associate Degree Programs |
| AI | Artificial Intelligence |
| BS | Bachelor of Science |
| CMS | Content Management System |
| ELT | English Language Teaching |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| HEC | Higher Education Commission |
| HEIs | Higher Education Institutions |
| HOD | Head of Department |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| IIUI | International Islamic University, Islamabad |
| LMS | Learning Management System |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| NUML | National University of Modern Languages |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| QAA | Quality Assurance Agency |
| QAC | Quality Assurance Cells |
| QACS | Quality Assurance Committees |
| QEC | Quality Enhancement Cells |
| QED | Quality Education Standards |
| ORIC | Office of Research Innovation, Commercialization |
| TS | Tenure Track Service |
| UG | Undergraduate |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Higher Education Commission has launched undergraduate policy 2023 to maintain the quality of higher education in Pakistani universities and to meet out the global challenges. This policy aims to promote the student success, ability to comprehend and apply conceptual knowledge, acquiring professional skills and competencies, strong civic skills, ethical values, tolerance, and inclusiveness among students. The Undergraduate Education Policy 2023 was adopted by Higher Education Institutions and implemented w.e.f 2023. This research investigates the challenges faced by teachers, chairpersons/HODS, and Department coordinators regarding the implementation of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. The policy objectives include enhancing quality and relevance of undergraduate programs, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills, promoting research and innovation, ensuring alignment with institutional needs and global best practices, improving accessibility and inclusivity, strengthening institutional capacity and governance, and encouraging community engagement and social responsibility. Key features of the policy include the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework, revised curriculum structures and credit hours, enhanced focus on research and innovation, institution-academia partnerships, technology-enhanced learning, assessment and evaluation reforms, faculty development, and training programs (Higher Education Commission, 2023).

The policy is being implemented in phases, focusing on institutional capacity building, faculty development, and curriculum reform. The expected outcomes include graduates who are knowledgeable and skilled, critical thinkers and problem solvers, innovative and entrepreneurial, globally competitive, and socially responsible and engaged. The HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 marks a significant shift toward enhancing the quality and relevance of undergraduate education in Pakistan.

The International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI), established in 1980, is a leading educational institution in Pakistan that focuses on Islamic studies and research. By fostering a community of scholars and practitioners who embody Islamic values, IIUI seeks to address contemporary challenges and promote intellectual growth. With a diverse range of academic programs, research initiatives, and extracurricular activities. IIUI has become a prominent hub for Islamic education and intellectual

development in the region. NUML is renowned for its expertise in languages, linguistics, and cultural studies. It offers undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs in various disciplines. NUML is committed to providing quality education, fostering research, and promoting cultural diversity. Its faculty comprises experienced academics and professionals. The university has a strong focus on language training and translation services, making it an essential institution for students, diplomats, and professionals seeking language proficiency. NUML has international collaborations and partnerships, enabling students to participate in exchange programs and gain global exposure ((International Islamic University Islamabad, 2022; National University of Modern Languages, 2022).

1.1 Background and the Context of Study

International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) and the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) are Educational institutions located in Islamabad. The instructions given by HEC for undergraduate programs were implemented by these universities. Both Universities had to ensure that the undergraduate policy of HEC was properly implemented and examined that quality education was disseminated as required in HEC policy 2023.

Islamic University, established in 1980, and the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), founded in 1970 as an institute and upgraded to university status in 2000, share a rich history in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad. Islamic University focused on promoting Islamic studies, law, and Arabic, while NUML excelled in languages, linguistics, and cultural studies. Both universities had evolved significantly, with Islamic University expanding its faculties to include international relations, economics, and computer science, and NUML offering programs in business administration, engineering, and more. Despite differing areas of expertise, both institutions prioritized research, cultural diversity, and academic excellence, contributing substantially to Pakistan's higher education landscape.

This research is timely addressing knowledge gaps in implementing the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 across varied institutional settings. By exploring challenges, strengths, and improvement opportunities, it offers actionable recommendations for policymakers, academic leaders, and educators, stakeholder engagement in Pakistan higher education reform.

1.2 Implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) implemented policies to improve undergraduate education across the country. A policy relating to undergraduate education at the International Islamic University, Islamabad, and the National University of Modern Languages contained the criteria and instructions that meet the admission requirements, development of educational programs, staff training, assessment methods, and to take steps for ensuring quality control. Its purpose was to ensure that the undergraduate programs in the IIUI and NUML adhered to the standards set by the country and helped to fulfill the objectives of Higher Education in Pakistan. This study explored the challenges and effects of the new policy to promote quality education (Higher Education Commission Pakistan, 2023).

International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI) and the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) strictly adhere to Higher Education Commission (HEC) policies, ensuring quality education and research. Both universities had implemented accreditation, quality assurance, faculty development, research, and curriculum review policies. IIUI's programs were accredited by relevant accrediting bodies, and its Quality Enhancement Cell monitored academic standards. NUML's Quality Assurance Directorate ensures academic quality, and both universities follow HEC's faculty recruitment and development policies. They promote research, publication, and innovation, aligning with HEC's research priorities, and regularly update curricula to meet HEC's standards and industry requirements. Common HEC policies implemented include admission, examination, degree verification, academic integrity, and plagiarism policies. Both universities submit compliance reports to HEC, demonstrating their commitment to maintaining high academic standards ((International Islamic University Islamabad, 2022; National University of Modern Languages, 2022).

1.3 Problem Statement

The implementation of the HEC policy aimed to improve the quality of the Higher Education Sector. Whereas multiple challenges were faced by universities in the implementation of the policy, including teachers' resistance. The overall quality of education in Higher Educational Institutions needed improvement. Therefore, this research highlighted the challenges faced by universities while implementing the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. This study investigated the HEC Undergraduate Policy

2023, which provided conduct workshops for academic leaders on performance evaluation techniques; develop clear, HEC-aligned evaluation rubrics for assessing faculty engagement and compliance with the policy.an opportunity to Higher Educational Institutions to promote quality education.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the challenges faced by program coordinators at the administrative level during the implementation of HEC undergraduate policy 2023.
2. Identify the challenges faced by teachers at the academic level during the implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023.
3. Explore the perceptions of the chairpersons /HODs regarding the contribution of the undergraduate policy 2023 to promote quality education.
4. Explore the opportunities regarding the dissemination of quality education provided in the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023.

1.5 Research Questions

This research study focused on answering the following research questions

RQ1. What are the challenges faced by the program coordinators during implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023 at the administration level?

RQ2. What are the challenges faced by teachers at the academic level during the implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023?

RQ3. What are the perceptions of the chairpersons/HODs regarding the impact of the undergraduate policy 2023 to promote quality education?

RQ4. What are the benefits and opportunities proposed by the HEC policy to enhance the quality of education and to improve students learning outcomes and how can these changes be effectively implemented?

1.6 Significance of Study

This research addresses the challenges faced by chairpersons/HODS, faculty members, and program coordinators. It will assist in the implementation of the undergraduate policy 2023 for students according to the guidelines highlighted by the

Higher Education Commission. The study helped teachers and program coordinators to promote student success and enabling them to apply their conceptual knowledge to their own practical and professional lives. The results of the study will be significant for teachers, program coordinators, university level administration, and for the professionals working on quality education. The findings from this study will contribute to existing research and will be recorded for future use.

1.7 Delimitations of Study

This research was delimited to faculty members, program coordinators and chairpersons/HODs of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), and NUML (National University of Modern Languages). Furthermore, this study was delimited to the following departments (English, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Teacher Education, Educational Leadership & Management, Media & Communication Studies, Economics & Finance, Mathematics & Statistics). Furthermore, this study was delimited to the challenges (limited financial resources, faculty training program, assessment methodologies, communication among teachers, course registration) regarding implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023.

1.8 Operational Definitions

1.8.1 Challenges

A problem that involves uncertainty and requires the skills, abilities, motivation and knowledge to perform a task.

1.8.2 Implementation

The process of putting into practice or executing a policy, program or intervention in a real-world setting such as educational institutions.

1.8.3 Prospects

Potential outcomes, benefits or opportunities that may arise after implementation of a particular policy, program, intervention, or study.

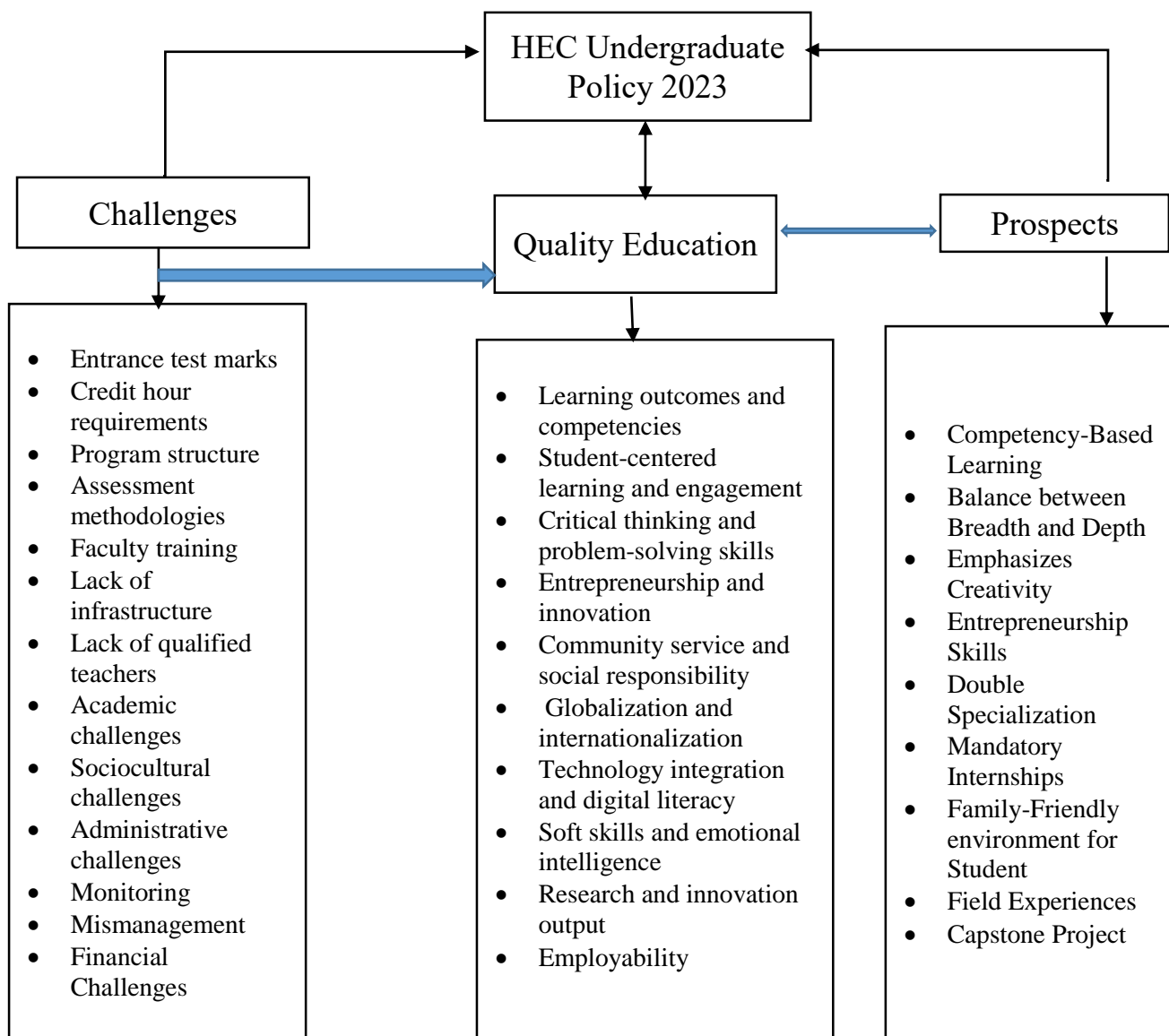
1.8.4 Quality Education

A quality education is one that focuses on the whole child-the social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of each student regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1

A conceptual framework developed by researcher



The conceptual framework depicts the key factors that influenced the implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 at the university level. The framework suggested that addressing the challenges faced by program coordinators, teachers, and chairpersons/HODs, leveraging the opportunities proposed by the HEC policy, led to the successful implementation of the revised undergraduate curriculum and ultimately enhance the quality of education and students learning outcomes.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section deals with literature review. The relevant studies are cited in this section and the literature that appeared in the published textbooks and research papers is thoroughly reviewed and cited properly.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) are important in preparing students for their professional lives. To meet these diverse needs, HEIs should provide a curriculum that develops different skills and patience among students (Stentiford & Koutsouris, 2021). They should also be able to take feedback from internal and external stakeholders. This reflects the external demands for universities to develop a skilled workforce. Contemporary students' complex learning needs often cannot be met by traditional instructional methods (Bond et al., 2020). Similarly, 21st-century learners require more tailored approaches that incorporate technology and competency-based learning (Kearns, 2022). By integrating real-world applications and peer review, curricula can foster students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills (Boud & Falchikov, 2019). Teaching should focus on promoting students' analytical skills and cultural competencies instead of simply teaching them practical skills or management techniques (Capobianco et al., 2018).

Accordingly, it is driven not only by the objective of the development of the institutions, but also by the social demands for superior and skilled manpower for the society. According to Wessels (2020) capabilities have a broader meaning that comprises social changes and includes the need for a future practical life. In this study, we will understand how to make the policies successful in an interactive way that is socially relevant on a wide scale and effective for higher education sector and society. Instead of looking at curriculum-based management, we can focus on a process based learning, different standards and concepts of knowledge. Strategic curriculum planning and goal setting are required to make the curriculum successful in HEIs, review of changes and policies is still associated with top activities (Blackmore & Kandiko, 2012, Annala & Makinen, 2017, Azizuddin & Hossain, 2020).

2.2 Background on HEC Undergraduate Education Policy 2023

In 2023, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan introduced a new Undergraduate Education Policy aimed at enhancing the country's higher education quality. The policy outlines a comprehensive framework for undergraduate education in Pakistan, emphasizing key aspects such as competency-based learning, a balance of breadth and depth of knowledge, practical skills, and fostering creativity. The policy establishes a framework for undergraduate education in Pakistan, emphasizing competency-based learning, a balance of breadth and depth, practical knowledge, and innovation. The policy also includes additional reforms, such as removing the mandatory topic "Study of Pakistan" from all bachelor's and master's degree programs. The policy was developed in 2020 and amended in 2023 in response to stakeholder comments. The HEC established norms and guidelines for academic policies, curriculum, learning outcomes, and assessment procedures while considering societal requirements, technological improvement, and global trends. The policy will go into effect in the fall of 2023 and will apply to Pakistani universities and colleges.

2.3 Challenges and prospects of implementing the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023

According to the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 document, the problems of strengthening the policy include "resistance to change, lack of resources, insufficient faculty training, and difficulty in assessing competency-based learning" while the prospects for strengthening the policy include "producing graduates with applied knowledge and skills, enhancing employability, promoting entrepreneurship, fostering university linkages, and aligning with international standards". The policy also mentions that the implementation of the policy will "help to address the challenges of access, equity, quality, and relevance in higher education, and will lead to the production of graduates who are creative, critical thinkers, and problem solvers, with the ability to adapt to the changing needs of society" (Higher Education Commission Pakistan, 2023).

Pakistan's higher education sector faces several pressing challenges that must be addressed to ensure its continued growth and relevance. One major concern is the mismatch between the skills imparted to students and the demands of the job market, highlighting the need for greater emphasis on quality and relevance in education. Additionally, issues of affordability and accessibility continue to hinder many students'

ability to pursue higher education, underscoring the importance of strengthening financial systems. To remain competitive globally, Pakistan must also prioritize the development of its research and innovation capacity. Furthermore, efforts are underway to revitalize the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, recognizing its critical role in equipping students with the skills required to meet the evolving needs of the workforce.

The implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 presents several prospects that can transform the higher education landscape in Pakistan. By focusing on competency-based learning, the policy can produce graduates with practical skills and knowledge, making them more employable and entrepreneurial. This, in turn, can foster a culture of innovation and creativity, leading to the development of new businesses and industries. Furthermore, the policy's emphasis on collaboration between universities and industry partners can lead to research and development opportunities, driving economic growth and development. Additionally, aligning Pakistani universities with international standards can enhance their global reputation, attracting international students and faculty, and promoting global collaborations. Overall, the successful implementation of the policy can lead to a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce, driving Pakistan's economic and social development.

The policy can lead to improved access to education, particularly for underrepresented communities, promoting social equity and inclusion. Moreover, the incorporation of digital skills and literacy into the curriculum can enhance digital literacy, preparing graduates for the digital economy and increasing their employability and entrepreneurial prospects. The policy's emphasis on collaboration and research can also lead to interdisciplinary research opportunities, driving innovation and solving complex societal problems. Additionally, the focus on competency-based learning can help graduates develop essential soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, making them more employable and adaptable. The policy can also foster community engagement and social responsibility among universities, promoting social cohesion and development (Higher Education Commission Pakistan, 2023).

Furthermore, aligning Pakistani universities with international standards can lead to the internationalization of the curriculum, providing graduates with a global perspective and enhancing their employability in the global job market. The policy's emphasis on entrepreneurship and innovation can also lead to the development of

entrepreneurial ecosystems, supporting start-ups and small businesses, and driving economic growth. Finally, the policy's implementation can lead to improved governance and accountability in higher education institutions, promoting transparency and effectiveness. These additional prospects highlight the potential of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 to drive economic and social development in Pakistan.

2.3.1 Administrative Challenges

Administrative challenges refer to the difficulties faced by administrators, managers in managing and running an institution, or system. Administrative challenges include managing student's enrollment, records, implementation of policies, supervising faculty and staff, handling students discipline, behavioral issues, managing facilities, maintenance, balancing academic tasks, administrative tasks, addressing teacher shortages, professional development, managing school finances and budgets

2.3.2 Academic Challenges

The difficulties or hurdles that students, teachers, or educational institutions face in achieving academic goals, success, or excellence. These challenges may affect various aspects of the learning process, understanding different learning challenges, understanding of student family problems, bullying, lack of funding, insufficient resources, lack of effective communication, being encouraging and motivating under challenging times, disciplining students, and endless paperwork and extended working hours.

2.3.3 Socio-Cultural Challenges

Difficulties and complexities that arise from the social and cultural context in research are conducted or implemented. Some socio-cultural challenges are following cultural differences, misunderstandings, language barriers, communication difficulties, social norms, expectations, discrimination or biases (e.g., racism, sexism, homophobia), socioeconomic inequality, family or community dynamics, cultural identity conflicts, assimilation challenges, social media or technology-related issues and community or societal values conflicting with personal beliefs.

2.3.4 Mentorship Programs

A mentoring program is a structured initiative designed to pair experienced individuals with less experienced ones to provide guidance, support, and knowledge transfer. Some mentorship programs include academic development, professional

development, leadership development, entrepreneurship, goal setting, planning, youth development, social support, regular meetings, communication, skill development, training, feedback and evaluation. Mentorship programs can be conducted by educational institutions, community groups and leadership development programs. Conducting mentorship programs is crucial for fostering personal growth, professional growth, knowledge transfer, and skill development. Mentorship programs also promote innovation, creativity, and better decision-making, while building strong professional networks and relationships.

2.4 Key Components and Objectives of the 2023 Policy

According to the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023, the key components and objectives are as follows:-

Key Components include competency-based education, balance between breadth and depth, applied knowledge and skills, faculty Development, assessment and evaluation, collaboration with industry and employers to ensure relevance, quality assurance, general education, disciplinary requirements, interdisciplinary requirements, field experience, and capstone projects.

2.4.1 Objectives of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023

Objectives include improve quality of education, increase access and equity, enhance employability, foster research and innovation, align with national and global standards, promote entrepreneurship and innovation, improve governance and management, empower students for success, foster competency-based education, achieve balance between breadth and depth, promote applied knowledge and innovation, develop critical thinking and analytical skills, shape the future of Pakistan, encourage interdisciplinary learning, provide practical experience through internships to gain hands-on experience, offer flexible learning options, emphasize assessment and evaluation, instill civic and ethical values (Higher Education Commission Pakistan, 2023).

2.5 Review of Higher Education in Pakistan

Noor Fatima, Muhammad Imran Ashraf, and Sania Zehra (2020) examined the role of higher education in Pakistan's socio-economic transformation. They argued that higher education institutions and policy play a critical role in contributing to a knowledge-based and knowledge-driven society. The authors noted that Pakistan's

higher education sector has undergone significant reforms over the last 15 years. Still, there remains a mismatch between higher education and the trained labor force, hindering socio-economic transformation. They emphasized the need for quality education, research, and innovation to sustain growth in a knowledge-based economy.

According to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, the country aimed to have at least five universities in the top 300 Technology Universities of the World by 2015 (HEC, 2015). To achieve this goal, the HEC focused on core areas such as faculty development, improving access, promoting excellence in learning and research, and relevance to the economy and development (HEC, 2015). These efforts align with the Ministry of Planning and Development's Vision 2025, which emphasizes the importance of higher education and research in driving economic growth and development (Ministry of Planning and Development, 2014).

The Vision 2025 roadmap aims to increase higher education coverage, improve gender parity, and enhance research and development in Pakistan (Ministry of Planning and Development, 2014). The HEC's efforts to strengthen quality education and research are crucial in achieving these goals, as highlighted by the importance of relevant knowledge and social capital in the contemporary competitive world (HEC, 2015).

The Education Sector Reforms and Strategic Plan 2001-2004 marked a significant shift towards science and technology, recognizing the critical role of research in generating knowledge and driving economic growth (HEC, 2015). However, the state of research in higher educational institutions was found to be unsatisfactory, highlighting the need for improvement (HEC, 2015).

The higher education reform initiatives include increasing access to higher education by establishing new campuses, offering targeted tuition waivers and scholarships, and improving quality education through applied research and the use of technology. These initiatives caused enrollment in higher education to leap from 2% to 12.6% from 2003 to 2021, and there were some observed enhancements in quality as well (UNESCO, 2021).

- Pakistan's higher education system faces numerous challenges that hinder its effectiveness and relevance. One major concern is the prevalence of standard teaching methods, which prioritize rote memorization over critical thinking and research. Furthermore, outdated curricula fail to address the evolving needs of the

job market, leaving graduates ill-prepared for the workforce

- Limited research opportunities, and a shortage of qualified faculty. Poor quality management and institutional structures also hinder the system's overall effectiveness.
- In terms of access and equity, Pakistan's higher education system falls short. Despite increased enrollment, many regions and demographics continue to face significant barriers to accessing higher education.
- The disconnect between higher education and the workforce is another pressing concern. Graduates often lack the skills and knowledge required by employers, leading to unemployment and underemployment. Moreover, the system's limited focus on innovation, entrepreneurship, and critical thinking skills hinders students' ability to adapt to the demands of the 21st-century workforce.

2.6 Role of HEC in Strengthening Higher Education in Pakistan

The Higher Education Commission (HEC), formerly the University Grants Commission, is the primary regulator of higher education in Pakistan. It also facilitates the development of the higher educational system. Its main purpose is to upgrade universities in Pakistan to become centers of excellence in education, research, and development. The HEC has facilitated Pakistani higher education institutions' aspiring to international standards, increasing enrollment, promoting human resource development, and devising mechanisms for improving the quality and standards of higher education institutions. Because of this, in the last fifteen years, and with the full cooperation of the universities, for the first time Pakistani higher education institutions have been included in the top-ranked universities of the world. The HEC has played a leading role in building a knowledge-based economy in Pakistan, by granting hundreds of doctoral scholarships for education (at home and abroad) every year (Higher Education Commission Pakistan, 2023).

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan has implemented various initiatives to enhance the quality of higher education in the country. These initiatives include:

1. Promoting internationalization through the admission of foreign students.
2. Encouraging research in Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities through sponsorship and patronage.

3. Offering scholarship schemes for domestic and foreign students.
4. Supporting faculty development through hiring and training programs.
5. Introducing the Tenure Track Service Structure (TTS) to enhance faculty career development.
6. Establishing the Learning Innovation Division to provide training programs for university teaching faculty and governance programs for university management.
7. Improving English Language Teaching (ELT) through workshops, short courses, seminars, and orientation programs.
8. Conducting courses on Incorporating Technology in Education (ITE) to enhance the use of technology in education.
9. Ensuring quality assurance through the establishment of Quality Assurance Cells (QAC) and Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC).
10. Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) assumes a vital role in governing and promoting excellence within the country's higher education sector.
11. To promote academic excellence, the HEC develops strategic policies and guidelines for higher education institutions, encompassing curriculum development, research initiatives, and faculty appointment standards.
12. To foster academic excellence, the HEC offers various scholarship programs, including prestigious international opportunities like the Fulbright Program and Commonwealth Scholarships, as well as domestic initiatives such as the Indigenous PhD Fellowship.
13. Furthermore, the commission conducts targeted training programs to enhance the teaching effectiveness of faculty members.
14. To promote financial stability in public sector universities, the HEC administers government funding allocations, thereby enabling these institutions to pursue research and development endeavors with confidence. Moreover, the commission extends financial support to deserving students through its need-based scholarship programs.

These initiatives demonstrate the HEC's commitment to enhancing the quality of higher

education in Pakistan and promoting international standards. By supporting faculty development, research, and innovation, the HEC aims to build a knowledge-based economy and promote sustainable development (Higher Education Commission, 2023).

2.7 Faculty development and capacity building

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan has introduced a comprehensive undergraduate policy in 2023 aimed at enhancing the quality of education and aligning it with international standards. This policy places significant emphasis on faculty development and capacity building, recognizing that the competency of faculty members is crucial for effective implementation. However, several challenges impede progress in this area, alongside promising prospects that can be harnessed to improve educational outcomes.

Inadequate Training Programs: One of the primary challenges in faculty development is the lack of structured and ongoing training programs. Many institutions struggle to provide faculty with access to modern pedagogical techniques and subject-specific knowledge. As a result, educators may not be equipped to adapt to the new policies effectively, leading to inconsistent educational quality (Baker, Christopher, & Noah, 2024).

Resistance to Change: Faculty members often exhibit resistance to adopting new teaching methodologies and curricular changes mandated by the HEC. This resistance may stem from a lack of awareness about the benefits of the new policy or fear of the unknown. Overcoming this inertia is vital for the successful implementation of the undergraduate policy.

Resource Constraints: Many higher education institutions face financial limitations that hinder their ability to invest in faculty development initiatives. Budget constraints can restrict access to professional development opportunities, workshops, and research grants, thus stifling faculty growth and innovation.

(i) Limited Research Opportunities

The HEC policy emphasizes research-oriented education, yet faculty members often lack the resources or time to engage in meaningful research. This limitation can affect the quality of education, as faculty may struggle to incorporate the latest findings and methodologies into their teaching (Shah & Anwar, 2023).

(ii) Insufficient Collaboration

Effective implementation of the HEC policy requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including universities, industry partners, and government bodies. However, a lack of communication and partnership often leads to fragmented efforts in faculty development, diminishing the overall impact. Despite these challenges, there are significant prospects for enhancing faculty development and capacity building in line with the HEC undergraduate policy.

(iii) Enhanced Professional Development Programs

Institutions can establish robust professional development programs tailored to the needs of faculty. By promoting workshops, seminars, and online courses, universities can equip educators with the skills necessary to implement innovative teaching practices (Nawaz & Qureshi, 2022).

(iv) Mentorship and Peer Support

Creating mentorship programs where experienced faculty guide newer instructors can foster a culture of continuous learning. Peer support groups can also encourage knowledge sharing and collaboration, enhancing overall faculty competence.

(v) Leveraging Technology

The integration of technology in education offers exciting prospects for faculty development. Online platforms can facilitate access to resources, training, and collaborative opportunities. E-learning tools can also help faculty adapt their teaching methods to suit diverse learning styles.

(vi) Research Incentives

To encourage faculty engagement in research, institutions can provide incentives such as funding, sabbaticals, and recognition for research contributions. By aligning research outputs with the HEC policy objectives, faculty can enhance their teaching and contribute to the institution's academic reputation (Khan & Ahmad, 2023).

(vii) Building Partnerships

Collaborating with industries, NGOs, and international educational institutions can provide faculty with valuable insights and resources. Such partnerships can also facilitate internships and practical experiences for students, bridging the gap between theory and practice (Gul & Zeb, 2021).

(viii) Mentorship Programs

Develop mentorship programs that pair experienced faculty members with junior faculty, to provide guidance and support.

(ix) Faculty Exchange Programs

Establish faculty exchange programs with international universities, to provide opportunities for faculty members to gain new experiences and perspectives.

(x) Teaching and Learning Centers

Create teaching and learning centers that provide resources and support for faculty members to improve their teaching practices.

(xi) International Collaborations

Foster international collaborations and partnerships to enhance faculty development and capacity building.

(xii) Autonomy and Flexibility

Provide autonomy and flexibility to universities and faculty members, allowing them to innovate and adapt to changing circumstances. By implementing these strategies, Pakistan's higher education sector can overcome the challenges and capitalize on the prospects, ultimately enhancing the quality of education and aligning it with international standards (Farukh & Aziz-ur-Rehman, 2024).

2.8 Infrastructure and Resource-related Constraints

Its implementation faces significant infrastructure and resource-related constraints, which pose challenges to achieving the policy's goals. Understanding these constraints is crucial for stakeholders to explore potential solutions and ensure the policy's success.

Inadequate Infrastructure: Many universities in Pakistan lack the necessary physical infrastructure to support the expanded requirements of the new policy. This includes insufficient classrooms, laboratories, and library facilities. Without modern classrooms and well-equipped labs, institutions struggle to deliver quality education that meets the policy standards (Shah & Rehman, 2023).

1. Limited Financial Resources

Public and private universities often operate on tight budgets. The

implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy requires substantial financial investment in infrastructure development, faculty hiring, and educational resources. Many institutions may find it challenging to allocate funds for these improvements, leading to disparities in the quality of education offered (Mahmood & Saeed, 2023).

2. Faculty Shortages

The policy emphasizes the need for qualified faculty capable of delivering updated curricula. However, there is a significant shortage of qualified educators in various disciplines. Recruiting, training, and retaining skilled faculty members is a critical challenge for institutions, particularly in remote or less developed regions.

3. Technological Constraints

The integration of technology in education is vital for modern learning environments. However, many universities lack the necessary technological infrastructure, such as high-speed internet and access to the latest educational software. This gap limits the ability of institutions to provide hybrid or online learning opportunities, which are increasingly important in today's educational landscape (Rashid & Yousaf, 2023).

4. Resistance to Change

Implementing new policies often encounters resistance from stakeholders accustomed to traditional methods of education. Faculty, administration, and even students may be hesitant to embrace new curricula, teaching methodologies, and assessment methods. This resistance can impede the successful rollout of the HEC undergraduate policy. Despite these challenges, there are several prospects for overcoming the constraints associated with the implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy.

5. Public-Private Partnerships

Collaborations between the government and private sector can facilitate investment in educational infrastructure. By pooling resources, institutions can enhance their facilities and technology, ensuring better educational outcomes (Ahmed & Khurshid, 2024).

6. Increased Funding

Advocacy for increased funding from the government and international

organizations can help address financial constraints. Targeted funding initiatives can support infrastructure development and faculty recruitment, enabling institutions to meet policy requirements.

7. Faculty Development Programs

Investing in faculty development is essential. Training programs can equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to the new curriculum and teaching methods. This investment will lead to improved teaching quality and student outcomes (Naz & Shafqat, 2022).

8. Technology Integration

Universities should prioritize the development of technological infrastructure. By investing in digital tools and platforms, institutions can enhance the learning experience, making education more accessible and engaging for students.

9. Stakeholder Engagement

Involving all stakeholders, including faculty, students, and industry leaders, in the policy implementation process can foster a sense of ownership and reduce resistance to change. Constructive dialogue can lead to a better understanding of the benefits of the new policy and encourage collaboration among various parties (Rehman & Gul, 2023).

2.9 Resistance to Change and Institutional Barriers

Resistance to change often stems from deeply entrenched beliefs and practices within academic institutions. Faculty members may be hesitant to adopt new curricula or teaching methodologies, fearing that these changes threaten their established routines and expertise. This reluctance can be exacerbated by a lack of awareness regarding the benefits of the new policy, leading to a climate of skepticism among educators. Additionally, administrative staff may resist changes due to concerns about increased workloads and the need for additional training to adapt to new systems or processes. Institutional culture plays a crucial role in this resistance; many universities have historically operated under rigid hierarchical structures that prioritize tradition over innovation. Consequently, efforts to implement reforms often face bureaucratic obstacles, as decision-making processes can be slow and cumbersome, stifling the agility needed to adapt to the new policy's demands swiftly. Furthermore, the absence of a clear communication strategy can hinder the effective dissemination of information

regarding the rationale and expected outcomes of the policy, leading to misunderstandings and misinformation among stakeholders. Institutional barriers, such as inadequate infrastructure and limited financial resources, further complicate the situation (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2022).

Many universities lack the necessary facilities and technological support to successfully implement the new curriculum, which can lead to frustration among faculty and students alike. This infrastructural deficiency can perpetuate a cycle of resistance, as educators may feel ill-equipped to deliver the quality of education envisioned by the HEC. Moreover, financial constraints can limit institutions' ability to invest in professional development for faculty, necessary resources, and technological advancements, thereby impeding the policy's goals. The challenge is compounded by the fact that many institutions may prioritize short-term operational stability over long-term strategic reforms, viewing the new policy as an additional burden rather than an opportunity for growth and improvement. However, there are prospects for overcoming these barriers. Engaging all stakeholders—faculty, administration, students, and industry representatives—in the policy implementation process can foster a sense of ownership and collaboration, which is essential for reducing resistance (Yousaf & Javed, 2022).

Moreover, creating platforms for dialogue and feedback can help address concerns and clarify misconceptions, ultimately building a more supportive environment for change. Professional development programs tailored to equip faculty with the skills and knowledge necessary to embrace new teaching methodologies can also mitigate resistance. Additionally, the establishment of champions for change within institutions can lead to a cultural shift, as these individuals advocate for the benefits of the new policy and inspire their peers. To address infrastructural and financial constraints, institutions could explore partnerships with private organizations, NGOs, and government agencies to secure funding and resources. By actively seeking support and fostering a collaborative culture, universities can better position themselves to adapt to the HEC undergraduate policy. In conclusion, while resistance to change and institutional barriers present formidable challenges to the implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy, targeted strategies that promote engagement, professional development, and resource mobilization can pave the way for a successful transition. By reframing the narrative around the policy as an opportunity for institutional growth rather than a burden, stakeholders can work together to create a more dynamic and

responsive higher education landscape in Pakistan (Raza & Malik, 2022).

2.10 Quality Assurance and Assessment

One of the primary challenges is the lack of standardized assessment criteria and quality benchmarks across universities, leading to inconsistencies in educational outcomes. Many institutions may not have established mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of new curricula or teaching methodologies, making it difficult to ensure that educational standards are met. Additionally, faculty members may require training in modern assessment techniques, which can pose logistical and financial hurdles. The absence of a culture of continuous improvement further complicates the situation, as institutions may not prioritize regular evaluations of their programs and practices. However, there are significant prospects for enhancing quality assurance within the framework of the HEC policy. By adopting a comprehensive quality assurance system that includes regular audits, feedback mechanisms, and peer reviews, universities can foster a culture of accountability and excellence. Collaborating with international accrediting bodies can also provide valuable insights into best practices and help align local standards with global benchmarks. Furthermore, investing in faculty development programs focused on assessment strategies can empower educators to adopt innovative evaluation methods that reflect student learning more accurately. By addressing these challenges and capitalizing on the prospects for improvement, institutions can enhance the overall quality of education, ultimately leading to better outcomes for students and the workforce (Akram & Zafar, 2023).

The integrity and reputation of higher education institutions (HEIs) depend on the effectiveness of their Quality Assurance (QA) and assessment processes. In Pakistan, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has implemented a range of initiatives to enhance the quality of HEIs. These efforts focus on establishing accreditation standards, developing faculty capabilities, and promoting curriculum innovation, ultimately contributing to the advancement of academic excellence in the country (HEC, 2023).

2.11 Indicators of Quality Education

According to the content of the HEC, 2020 policy following indicators of quality education were mentioned:

1. Passing out ratio
2. Student-teacher ratios

3. Infrastructure and facilities
4. Curriculum coverage and compliance
5. Teacher qualifications and training
6. Student performance in exams and assessments
7. Accreditation and affiliation status
8. Research output and publications (for higher education)
9. Internships and job placements (for professional programs)
10. Student satisfaction and feedback

According to the revised HEC 2023 Policy indicators of quality education are as follow:

1. Learning outcomes and competencies
2. Student-centered learning and engagement
3. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
4. Entrepreneurship and innovation
5. Community service and social responsibility
6. Globalization and internationalization
7. Technology integration and digital literacy
8. Soft skills and emotional intelligence
9. Research and innovation output
10. Employability

2.12 Quality Education

Quality education is a transformative learning experience that fosters academic excellence, personal growth, and social responsibility among students. It is a student-centered approach that provides relevant, engaging, inclusive learning experiences, and empowering individuals to reach their full potential. Quality education is delivered by qualified and passionate educators by utilizing research-based methods and resources in a supportive and motivating environment. Quality Education emphasizes promoting critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, among students for their personal and professional growth. Through continuous assessment and feedback, quality education ensures that students achieve the desired learning outcomes, to

develop them into active citizens, lifelong learners, and positive contributors to the society. Factors affecting the quality of education include socio-economic factors, cultural factors, availability of infrastructural facilities, staffing, class size, parental involvement, technological devices, in-service programs, teaching methods, pedagogy, assessment, evaluation practices, community involvement, support, government policies and funding (Aamir & Sharjeel, 2020).

Quality education is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various dimensions. To ensure effective learning outcomes, equity, and relevance, several key indicators must be present. These indicators serve as benchmarks for evaluating the quality of education. Indicators of quality education can vary by context, but several key factors are commonly recognized as essential in assessing the effectiveness of educational systems. Here are some important indicators of Quality Education:

i. Curriculum Relevance:

The curriculum should align with current industry needs and societal demands, preparing students for real-world challenges (HEC, 2023).

ii. Faculty Qualifications:

The education level, experience, and ongoing professional development of faculty members are crucial to delivering high-quality instruction.

iii. Teaching Methods:

Innovative and varied teaching methodologies that engage students and promote active learning contribute to educational quality.

iv. Student Engagement:

High levels of student participation in classroom activities and overall engagement with the learning process indicate a supportive educational environment.

v. Assessment Practices:

Effective and fair assessment methods that accurately measure student learning outcomes and provide meaningful feedback are essential.

vi. Learning Resources:

Access to quality educational resources—such as libraries, laboratories, and technology—enhances the learning experience.

vii. Graduation and Retention Rates:

High graduation rates and student retention indicate the effectiveness of support services and the overall quality of the educational experience.

viii. Student Satisfaction:

Surveys and feedback from students regarding their educational experience can provide valuable insights into the quality of education (Rehman & Bibi, 2023).

ix. Post-Graduation Employment:

The employability of graduates and their success in the job market serve as a critical measure of the relevance and quality of education received.

x. Accreditation Status:

Institutional or program accreditation by reputable bodies ensures that educational offerings meet established standards of quality.

xi. Teacher Quality and Professional Development:

Educators play a vital role in shaping learning outcomes. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that teachers possess the necessary qualifications, training, and ongoing professional development opportunities (UNESCO, 2017).

xii. Inclusive Education:

Quality education should be accessible to all, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, or disability. Policies and initiatives that support marginalized groups are crucial in promoting equity (Weiland et al., 2021).

xiii. Supportive Learning Environment:

A safe, supportive, and well-equipped learning environment is essential for student success. Access to basic amenities, such as clean water and sanitation, also contributes to improved learning outcomes.

xiv. Relevant Curriculum:

Education should align with the needs of society, the labor market, and technological advancements. Curricula should emphasize critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills to prepare students for an ever-changing world.

xv. Family and Community Engagement:

The involvement of parents and the community in education can significantly enhance student motivation and performance. Partnerships between schools and local organizations can provide valuable learning opportunities (Epstein, 2011).

xvi. Effective Governance:

Strong leadership, accountability, and evidence-based policies are necessary for ensuring quality education. Government investment in education plays a critical role in promoting educational excellence.

By focusing on these indicators, educational institutions can better assess and improve the quality of education they provide.

2.13 Academia and Industry Partnerships

Employability is a fundamental outcome of higher education, and the policy aims to ensure that graduates possess the skills and competencies demanded by the job market. To achieve this, universities must forge strong partnerships with industry stakeholders, which can facilitate curriculum development that aligns with current labor market needs. Collaborating with businesses allows institutions to gain insights into the specific skills and knowledge that employers prioritize, enabling them to tailor educational programs accordingly. Moreover, these partnerships can provide students with valuable internship and job placement opportunities, enhancing their practical experience and increasing their employability upon graduation. However, challenges such as a lack of communication between academia and industry, and limited resources for establishing these partnerships may hinder effective implementation. Despite these obstacles, the prospects for enhancing employability through industry collaboration are promising. By creating advisory boards that include industry representatives and fostering cooperative education programs, universities can bridge the gap between education and employment. Such initiatives not only enhance the relevance of academic programs but also promote a culture of continuous improvement within institutions. Ultimately, prioritizing employability and industry partnerships within the HEC undergraduate policy framework can significantly contribute to producing a workforce that is well-equipped to meet the challenges of a dynamic global economy (Saeed & Mehmood, 2022).

2.14 Success and Equality in Higher Education

Success in this context refers not only to academic achievement but also to the ability of graduates to thrive in their professional lives. To foster this success, the policy encourages the adoption of inclusive teaching practices and support services that cater to diverse student needs, ensuring that all learners, regardless of their socio-economic background, can access quality education. However, achieving equality poses significant challenges, including disparities in resources among institutions, particularly between urban and rural areas. Many universities in remote regions struggle with inadequate infrastructure, limited faculty qualifications, and fewer opportunities for student engagement, which can hinder their ability to provide a high-quality educational experience. The HEC policy seeks to address these challenges by promoting equitable funding models and encouraging partnerships between institutions to share resources and expertise. Furthermore, targeted outreach programs can help attract underrepresented groups, including women and marginalized communities, into higher education. By fostering an environment that values diversity and inclusion, the policy aims not only to enhance individual success but also to contribute to a more equitable society. Ultimately, prioritizing success and equality in higher education will empower a broader spectrum of the population, facilitating social mobility and economic development, and ensuring that all students have the opportunity to realize their full potential in a rapidly evolving world (Annala, 2020).

2.15 Faculty Research and Innovations

Encouraging faculty members to engage in research not only enhances their teaching effectiveness but also cultivates a culture of inquiry and critical thinking among students. The policy aims to facilitate a research-oriented environment by providing funding opportunities, resources, and support for faculty members to pursue innovative projects. However, challenges such as limited research funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of collaboration between institutions can impede the advancement of research initiatives. Addressing these barriers is crucial for fostering an environment where faculty can thrive as researchers. Moreover, promoting interdisciplinary research can lead to innovative solutions that address complex societal issues, thereby enhancing the relevance of academic work. The HEC policy encourages partnerships between universities and industries, facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technology, which can spur innovation and contribute to economic development.

By incorporating research into the undergraduate curriculum, faculty can inspire students to engage in critical thinking and problem-solving, preparing them for future challenges. Additionally, recognizing and rewarding faculty achievements in research can motivate educators to pursue excellence. Ultimately, prioritizing faculty research and innovation within the HEC undergraduate policy framework not only elevates the quality of education but also positions universities as key players in driving societal progress and fostering a knowledge-based economy in Pakistan.

2.16 Comparison between Previous Policies

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan introduced a new Undergraduate policy in 2023. The new HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 introduces significant changes as compared to the previous policy. The new HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 has introduced capstone projects, experimental learning, and presentations, whereas, the previous policy emphasizes on traditional exams and written assessments. The new policy makes entrepreneurship education mandatory, recognizing its importance in the contemporary workforce. Whereas, the previous policy did not have this requirement. The new policy introduces a more flexible and interdisciplinary approach to curriculum design, allowing students to pursue double specializations and elective courses. In contrast, the previous policy had a more rigid curriculum structure with limited flexibility. The new policy adopts a CGPA-based system whereas, the previous policy categorized students into grades or divisions. The new policy has increased the passing marks to 60% for MPhil and 70% for PhD programs, whereas, the previous policy had lower passing marks of 60% for MPhil and 65% for PhD.

The new policy requires a 3-credit hour compulsory internship in AD (Associate Degree programs) and BS programs (Bachelor of Science programs), and general education subjects have been made mandatory for the first four semesters. Whereas, the previous policy was not demanding compulsory internship in AD (Associate Degree programs) and BS (Bachelor of Science programs) and general education subjects were not mandatory for the first four semesters. Furthermore, practical learning labs have been removed, and the new policy is focusing on academic work, research, and critical thinking skills. While, the previous policy was practical learning labs, including sports and youth clubs, were part of the undergraduate program, and the focus was more on traditional teaching methods rather than research and critical thinking skills. The previous policy had its strengths and weaknesses.

Therefore, it's concluded that the new policy aims to address the challenges and build on the prospects, enhancing the quality of undergraduate education in Pakistan to prepare students for the contemporary workforce and societal needs. In contrast to the previous policy, which had a more rigid structure with less emphasis on innovation, flexibility, and student-centered learning, the revised 2023 policy offers a more dynamic approach (Fatima et al., 2020).

2.17 Comparison of CBE (Competency Based Education) Theory with other Education Policies

The earlier Higher Education Commission (HEC) undergraduate policies, particularly the 2006 and 2013 curriculum frameworks, laid the foundation for Pakistan's modern undergraduate education system but were largely discipline-specific and lacked a cohesive structure for general education and interdisciplinary learning. The HEC Undergraduate Education Policy 2006 introduced the four-year Bachelor of Studies (BS) degree in response to global academic standards, replacing the older two-year BA/BSc programs. However, it placed minimal emphasis on soft skills, critical thinking, or civic education, and general education courses were neither clearly defined nor credit-hour specific (HEC, 2006). The policy primarily focused on subject specialization and technical proficiency within individual disciplines. Similarly, the HEC Revised Curriculum of 2013 updated the disciplinary content for various fields like Computer Science and Engineering but did not introduce significant structural changes to promote broader learning outcomes or competency-based education (HEC, 2013). There was no standardized requirement for internships, capstone projects, or interdisciplinary learning, and most universities implemented them arbitrarily.

In 2020, HEC attempted a significant policy shift by introducing the Undergraduate Education Policy 2020, which aimed to modernize undergraduate education by mandating general education (45 credit hours), interdisciplinary coursework, internships, and a capstone project. However, this policy faced strong resistance from universities and was ultimately not implemented due to concerns about institutional capacity, faculty readiness, and unclear execution strategies (Ahmed & Siddiqui, 2022). As a result, the policy was revised and replaced by the HEC Undergraduate Education Policy 2023, which retained many of the core ideas of the 2020 policy but introduced more flexible and phased implementation mechanisms. The 2023 policy mandates 120–144 credit hours, including 30 credit hours of structured general education, a minimum of 72 in

major-specific courses, 12 in allied or interdisciplinary areas, and 6 credit hours allocated to a mandatory internship and a capstone project (HEC, 2023). Compared to the earlier policies, the 2023 policy marks a substantial shift toward competency-based education, interdisciplinary exposure, and real-world preparedness—aligning Pakistan’s undergraduate education system more closely with global academic and employment standards (Yousaf & Qureshi, 2023).

2.18 Review of Higher Education Policy UK, USA, SWEDEN, NORWAY

A comparative review of higher education policies in the UK, USA, Sweden, and Norway provides valuable insights for the implementation of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) undergraduate policy in Pakistan in 2023. In the UK, the emphasis on quality assurance through rigorous accreditation processes ensures that institutions meet high educational standards, which could inform similar frameworks in Pakistan to enhance accountability. The UK's Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) enforces rigorous standards through its Quality Code (2024), emphasizing student-centered approaches, sustainability, and partnerships. Aligned with European guidelines, this framework ensures academic excellence, credibility, and global recognition through regular reviews, data-driven evaluations, and continuous improvement. By prioritizing student engagement and inclusivity, the QAA fosters a culture of quality assurance, enhancing the reputation of UK higher education worldwide. In contrast, Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) has launched the Pakistan Precepts, Standards and Guidelines (PSG-2023), a comprehensive framework developed in collaboration with the British Council and informed by global best practices. The revised Quality Assurance framework encompasses 16 rigorous standards, spanning curriculum design, research excellence, governance, technology integration, and employability skills. With an emphasis on institutional classification through thorough evaluations, HEC aims to enhance quality and accountability in Pakistan's higher education sector. Recognizing quality assurance and governance as pressing challenges, HEC's initiative seeks to drive transformative change and excellence in the country's academic landscape.

The USA's diverse funding models, including federal grants and state support, highlight the importance of financial resources in promoting access and equity in higher education, suggesting that Pakistan could benefit from exploring varied funding mechanisms to support under-resourced institutions. Globally, higher education funding models exhibit significant diversity (Altbach et al., 2024). The United States exemplifies

a multifaceted approach, leveraging federal grants, state appropriations, and institutional revenue to foster access, equity, and excellence (Lederman, 2024). Notably, state governments allocated over \$126 billion to public higher education in 2023, representing a 10% increase from the previous year (Knox, 2024). Initiatives like Minnesota's "North Star Promise" provide tuition-free education to low- and middle-income students, while equity-based funding formulas promote diversity (Rosinger et al., 2024). In contrast, Pakistan's higher education sector is heavily reliant on government grants, with funding averaging 0.22-0.25% of GDP, significantly below UNESCO's recommended 4-6% (HEC, 2024; UNESCO, 2023). Chronic underfunding, stagnant budgets, and inflation impede institutional development (Noor, 2024). To address these challenges, Pakistan may consider exploring diverse funding models, including public-private partnerships and performance-based funding, while prioritizing equity and local context (Nation, 2024; The News, 2024).

Sweden's approach prioritizes student-centered learning and inclusivity, focusing on equal access for all demographics, which aligns with HEC's goals of fostering success and equality. This model can inspire initiatives aimed at broadening participation among marginalized groups in Pakistan. Sweden's higher education model prioritizes student-centered learning, inclusivity, and equal access, aligning with the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) objectives of promoting success and equality. Swedish universities emphasize autonomous learning, collaboration, and critical thinking, fostering diverse student populations' growth (Swedish Council & UKÄ, 2024). Strong public investment in tertiary education has yielded rising attainment rates and institutional quality, driven by a national quality assurance framework embedding gender equality and accessibility (European Commission, 2024). Lifelong learning initiatives, alternative access routes, and support for students with disabilities further reinforce inclusivity. Pakistan's HEC can draw lessons from Sweden's approach, adapting policies to prioritize student-led learning, inclusive admissions, and support for marginalized learners, potentially broadening participation and improving outcomes in under-resourced institutions.

Norway's research landscape is characterized by robust faculty-led initiatives and academia-industry partnerships. A NOK 300 million scheme (2025-2028) aims to attract top scholars, focusing on strategic areas like climate, health, and AI. National grants, such as UTFORSK (NOK 150 million in 2024) and NORPART (NOK 35 million per annum), support global partnerships. Innovation hubs like NTNU's collaboration with SINTEF

and Stimuli facilitate research translation. In contrast, Pakistani universities face challenges in faculty-led research and industry partnerships, despite HEC's reforms (HEC, 2025). Limited faculty incentives and resources hinder innovation beyond traditional outputs (Reddit user, 2024).

| Aspect | UK | USA | Sweden | Norway | Relevance to Pakistan |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| Quality Assurance | Rigorous accreditation processes | Diverse quality assurance mechanisms | National quality assurance for programs | Strong emphasis on research quality | Implement similar accreditation frameworks |
| Funding Models | Combination of public and private funding | Federal and state grants, loans | Publicly funded, no tuition fees | Funded through taxes, no tuition fees | Explore varied funding mechanisms for equity |
| Inclusivity | Focus on widening participation | Affirmative action policies | Strong emphasis on equal access | Policies promoting access for all | Initiatives to broaden participation among marginalized groups |
| Research and Innovation | Emphasis on research impact | Significant funding for research grants | Strong focus on research and development | Close ties between academia and industry | Foster faculty-led research initiatives and partnerships |
| Student-Centered Learning | Emphasis on student satisfaction | Diverse teaching methods | Student-centered pedagogies | Collaborative learning approaches | Adopt student-centered approaches in teaching |

This table provides a clear overview of how different countries approach key aspects of higher education policy, offering insights that can inform the HEC's implementation strategy (OECD, 2023).

2.19 Comparison between QEC and QACS

The comparison between Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC) and Quality Assurance Committees (QACS) in the context of the implementation of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) undergraduate policy in 2023 highlights distinct yet complementary roles in enhancing educational quality in Pakistan. QECs are established within higher education institutions to oversee the internal quality assurance processes, focusing on systematic evaluation and improvement of academic programs. Their primary functions include conducting assessments, collecting feedback from stakeholders, and implementing quality enhancement initiatives. This internal structure allows for a more agile response to emerging challenges within specific institutions, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. In contrast, QACS operate at a broader level, often comprising representatives from multiple institutions and external stakeholders, to develop national standards and policies for quality assurance. They are responsible for establishing guidelines that align with HEC objectives and for monitoring compliance across institutions. QACS plays a critical role in ensuring that the quality assurance practices of QECs are consistent and meet national benchmarks (Higher Education Commission, 2023).

While QECs focus on internal processes, QACS emphasize external validation and accountability. The effective collaboration between these two entities is essential for a holistic approach to quality enhancement. By leveraging the strengths of both QECs and QACS, the HEC can create a robust framework that not only addresses immediate quality concerns but also fosters long-term educational excellence. This synergy is crucial for the successful implementation of the undergraduate policy, ensuring that educational institutions meet the evolving needs of students and the job market. QECs focus on internal quality enhancement, while QACs focus on external quality assurance and compliance. QECs develop and implement quality assurance policies, conduct self-assessment, identify areas for improvement, and facilitate quality-related activities, while QACs oversee the implementation of quality assurance policies, conduct audits and reviews, and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. QECs consist of internal stakeholders, including faculty members, administrators, and students, while QACs

consist of external experts, including academics, industry professionals, and regulatory representatives. QECs report to the institution's administration or academic council, while QACs report to external stakeholders, including accreditation agencies, regulatory bodies, and government authorities.

| Aspect | Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC) | Quality Assurance Committees (QACS) | Relevance to HEC Implementation |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Purpose | Focus on internal quality enhancement | Develop national standards for quality assurance | Ensures alignment with HEC objectives |
| Scope | Operate within individual institutions | Operate across multiple institutions | Facilitates consistency in quality assurance practices |
| Functions | Conduct assessments, collect feedback, and implement initiatives | Monitor compliance, establish guidelines | Provides a framework for accountability and improvement |
| Level of Operation | Internal, institution-specific | External, national-level | Enhances comprehensive quality assurance strategies |
| Stakeholder Involvement | Primarily internal stakeholders (faculty, students) | Includes representatives from various institutions | Promotes collaboration and shared standards |
| Response Agility | Quick adaptation to local challenges | Broader oversight and policy development | Balances immediate needs with long-term objectives |
| Focus | Continuous improvement of academic programs | Compliance with national benchmarks | Supports both immediate quality and overarching goals |

This table provides a clear overview of the roles and functions of QECs and QACS, illustrating how each contributes to the effective implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy. QECs and QACs serve complementary purposes in ensuring the quality of academic institutions. While QECs focus on internal quality enhancement, QACs ensure external quality assurance and compliance with regulatory standards (Higher Education Commission, 2023).

2.20 Challenges Related to Physical, Financial, Human Resources, and Academic Challenges

The implementation of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) undergraduate policy in 2023 faces several significant challenges across various dimensions, including physical, financial, human resources, and academic aspects. Physically, many institutions grapple with inadequate infrastructure, outdated facilities, and insufficient technological resources, which hinder the delivery of quality education. This is particularly pronounced in rural areas where access to modern educational tools and environments is limited. Financially, the reliance on government funding, coupled with budget constraints, poses a substantial barrier to enhancing educational quality and expanding access. Many universities struggle with limited financial resources, which affects their ability to invest in faculty development, research initiatives, and student support services.

In terms of human resources, there is often a shortage of qualified faculty members, particularly in specialized fields, leading to imbalances in student-to-faculty ratios and affecting the overall educational experience. Faculty professional development opportunities are also often inadequate, limiting their ability to adopt innovative teaching practices. Academically, the challenges include aligning curricula with industry needs and ensuring that programs remain relevant in a rapidly changing job market. Additionally, the lack of effective assessment and evaluation mechanisms can hinder the identification of areas needing improvement. Addressing these multifaceted challenges is crucial for the successful implementation of the HEC's undergraduate policy, as they directly impact the quality of education and the ability of institutions to produce competent graduates who can contribute meaningfully to society (Higher Education Commission, 2023).

Physical Challenges

1. Inadequate Infrastructure:

Many institutions, particularly in rural areas, struggle with outdated facilities, insufficient technological resources, and inadequate classrooms.

2. Limited Access to Modern Educational Tools:

Rural areas often lack access to modern educational tools, such as digital libraries, online resources, and state-of-the-art laboratories.

3. Insufficient Technological Infrastructure:

Universities face challenges in providing reliable internet connectivity, modern computer systems, and other essential technological resources.

Financial Challenges

1. Reliance on Government Funding:

Universities rely heavily on government funding, which is often inadequate and unpredictable.

2. Budget Constraints:

Limited financial resources hinder universities' ability to invest in faculty development, research initiatives, and student support services.

3. Inadequate Funding for Research:

Insufficient funding for research initiatives limits universities' ability to produce high-quality research and innovate.

Human Resources Challenges

1. Shortage of Qualified Faculty:

Universities face a shortage of qualified faculty members, particularly in specialized fields.

2. Imbalanced Student-to-Faculty Ratios:

The shortage of faculty members leads to imbalanced student-to-faculty ratios, affecting the overall educational experience.

3. Inadequate Faculty Development Opportunities:

Limited opportunities for faculty professional development hinder their ability to adopt innovative teaching practices (Higher Education Commission, 2023).

Academic Challenges

1. Aligning Curricula with Professional standards:

Universities struggle to align their curricula with industry needs, making it challenging for graduates to find employment.

2. Ensuring Program Relevance:

Rapidly changing job markets require universities to continuously update their programs to ensure relevance.

3. Ineffective Assessment and Evaluation Mechanisms:

The lack of effective assessment and evaluation mechanisms hinders universities' ability to identify areas needing improvement (Mahmood, 2024).

Addressing these multifaceted challenges is crucial for the successful implementation of the HEC's undergraduate policy. By overcoming these challenges, universities can enhance the quality of education, produce competent graduates, and contribute meaningfully to society.

2.21 Critical Summary of Literature Review

This research discussed the need to redesign university curricula to prepare students for the knowledge-based and service-based economies emerging globally. It reviews the literature on curriculum development in higher education, highlighting key considerations. The review finds that successful curriculum design must involve input policymakers. It needs to balance traditional subject-based learning with the development of broader analytical, cultural, and practical competencies. Curriculum planning should be strategic, with clear goals, and responsive to evolving social and economic demands. There is often a lack of common understanding about curriculum objectives and success measures. While participatory approaches are beneficial, achieving consensus on goals can be challenging and time-consuming.

It suggests that over-reliance on creating new courses, rather than optimizing existing ones, has hindered curriculum innovation. It compares the previous and new undergraduate policies of Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC). Key changes include the introduction of capstone projects, mandatory entrepreneurship education, more interdisciplinary flexibility, a shift to CGPA-based grading, and increased emphasis on research, critical thinking, and practical training. It argues that the new HEC policy represents a positive shift towards a more dynamic, student-centered, and socially

relevant undergraduate curriculum. However, it acknowledges the difficulties in implementing such reforms, which require navigating complex power dynamics and securing buy-in from diverse stakeholders. The success of the new policy will depend on its effective execution and the ability to address persistent challenges in Pakistani higher education (Higher Education Commission, 2023).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the research design, population of the study, sample of the study, sampling technique, instrumentation, data collection, and procedure of data analysis. The details are presented in the next section.

3.1 Research Design

A sequential research design using a mixed-method approach was used to collect the data. Interviews were conducted with chairpersons/HODs of both universities (NUML & IIUI), and the questionnaire was filled out by teachers and program coordinators of selected departments from two universities. This research design employed a sequential mixed-method approach to gather comprehensive data from diverse sources and perspectives, fostering a richer understanding of the research topic. By building upon findings from each phase, we were able to inform subsequent phases and create a more complete picture of the phenomenon under investigation. Mixed methods research design was used to provide a comprehensive understanding of HEC policy implementation, combining quantitative metrics such as enrollment, graduation rates, student retention rates, research output, and institutional rankings with qualitative insights including stakeholder perceptions, faculty experiences, student feedback, challenges, and institutional capacity building efforts, to enhance validity and inform decision-making.

3.2 Population

The population of the study consisted of 18 program coordinators, 16 chairpersons/HODs, and 680 teachers of the following common departments ((English, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Teacher Education, Educational Leadership & Management, Media & Communication Studies, Economics & Finance, Mathematics & Statistics) from two universities (NUML, & IIUI). The data were obtained from websites of universities.

Table 1*Population of the study*

| IIUI | | | | | NUML | | |
|----------|---|----------|------|--------------|----------|------|--------------|
| Sr.# | Department | Teachers | HODs | Coordinators | Teachers | HODs | Coordinators |
| 1 | English | 51 | 1 | 1 | 104 | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | Computer Science | 43 | 1 | 1 | 37 | 1 | 1 |
| 3 | Software Engineering | 41 | 1 | 1 | 38 | 1 | 1 |
| 4 | Electrical Engineering | 47 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 1 |
| 5 | Teacher Education & Education Leadership Management | 70 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 1 |
| 6 | Media & Communication Studies | 40 | 1 | 1 | 34 | 1 | 1 |
| 7 | Economics & Finance | 35 | 1 | 1 | 40 | 1 | 1 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----|---|---|-----|----|---|
| 8 | Mathematics | 38 | 1 | 1 | 39 | 1 | 1 |
| | & Statistics | | | | | | |
| | Total | 365 | 9 | 9 | 315 | 10 | 8 |

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The researcher used a simple random sampling technique in the case of teachers and census sampling technique was used in the case of chairpersons/HODs and program coordinators to collect the data from the sample. The Chairpersons /HODs were requested to provide a list of teachers who were involved in implementing the revised HEC undergraduate policy 2023 for data collection. I used different sampling techniques because teachers (a larger group) were sampled using simple random sampling, while chairpersons and program coordinators (a smaller, more accessible group) were surveyed through census sampling. This approach ensured a representative sample of teachers, while capturing the unique perspectives of chairpersons and program coordinators. By using different sampling techniques, the study increased accuracy, reliability, and captured diverse perspectives.

Table 2

Sample of the study

| Sr# | Category | Population | Sample |
|-----|----------------------|------------|--------|
| 1 | Program Coordinators | 18 | 18 |
| 2 | Teachers | 680 | 248 |
| 3 | Chairpersons/HODs | 16 | 16 |
| 4 | Total | 714 | 282 |

3.4 Instruments

The questionnaire was developed based on different indicators that appeared in the previous research literature on the Likert five-point scale to collect data about

challenges. The major indicators for quantitative data instrument development include (financial resources, managing program data, communication with faculty members, credit hour requirements, entrance test marks, student assessment methodologies, faculty training program, lack of collaboration among teachers, communication among teachers, integrating PLOs into course objectives, departmental meetings facilitate discussions, familiar with the course registration requirements, creating a creative environment and focusing on research and innovative skills). The questionnaire included close-ended questions. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the teachers and program coordinators. A semi-structured interview was conducted to collect data from the chairpersons/HODs. The major indicators for qualitative data instrument development include (faculty performance evaluation, student learning assessment, assessment and evaluation, program specification development, quality education, policy implementation, faculty motivation and course alignment).

3.5 Procedure (Validity, Reliability, Pilot Testing)

In this study, the validity of the instruments was checked through experts (Faculty members) 'opinions. Changes were made according to their suggestions. A pilot test was conducted to check the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was checked through Cronbach's alpha.

3.6 Data Collection

For quantitative data collection, a questionnaire was distributed to the coordinators and teachers. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with chairpersons/HODs. The researcher introduced herself, establishing a professional and respectful tone for the interaction. This initial step helps build trust and sets the stage for a productive conversation. Next, the researcher likely explained the purpose of the interview, ensured confidentiality, and obtained consent from the participant. This step is crucial in establishing a comfortable environment, allowing the participant to feel informed and willing to share their thoughts and experiences. After the researcher clearly outlined the purpose and objectives of the study, ensuring the participant understood the context and scope of the discussion. This transparency helps build trust and facilitates informed participation. Before recording the interview, the researcher obtained prior consent from the participants. This ensured that the participant was aware of and agreed to the recording, respecting their privacy and rights. Thereafter, the researcher conducted an interview with the chairpersons/HODs and noted down their

responses. The researcher also obtained permission to record their answers. The interview concludes with the researcher thanking the participant for their time and insights. This final step includes acknowledging their contribution, verifying that all essential information has been gathered, and outlining any subsequent actions.

3.7 Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the quantitative data by calculating mean, percentage and standard deviation through applying SPSS Version 21. Qualitative data were analyzed by making a thematic analysis. Themes and sub-themes were developed keeping in view the responses recorded through qualitative data.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was sought from faculty members and the HODs. Data was kept confidential. Researcher ensured the respondents of the study that collected data were used only for research purposes. The researcher builds a relationship of trust between themselves, the program coordinators, the teachers, and the Chairpersons/HODs before collecting data. The researcher obtained permission from university authorities and concerned departments to collect data from the program coordinators, teachers, and the Chairpersons/HODs. Similarity index and plagiarism were checked.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This chapter presented a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of data gathered through a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The study's population comprised 18 coordinators, 18 chairpersons, and 248 teachers, who participated in the data collection process. To facilitate a seamless data collection experience, the researcher personally visited the teachers and coordinators, providing a detailed overview of the questionnaire prior to administration. The coordinators and teachers demonstrated ease and efficiency in completing the questionnaire. Quantitative analysis involved administering a structured questionnaire comprising 12 Likert-scale statements to program coordinators and teachers. In contrast, qualitative analysis entailed conducting semi-structured interviews with chairpersons/HODs, yielding rich, comprehensive insights. During the interviews, the researcher secured permission to record responses, ensuring accuracy and reliability in thematic analysis. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were utilized to analyze the questionnaire data using SPSS Version 20, providing valuable insights into central tendency and response variability. Thematic analysis of interview data involved identifying patterns, developing themes, and interpreting them in relation to the research objectives. This chapter presented a comprehensive discussion of the findings, integrating both quantitative and qualitative results. The data was presented in a tabular format to enhance clarity, readability, and comprehension of the respondents' perspectives.

4.1 Analysis of Questionnaires

Challenges of Program coordinators

Table 4.1

Limited financial resources

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 7 | 38.9% | | |
| A | 7 | 38.9% | | |
| N | 2 | 11% | 2.06 | 1.259 |
| DA | 0 | 0% | | |
| SDA | 2 | 11% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 4.1 depicts that (78%) program coordinators agreed with the statement that Limited financial resources provided to the universities hinder the implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023 and (11%) disagreed with the statement that Limited financial resources provided to the universities hinder the implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023. The value of mean score (2.06) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 1.3 units. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 1.3 units from the mean score of 2.1.

Table 4.2

Managing program data/evaluation is challenging

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 4 | 22.2% | | |
| A | 9 | 50.0% | | |
| N | 3 | 16.7% | 2.17 | .924 |
| DA | 2 | 11.1% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 4.2 depicts that (72%) program coordinators agreed with the statement that Managing program data/evaluation is challenging regarding the importance of HEC undergraduate policy 2023 and 11% disagreed with the statement that Managing program data/evaluation is challenging regarding the importance of HEC undergraduate policy 2023. The value of mean score (2.17) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.924. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.924 units from the mean score of 2.3.

Table 4.3

Effective communication with faculty members is difficult

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 2 | 11.1% | | |
| A | 7 | 38.9% | | |
| N | 4 | 22.2% | 2.72 | 1.127 |
| DA | 4 | 22.2% | | |
| SDA | 1 | 5.6% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 4.3 depicts that (50%) program coordinators agreed with the statement that effective communication with faculty members is difficult for the effective implementation of HEC undergraduate policy 2023 and (27%) disagreed with the statement that effective communication with faculty members is difficult for the effective implementation of HEC undergraduate policy 2023. The value of mean score (2.72) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 1.13 units. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 1.13 units from the mean score of 2.7.

Table 4.4*Coordinating with other departments is difficult to discuss*

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 6 | 33.3% | | |
| A | 6 | 33.3% | | |
| N | 1 | 5% | 2.39 | 1.420 |
| DA | 3 | 16.7% | | |
| SDA | 2 | 11.1% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 44 depicts that program coordinators (66%) agreed, with the statement that Coordinating with other departments is difficult to discuss and implement the HEC undergraduate policy 2023 and (27%) disagreed with the statement that Coordinating with other departments is difficult to discuss and implement the HEC undergraduate policy 2023. The value of mean score (2.39) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is: 1.42 units. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 1.42 units from the mean score of 2.4.

Table 4.5*Faculty members are aware of the requirements*

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 2 | 11.1% | | |
| A | 11 | 61.1% | | |
| N | 3 | 16.7% | 2.28 | .826 |
| DA | 2 | 11.1% | | |
| SDA | 0 | 0% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 4.5 depicts that (72%) program coordinators agreed with the statement that

faculty members are aware of the requirements of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 and (11%) disagreed with the statement that faculty members are aware of the requirements of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. The value of mean score (2.28) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.83 units. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.83 units from the mean score of 2.3.

Table 4.6

The credit hour requirements outlined in HEC's undergraduate Policy 2023

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 1 | 5.6% | | |
| A | 10 | 55.6% | | |
| N | 3 | 16.71% | 2.67 | 1.138 |
| DA | 2 | 11.1% | | |
| SDA | 2 | 11.11% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 4.6 depicts that (60%) program coordinators agreed with the statement that the credit hour requirements outlined in HEC's undergraduate Policy 2023 are manageable for students and (22%) disagreed with the statement that the credit hour requirements outlined in HEC's undergraduate Policy 2023 are manageable for students. The value of the mean score (2.67) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is: 1.14 units. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 1.14 units from the mean score of 2.7.

Table 4.7

The entrance test marks as per HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 accurately

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 3 | 16.7% | | |
| A | 9 | 50.0% | | |
| N | 4 | 22.2% | | |
| DA | 2 | 11.1% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | 2.28 | .895 |

Table 4.7 depicts that (66%) program coordinators agreed with the statement that the entrance test marks as per HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 accurately reflect students' academic abilities and (11%) disagreed with the statement that the entrance test marks as per HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 accurately reflect students' academic abilities. The value of the mean score (2.28) favored the statement. The Standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.895. This indicates that the responses are relatively consistent, with a spread of approximately 0.90 units from the mean score of 2.28.

Table 4.8

The HEC 2023 policy's curriculum requirements are clear

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| A | 7 | 38.9% | | |
| N | 8 | 44.4% | 2.78 | .732 |
| DA | 3 | 16.7% | | |
| SDA | 0 | 0% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 4.8 depicts that (39%) agreed with the statement that the HEC 2023 policy's curriculum requirements are clear. and (16%) disagreed with the statement that

the HEC 2023 policy's curriculum requirements are clear. The value of the mean score (2.78) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.73 units. This indicates that the responses are relatively consistent, with a spread of approximately 0.73 units from the mean score of 2.8.

Table 4.9

Mismanagement affects the implementation of HEC undergraduate Policy

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std.Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|---------------|
| SA | 4 | 22.2% | | |
| A | 8 | 44.4% | | |
| N | 2 | 11.1% | 2.44 | 1.294 |
| DA | 2 | 11.1% | | |
| SDA | 2 | 11.1% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 4.9 depicts that (22%) program coordinators strongly agreed, (44%) agreed, (11%) neutral, (11%) disagreed, and (11%) strongly disagreed with the statement that mismanagement affects the implementation of HEC undergraduate Policy. The value of the mean score (2.44) favored the statement. Thus it is found that a majority (44.4%) of the program coordinators agreed with the statement that mismanagement affects the implementation of the HEC undergraduate Policy.

Table 4.10

HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 verifies program adherence

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 1 | 5.6% | | |
| A | 7 | 38.9% | | |
| N | 7 | 38.9% | 2.72 | 0.958 |
| DA | 2 | 11.1% | | |
| SDA | 1 | 5.6% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 4.10 depicts that (44.6%) program coordinators agreed with the statement

that the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 verifies program adherence to meet the quality expectations. (16.6%) disagreed with the statement that the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 verifies program adherence to meet the quality expectations. The value of the mean score (2.72) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.96 units. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.96 units from the mean score of 2.7.

Table 4.11

Assessment methodologies used in our program

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 3 | 16.7% | | |
| A | 10 | 55.6% | | |
| N | 4 | 22.2% | 2.17 | .786 |
| DA | 1 | 5.6% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 4.11 depicts that (16.7%) program coordinators strongly agreed, (55%) agreed, (22%) neutral, (5.6%) disagreed, and (0%) strongly disagreed with the statement that the assessment methodologies used in our program are aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. The value of the mean score (2.17) favored the statement. Thus it is found that a majority (55.6%) program coordinators agreed with the statement that the assessment methodologies used in our program are aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023.

Table 4.12

Programs are designed according to HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| SA | 4 | 22.2% | 2.278 | 1.019 |
| A | 9 | 50.0% | | |
| N | 3 | 18.8% | | |
| DA | 0 | 0% | | |
| SDA | 2 | 12.5% | | |
| Total | 18 | 100.0% | | |

Table 4.12 depicts that (72.2%) program coordinators agreed with the statement that Programs are designed according to HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 to accommodate diverse student needs and (12%) strongly disagreed with the statement that Programs are designed according to HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 to accommodate diverse student needs. The value of the mean score (2.28) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 1.02 units. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 1.02 units from the mean score of 2.3.

Table 4.13

The faculty training program enhances your teaching and mentoring skills

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 81 | 40.5% | 1.85 | 0.91 |
| A | 87 | 43.5% | | |
| N | 17 | 8.5% | | |
| DA | 11 | 5.5% | | |
| SDA | 4 | 2% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.13 depicts that (85%) teachers agreed with the statement that the faculty training program enhances your teaching and mentoring skills as per HEC undergraduate Policy 2023 and (7%) disagreed with the statement that the faculty training program

enhances your teaching and mentoring skills as per HEC undergraduate Policy 2023. The value of the mean score (1.85) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.91 units. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.91 units from the mean score of 1.9

Table 4.14

The student assessment methodologies used in our program.

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| SA | 55 | 27.5% | | |
| A | 116 | 58% | | |
| N | 25 | 12.5% | 1.905 | 0.857 |
| SD | 1 | 0.5% | | |
| SDA | 3 | 1.5% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.14 depicts that (84%) teachers agreed with the statement that the student assessment methodologies used in our program are aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 and (0.5%) disagreed, and (1.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement that the student assessment methodologies used in our program are aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. The value of the mean score (1.9) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.857. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.86 units from the mean score of 1.9.

Table 4.15

Our program's monitoring and evaluation processes are effective

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 58 | 29% | | |
| A | 69 | 48% | | |
| N | 34 | 17% | 2.02 | 0.863 |
| DA | 8 | 4% | | |
| SDA | 4 | 2% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.15 depicts that (77%) teachers agreed with the statement that Our program's monitoring and evaluation processes are effective and aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 and (6%) disagreed with the statement that Our program's monitoring and evaluation processes are effective and aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. The value of the mean score (2.1) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.863. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.86 units from the mean score of 2.02.

Table 4.16

Lack of collaboration among teachers hinders the effective implementation

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 50 | 25% | 2.18 | 0.863 |
| A | 99 | 49.5% | | |
| N | 25 | 12.5% | | |
| DA | 17 | 8.5% | | |
| SDA | 9 | 4.5% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.16 depicts that (75%) teachers agreed with the statement that Lack of collaboration among teachers hinders the effective implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 and (13%) disagreed with the statement that Lack of collaboration among teachers hinders the effective implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. The value of the mean score (1.9) favored in the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.863. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.9 units from the mean score of 2.2.

Table 4.17

Communication among teachers

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 58 | 29% | 2.72 | 0.958 |
| A | 113 | 56.5% | | |
| N | 18 | 9% | | |
| DA | 7 | 3.5% | | |
| SDA | 4 | 2% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.17 depicts that (86%) teachers agreed with the statement that Communication among teachers regarding the implementation of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 is required and (5.5%) disagreed with the statement that Communication among teachers regarding the implementation of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 is required. The value of the mean score (1.93) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.96. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.96 units from the mean score of 2.8.

Table 4.18

Departmental meetings facilitate discussions

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 59 | 29.5% | | |
| A | 108 | 54% | | |
| N | 21 | 10.5% | 1.93 | 0.758 |
| DA | 12 | 6% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.18 depicts that (29%) teachers strongly agreed, (54%) agreed, (10%) neutral, (6%) disagreed, and (0%) strongly disagreed with the statement that Departmental meetings facilitate discussions on HEC undergraduate Policy 2023 implementation. The value of the mean score (1.93) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 1.93. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.75 units from the mean score of 1.93.

Table 4.19

Integrating PLOs into course objectives remained challenging for teachers.

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| SA | 43 | 21.5% | | |
| A | 79 | 39.5% | | |
| N | 54 | 27% | 2.315 | 0.8503 |
| DA | 20 | 10% | | |
| SDA | 4 | 2% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.19 depicts that (61%) teachers agreed with the statement that Integrating PLOs into course objectives remained challenging for teachers and (12%) disagreed with the statement that Integrating PLOs into course objectives remained challenging for teachers. The value of the mean score (2.32) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.9. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.9 units from the mean score of 2.32.

Table 4.20

The HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 structured breakdown of marks

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| SA | 65 | 32.5% | | |
| A | 98 | 49% | | |
| N | 27 | 13.5% | 1.915 | 0.766 |
| DA | 9 | 4.5% | | |
| SDA | 1 | 0.5% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.20 depicts that (81.5%) teachers agreed and (5%) disagreed with the statement that the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 structured breakdown of marks has helped to refine your institution's assessment framework are enhance student evaluation processes. The value of the mean score (1.92) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.77. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 1.92 units from the mean score of 0.7

Table 4.21

You are familiar with the course registration requirements in the portal

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|------|----------------|
| SA | 76 | 38% | | |
| A | 99 | 49.5% | | |
| N | 13 | 6.5% | 1.82 | 0.801 |
| DA | 9 | 4.5% | | |
| SDA | 3 | 1.5% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.21 depicts that (87.5%) teachers agreed with the course registration requirements in the portal (LMS/CMS) according to the HEC undergraduate policy 2023 and (5.5%) disagreed with the statement that you familiar with the course registration requirements in the portal (LMS/CMS) according to the HEC undergraduate policy 202.3 The value of the mean score (1.82) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.82. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.82 units from the mean score of 1.82.

Table 4.22*Creating a friendly environment for Students is necessary*

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| SA | 68 | 33.8% | | |
| A | 108 | 53.7% | | |
| N | 16 | 8% | 1.815 | 0.787 |
| DA | 7 | 3.5% | | |
| SDA | 1 | 0.5% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.22 depicts that (87.5%) teachers agreed with the statement that creating a friendly environment for Students is necessary under the provisions of the HEC 2023 undergraduate policy and (4%) disagreed with the statement that creating a friendly environment for Students is necessary under the provisions of the HEC 2023 undergraduate policy. The value of the mean score (1.82) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.79. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.792 units from the mean score of 1.82.

Table 4.23*Focusing on research and innovative skills is required*

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| SA | 82 | 41% | | |
| A | 94 | 47% | | |
| N | 17 | 8.5% | 1.755 | 0.763 |
| DA | 5 | 2.5% | | |
| SDA | 2 | 1% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.23 depicts that (88%) teachers agreed with the statement that Focusing on research and innovative skills is required under the provisions of the HEC

undergraduate policy 2023 and (3.5%) disagreed with the statement that Focusing on research and innovative skills is required under the provisions of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023. The value of the mean score (1.76) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.76. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.77 units from the mean score of 1.76.

Table 4.24

Creating a creative environment is necessary for students

| Category | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------|-----------|------------|-------|----------------|
| SA | 92 | 46% | | |
| A | 96 | 48% | | |
| N | 8 | 4% | 1.625 | 0.829 |
| DA | 3 | 1.5% | | |
| SDA | 1 | 0.5% | | |
| Total | 200 | 100% | | |

Table 4.24 depicts that (94%) teachers agreed with the statement that Creating a creative environment is necessary for students under the provisions of undergraduate policy 2023 and (2%) disagreed with the statement that Creating a creative environment is necessary for students under the provisions of undergraduate policy 2023. The value of the mean score (1.63) favored the statement. The standard deviation (Std. Deviation) is 0.83. This indicates that the responses are spread out by approximately 0.83 units from the mean score of 1.63

4.2 Thematic Analysis

Objective 3. To study the Perceptions of the Chairpersons / HODs regarding the contribution of the undergraduate policy 2023 to promote quality education.

Qualitative data were analyzed by themes and subthemes

Themes

1. Lack of transparency and communication
2. Resistance to Change

3. Faculty Development and Support
4. Collaboration and Teamwork
5. Continuous Improvement
6. Student-Centered Approach
7. Accountability and Responsibility
8. Metrics and Measurement Challenges
9. Lack of clear evaluation criteria
10. Time-consuming evaluation process
11. Limited resources and support
12. Assessment of students
13. Grading Pressures
14. Limited proficiency in policy implementation

Theme 1. Lack of communication

Due to inadequate communication, chairpersons face challenges in evaluating faculty performance regarding policy implementation. Some chairpersons find the evaluation criteria unclear, making it difficult to assess faculty performance accurately.

The majority of the chairpersons say that the evaluation criteria for faculty performance regarding policy implementation are unclear, and there is a lack of communication regarding the evaluation process.

Chairpersons highlight a lack of communication regarding the evaluation process, leaving faculty members uninformed about expectations and criteria. This communication gap can foster confusion, mistrust, and anxiety, ultimately affecting faculty performance and motivation.

Theme 2. Resistance to Change

Some chairpersons note that faculty members are resistant to adapting to new policies and evaluation criteria, indicating a reluctance to adjust to changing requirements, and some observe that faculty members are hesitant to change their teaching methods, comfort with traditional approaches, and a distrust of innovative or

unfamiliar techniques.

The majority of the chairpersons say that faculty members are resistant to adapting to new policies, and faculty members are hesitant to change their teaching methods.

This resistance and hesitation can hinder the effective implementation of new policies, ultimately impacting the quality of education and faculty performance.

Theme 3. Faculty Development and Support

Chairpersons emphasize the need for faculty development and support to effectively implement policy. Some chairpersons believe that faculty members require additional training and resources to successfully execute policies.

The majority of the chairpersons say that faculty members need more development and support to implement policies effectively.

Theme 4. Collaboration and Teamwork

They emphasize that faculty members working together towards common goals is crucial for success. By collaborating and sharing knowledge, faculty members can leverage each other's strengths, address challenges, and ultimately achieve better outcomes in policy implementation.

The majority of the chairpersons say that collaboration and teamwork are essential for effective policy implementation, with some noting that faculty members should work together to achieve common goals.

Theme 5. Continuous Improvement

Some Chairpersons emphasize the importance of using the evaluation process as a tool for continuous improvement and encouraging faculty members to reflect on their practice, identifying areas for improvement and taking ownership of their professional development.

The majority of the chairpersons say that faculty members should be encouraged to reflect on their practice and identify areas for improvement.

Theme 6. Student-Centered Approach

The majority of the chairpersons say that faculty members should prioritize student needs and interests.

By doing so, faculty members can create a supportive learning environment that aligns with institutional policies, ultimately enhancing student outcomes and success.

Theme 7. Accountability and Responsibility

The majority of the chairpersons believe that faculty members should be held accountable for implementing policies, emphasizing their role in putting policies into practice. Others argue that chairpersons themselves should take responsibility for ensuring policy implementation, highlighting their leadership role in overseeing and supporting faculty members.

Theme 8. Metrics and Measurement Challenges

Some Chairpersons face difficulties in assessing faculty performance regarding policy implementation. And some struggle to develop effective performance criteria, making it hard to evaluate faculty efforts accurately.

The majority of the Chairpersons say that it is challenging to develop effective metrics to measure faculty performance regarding policy implementation.

Theme 9. Lack of clear evaluation criteria

The majority of the Chairpersons say we struggle to establish clear evaluation criteria for faculty performance regarding policy implementation.

Theme 10. Limited resources and support

Some chairpersons face challenges in assessing faculty performance due to inadequate resources.

The majority of the Chairpersons say that they lack the necessary resources and support to effectively evaluate faculty performance.

Theme 11. Assessment of students

The majority of the chairpersons say that they always focus on student participation, creativity, knowledge, and performance

Theme 12. Grading Pressures

Some Chairpersons say that Teachers need to be flexible. If teachers see students missing grades by just one or two marks, they offer additional opportunities. Teachers often administer a second quiz, giving students another chance. Most teachers also offer re-quizzes. Taking only one quiz can be challenging, but administering re-

quizzes, dividing marks, finalizing grades, setting standards, and recording results is an even bigger challenge for teachers.

The majority of the chairpersons say that teachers are stressed because they have to divide the marks. They also have to give grades.

Theme 13. Time-consuming evaluation process

The evaluation process can be a frightening task for some chairpersons.

The majority of the Chairpersons find the evaluation process to be time-consuming and challenging. They find it to be time-consuming and challenging, requiring a significant amount of time and effort to assess student performance accurately.

This complexity can lead to increased workload and stress for chairpersons, it becomes necessary to simplify and make the evaluation process more efficient.

Theme 14. Limited proficiency in policy implementation

Evaluating faculty performance related to policy implementation is a challenging task for some Chairpersons.

The majority of the Chairpersons say that they lack the necessary knowledge to effectively evaluate faculty performance regarding policy implementation.

They admit that they lack the necessary knowledge to effectively assess faculty members' ability to implement policies. This knowledge gap highlights the need for Chairpersons to receive training or support to enhance their understanding of policy implementation and evaluation.

4.3 Summary of the Chapter

Chapter four focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data gathered from questionnaires and interviews to evaluate the challenges in undergraduate 2023 policy implementation. The chapter presents the results of a study examining the perceptions of chairpersons, teachers, and program coordinators regarding the implementation of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Undergraduate Policy 2023 in Pakistan. The study found that limited financial resources, managing program data, effective communication, and coordinating with other departments are significant challenges. Faculty development and support, collaboration, and a student-centered approach are essential for effective policy implementation. The study also identified challenges faced by teachers, including integrating program learning outcomes, lack of collaboration, and grading pressures. The

thematic analysis revealed 14 themes, emphasizing the need for transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. Overall, the study highlights the challenges and opportunities faced by higher education institutions in Pakistan, emphasizing the need for faculty development, collaboration, and a student-centered approach to promote quality education.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of addressing these challenges to ensure the successful implementation of the policy, which aims to promote quality education in Pakistan. The findings of this study can inform policy decisions and institutional practices, ultimately contributing to the improvement of higher education in Pakistan. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the complexities of implementing education policy in a developing country context, highlighting the need for a multifaceted approach that addresses the diverse needs of stakeholders.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study was conducted to explore the Challenges and Prospects of Program Coordinators, Teachers, and Chairpersons in the implementation of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. The objectives of this study were to identify the challenges faced by program coordinators at the administrative level during the implementation of HEC undergraduate policy 2023. To identify the challenges faced by teachers at the academic level during the implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023. To study the perceptions of the chairpersons /HODs regarding the contribution of the undergraduate policy 2023 to promote quality education, and to explore the opportunities regarding the dissemination of quality education provided in the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. The population of the study was 18 Program Coordinators, 18 Chairpersons, and 200 teachers from the International Islamic University Islamabad and the National University of Modern Language. This research study was delimited to faculty members, program coordinators, and chairpersons/HODs of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), and NUML (National University of Modern Languages (NUML). Furthermore, this study was delimited to (English, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Teacher Education, Educational Leadership & Management, Media & Communication Studies, Economics & Finance, Mathematics & Statistics). The researcher used a purposive sampling technique in the case of teachers and a universal sampling technique in the case of chairpersons/HODs and program coordinators to select the sample. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires from program coordinators and teachers of selected departments (English, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Teacher Education, Education Leadership & Management, Media & Communication Studies, Economics & Finance, Mathematics & Statistics). The instruments for this study were close-ended questions and open-ended questions. The validity of the instruments was checked through experts' opinions. Experts' opinions. A pilot test was conducted to check the reliability of the questionnaire. Qualitative data were collected through interviews with chairpersons/HODs of the selected departments. The researcher analyzed the quantitative data by calculating mean and standard deviation through applying SPSS Version 21. Qualitative data were

analyzed by making a thematic analysis.

5.2 Findings of the Quantitative Data

The following findings are drawn from the analysis and interpretation of data.

1. Majority (78%) of program coordinators agreed that limited financial resources provided to universities hinder the implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 (Table 4.1)
2. Majority (72%) of program coordinators agreed with the statement that managing program data/evaluation is challenging regarding the implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023 (Table 4.2)
3. Only fifty percent program coordinators agreed that effective communication with faculty members is difficult for the effective implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 (Table 4.3).
4. Majority (67%) of program coordinators agreed that coordinating with other departments makes it difficult to discuss and implement the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 (Table 4.4).
5. Majority (72.2%) of program coordinators agreed that faculty members are aware of the requirements of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 (Table 4.5).
6. Majority (61%) of program coordinators agreed that the credit hour requirements outlined in the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 are manageable for students (Table 4.6).
7. Majority (67%) of program coordinators agreed that the entrance test marks as per the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 accurately reflect students' academic abilities (Table 4.7).
8. Only thirty-nine percent program coordinators aware the statement that HEC 2023 policy's curriculum requirements are clear. It revealed that 60% of respondents were not clear about the clarity of HEC Undergraduate Policy requirements (Table 4.8).
9. Majority (67%) of program coordinators agreed that mismanagement affects the implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy (Table 4.9)
10. Only forty-four percent program coordinators agreed that the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 verifies program adherence to meet quality expectations (Table 4.10).
11. Majority (72.2%) of program coordinators agreed that the assessment methodologies

- used in their program are aligned with the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 (Table 4.11).
12. Majority (72.2%) of program coordinators agreed that programs are designed according to the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 to accommodate diverse student needs (Table 4.12).
 13. Majority (85%) of teachers believed that the faculty training program enhances their teaching and mentoring skills as per HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 (Table 4.13).
 14. Majority (86%) of teachers agreed that the student assessment methodologies used in their program are aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 (Table 4.14).
 15. Majority (77%) of teachers agreed that their program's monitoring and evaluation processes are effective and aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 (Table 4.15).
 16. Majority (75%) of teachers agreed that lack of collaboration among teachers hinders the effective implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. (Table 4.16).
 17. The majority (86%) of teachers agreed that communication among teachers regarding the implementation of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 is required (Table 4.17).
 18. Majority (84%) of teachers agreed that departmental meetings facilitate discussions on HEC undergraduate Policy 2023 implementation (Table 4.18).
 19. Majority (61%) of teachers agreed that integrating PLOs into course objectives remained challenging for teachers (Table 4.19).
 20. Majority (82%) of teachers agreed that the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 structured breakdown of marks has helped refine their institution's assessment framework and enhance student evaluation processes (Table 4.20).
 21. Majority (88%) of teachers reported being familiar with the course registration requirements in the portal (LMS/CMS) according to the HEC undergraduate policy 2023 (Table 4.21).
 22. Majority (86%) of teachers agreed that creating a friendly environment for students is necessary under the provisions of the HEC 2023 undergraduate policy (Table 4.22).
 23. Majority (88%) of teachers agreed that focusing on research and innovative skills is required under the provisions of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023 (Table 4.23).
 24. Majority (94%) of teachers (46% strongly agreed and 48% agreed) agreed that

creating a creative environment is necessary for students under the provisions of undergraduate policy 2023 (Table 4.24).

5.3 Findings of the Qualitative Data

1. Majority of chairpersons find evaluation criteria unclear, and Lack of communication regarding the evaluation process leaves faculty uninformed (Theme 1).
2. Faculty members resist adapting to new policies, evaluation criteria, and hesitate to change teaching methods (Theme 2).
3. Majority of chairpersons believe faculty need development and support for policy implementation (Theme 3).
4. Majority of chairpersons emphasize collaboration and teamwork for effective policy implementation (Theme 4).
5. Majority of chairpersons believe faculty should reflect on practice and identify areas for improvement (Theme 5).
6. Majority of chairpersons prioritize student needs and interests (Theme 6).
7. Majority of chairpersons believe faculty should be accountable for policy implementation (Theme 7).
8. Majority of chairpersons struggle to develop effective metrics for faculty performance (Theme 8).
9. Majority of chairpersons struggle to establish clear evaluation criteria (Theme 9).
10. Majority of chairpersons lack necessary resources and support for evaluation (Theme 10).
11. Majority of chairpersons focus on student participation, creativity, knowledge, and performance (Theme 11)
12. Majority of chairpersons believe teachers are stressed due to grading pressures (Theme 12).
13. Majority of chairpersons find evaluation process time-consuming and challenging (Theme 13).
14. Majority of chairpersons lack knowledge to evaluate faculty performance on

policy implementation (Theme 14).

15. The HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 emphasizes the importance of quality education, providing opportunities for institutions to prioritize academic excellence.
16. The policy promotes a standardized curriculum framework, ensuring consistency and quality across institutions, and facilitating student mobility.
17. The policy encourages faculty development and training programs, enhancing teacher quality and effectiveness in disseminating quality education.
18. The policy introduces strong assessment and evaluation mechanisms, ensuring accountability and quality control in academic programs.
19. The policy promotes institutional autonomy, encouraging self-assessment and improvement, while maintaining accountability through external quality assurance mechanisms.
20. The policy advocates for a student-centered approach, focusing on student learning outcomes and promoting student engagement and participation in academic decision-making.
21. The policy encourages collaboration and partnership among institutions, industries, and communities, facilitating knowledge sharing, research, and innovation.
22. These findings highlight the opportunities presented by the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 for disseminating quality education and emphasize the importance of faculty development, assessment, and evaluation mechanisms in achieving academic excellence.

5.4 Discussion

Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) launched the Undergraduate Education Policy 2023 to upgrade undergraduate programs, aligning them with global benchmarks and promoting academic excellence, employability, and research skills (HEC, 2023). As the policy unfolds, it presents opportunities for growth while also posing implementation challenges that must be addressed. The HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 is a significant step towards improving the quality of education in Pakistan (Higher Education Commission, 2023). One of the key opportunities presented by this policy is

the emphasis on faculty development and training programs. By providing teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge, institutions can ensure that students receive high-quality education (Yusuf, 2016). Another opportunity presented by this policy is the introduction of comprehensive assessment and evaluation mechanisms. This will help institutions to identify areas where students need improvement and provide targeted support (Khan, 2018). Pakistan's Higher Education Commission (HEC) introduced the Undergraduate Policy 2023, a transformative initiative aimed at modernizing higher education. This policy seeks to bridge the gap between academia and industry, fostering globally competitive graduates. Key focus areas include faculty development, innovative assessment methods, institutional autonomy, and student-centered learning, all designed to enhance educational quality and employability. Additionally, the policy's focus on institutional autonomy and accountability will promote a culture of self-assessment and improvement within institutions (Shah, 2020). The policy's emphasis on a student-centered approach is also noteworthy. By prioritizing student learning outcomes and promoting student engagement and participation in academic decision-making, institutions can ensure that students are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the workforce (Hussain, 2019). Financial constraints pose a significant hurdle for public sector universities. Insufficient funding limits the implementation of curriculum reforms, faculty development programs, and technological upgrades (Yusuf & Shaheen, 2024). Moreover, institutions often lack state-of-the-art facilities, including laboratories, libraries, and smart classrooms, which are essential for fostering interdisciplinary learning and research.

This approach is consistent with international practices, where countries like Sweden and Norway prioritize faculty induction and teaching certifications (European Commission, 2024). Consequently, faculty are better equipped to deliver high-quality education, promoting student success. However, there are also challenges associated with implementing this policy. One of the key challenges is the lack of resources and infrastructure in some institutions (Ahmed, 2020). This can make it difficult for institutions to provide high-quality education and implement the policy's provisions. To overcome these challenges, institutions will need to work together with the government and other stakeholders to develop strategies for implementing the policy (Bukhari, 2020). The transition to student-centered and research-based learning has encountered resistance from faculty members, particularly those with limited familiarity with Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and Bloom's Taxonomy (Malik et al., 2024). Existing faculty

development initiatives have been inadequate in addressing the skills gap and shifting faculty perspectives to align with policy changes. The policy's focus on blended learning and digital literacy highlights the urban-rural digital divide. Institutions often lack essential digital infrastructure, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS) and digital libraries, exacerbating accessibility challenges for students in underserved areas (Shahbaz & Raza, 2024).

The UEP 2023's structured four-year undergraduate program, featuring exit options, capstone projects, and interdisciplinary learning, aligns Pakistani degrees with international standards (HEC, 2023). This harmonization can enhance global recognition and facilitate student mobility. The policy's focus on soft skills, entrepreneurship, and experiential learning boosts graduates' job prospects. Mandatory internships, community service, and final-year projects provide students with practical experience, better preparing them for the workforce (Ahmed & Fatima, 2023). The introduction of General Education Courses (GECs) and cross-disciplinary learning encourages critical thinking and innovation (Malik et al., 2024). Effective implementation hinges on faculty training and mentorship to support this approach. Strategic partnerships with industry and NGOs can help alleviate implementation challenges. Collaborations can provide internship opportunities, research grants, and technology access, particularly benefiting resource-constrained institutions (Khan, 2024). The findings of this study highlight the significance of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 in enhancing the quality of education in Pakistan. Specifically, the policy's emphasis on faculty development and training programs is crucial in enhancing teacher quality and effectiveness (Rahman, 2017).

Overall, the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 presents a number of opportunities for improving the quality of education in Pakistan. By emphasizing faculty development, comprehensive assessment and evaluation, institutional autonomy and accountability, and a student-centered approach, this policy has the potential to make a significant impact on the higher education sector in Pakistan. Pakistan's higher education sector embarks on a significant transformation with the HEC's Undergraduate Policy 2023. Despite challenges like resource constraints, faculty preparedness, and institutional alignment, the policy holds promise for enhancing academic quality, employability, and global recognition. Effective implementation will require concerted efforts, increased funding, faculty development, and institutional flexibility. Regular feedback, stakeholder involvement, and phased implementation can help unlock the policy's full potential.

5.5 Conclusions

The study examined the challenges faced by program coordinators, teachers, and chairpersons/HODs during the implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. The findings revealed several key challenges and areas for improvement.

1. The lack of financial resources and mismanagement significantly hinder effective policy implementation. Some program coordinators also face persistent challenges in managing data and coordinating across departments. This conclusion aligns with Objective 1: to identify the challenges faced by program coordinators at the administrative level during the implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 (findings 4.1- 4.4 & 4.9).
2. Some program coordinators believe faculty are aware of the policy, but others, including teachers, found the curriculum requirements unclear. While, 8 out of 16 Chairpersons reported resistance to change and confusion over evaluation criteria. This conclusion aligns with Objective 2, which is reflected in the unclear curriculum and faculty resistance to change. It also supports Objective 3, as chairpersons' observations highlight confusion regarding evaluation criteria and resistance to new approaches. (finding 4.8, and Themes 1, 2, 9).
3. Effective implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 is hindered by inadequate communication and collaboration between faculty and administration. Although program coordinators reported effective communication with faculty, some Chairpersons highlighted significant gaps in communication and collaboration, as well as limited knowledge of evaluation processes. These findings emphasize the need for enhanced communication structures to ensure policy clarity, faculty engagement, and successful policy implementation. This conclusion aligns with Objective 1, which focuses on identifying administrative-level challenges faced by program coordinators, and Objective 3, which explores chairpersons' perceptions of the policy's contribution to promoting quality education (Finding 4.3 and Themes 1, 4, and 14).
4. Teachers generally perceive the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 positively, particularly in relation to faculty development and academic practices. Many acknowledged that faculty training programs have enhanced their teaching and mentoring skills, and that student assessment methodologies are well-aligned with the policy. Additionally, departmental meetings were viewed as effective in facilitating

discussions on policy implementation. However, teachers also reported key academic-level challenges, such as difficulties in integrating Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) into course objectives, limited collaboration among faculty, and increased stress due to grading pressures. This conclusion aligns with Objective 2: to identify the challenges faced by teachers at the academic level during the implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023, and Objective 4: to explore the opportunities regarding the dissemination of quality education provided in the policy. (findings 4.13-14, 4.16, 4.18-19 and Theme 12)

5. Some teachers agreed that their evaluation systems align with the policy, whereas 10 out of 16 Chairpersons reported inconsistency and lack of clarity in performance metrics and accountability. This conclusion aligns with Objective 3, which explores the perceptions of chairpersons/HODs regarding the contribution of the undergraduate policy 2023 to promoting quality education (Themes 8,9,13)
6. The study revealed notable gaps in policy clarity and communication, which posed challenges at both the administrative and academic levels. Some Program coordinators reported ineffective communication with faculty, and curriculum requirements were perceived as unclear and inconsistently conveyed. While, 12 out of 16 Chairpersons cited ambiguous evaluation standards and insufficient dissemination of information. As a result, faculty members remained uncertain about their responsibilities and expectations regarding the implementation of policy. This conclusion aligns with Objective 1 to identifying administrative challenges faced by program coordinators and Objective 3 to exploring chairpersons' perceptions of the policy's contribution to quality education (findings 4.3, 4.8, and Themes 1,2,9,14)
7. Faculty resistance to adopting new approaches under the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 emerged as a significant academic-level challenge. Some Chairpersons observed hesitation among teachers in modifying their teaching practices or adopting updated evaluation techniques. This qualitative insight is supported by quantitative evidence, which showed that some teachers identified a lack of collaboration among faculty as a barrier to effective policy implementation, recognized the value of faculty training programs, and acknowledged alignment with new assessment methodologies. This conclusion aligns with the study objective of identifying teacher-level academic barriers and emphasizes the need to support faculty in transitioning toward policy-aligned practices. (findings 4.13-14, 4.16 and Theme 2).

8. Faculty training and professional development are recognized as essential for the effective implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. Some teachers reported that training programs contributed to improving their teaching and mentoring practices. While 13 out of 16 Chairpersons emphasized the need for ongoing support and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen faculty readiness and engagement with policy requirements. These insights reflect both academic-level challenges and opportunities, underscoring that sustained professional development is a key component for successful policy implementation and quality enhancement in higher education. (Theme 3). This conclusion aligns with Objective 2, which focuses on identifying academic-level challenges faced by teachers, and Objective 4, which explores opportunities for disseminating quality education through the policy
9. Program evaluation and interdepartmental coordination emerged as notable administrative challenges in the implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. Some Program coordinators reported persistent difficulties in managing evaluation processes and coordinating effectively with other departments. These concerns were echoed in qualitative findings, where 9 out of 16 Chairpersons described the evaluation process as burdensome and highlighted the lack of clear performance metrics for faculty. Such challenges indicate gaps in institutional systems and procedures, emphasizing the need for enhanced support structures, clearer evaluation frameworks, and mechanisms to facilitate cross-departmental collaboration for successful policy implementation. This conclusion aligns with Objective 1, which focuses on identifying the administrative challenges faced by program coordinators of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. (finding 4.2,4.4 and Theme 8,13)
10. Assessment and evaluation practices under the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 reflect a strong alignment with policy expectations. Quantitative data indicated that a large proportion of teachers affirmed the integration of assessment methods with policy guidelines. In addition, many teachers reported that the structured marking system introduced by the policy has enhanced their approach to student evaluation. The majority also expressed confidence in their programs' monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, suggesting that current practices effectively support the policy's intended outcomes. These findings highlight the policy's potential in strengthening quality assurance processes and align with the study's objective of exploring opportunities and improvements in academic practices. (findings 4.14-15, 4.20)

11. A majority of program coordinators indicated that their programs are structured to address diverse student needs, reflecting the policy's intent to promote inclusivity and adaptability. This is further supported by qualitative insights, as 12 out of 16 Chairpersons emphasized the importance of fostering student engagement, participation, and creativity in academic settings. This conclusion aligns with study's objective of exploring the policy's contribution to promoting quality education, highlighting curriculum responsiveness as a key area of progress (findings 4.12 and Theme 6).
12. The implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 has encouraged a shift toward research-oriented, student-centered, and creativity-driven learning environments. A large proportion of teachers advocated for promoting research skills, student engagement, and the creation of a supportive academic climate. Some teachers also demonstrated high awareness of course registration protocols. However, challenges remain, particularly in integrating Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) into course objectives, a task many teachers found challenging. Additionally, a notable portion of program coordinators expressed concern regarding the policy's effectiveness in ensuring consistent quality adherence. These findings highlight both the opportunities presented by the policy and the persistent academic-level challenges, supporting the study's objectives of identifying implementation barriers while exploring the policy's contributions to quality education. (findings 4.10, 4.19, 4.21–4.24)
13. The HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 presents multiple opportunities to enhance the quality of higher education through its focus on standardizing curriculum frameworks, promoting institutional autonomy, and strengthening assessment and evaluation systems. These policy features support improved collaboration among departments, encourage research and innovation, and emphasize faculty development and student engagement. Insights from 13 out of 16 chairpersons affirmed the policy's potential to promote inclusive, student-centered practices while fostering accountability and academic excellence. This conclusion aligns with the study's objective of exploring opportunities for disseminating quality education through effective policy implementation (Themes 15-21)
14. The quantitative findings revealed that limited financial resources are a major barrier to effective policy implementation. This was further supported by qualitative insights,

as some Chairpersons highlighted insufficient institutional support and inadequate resources as key challenges in implementing and evaluating the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 (findings 4.1, Theme 10).

15. Both the quantitative and qualitative findings reveal a significant gap in communication between faculty and administration, which hampers the effective implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. Quantitative data showed that program coordinators believed communication with faculty was effective. However, this was contradicted by qualitative themes, where some Chairpersons highlighted a lack of communication and collaboration, as well as insufficient knowledge regarding evaluation processes (findings 4.3, and Theme 1, 14).
16. The HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 integrates crucial components for enhancing quality in higher education, including standardized curricula, faculty capacity-building, rigorous assessment frameworks, institutional autonomy, and student-focused approaches. Throughout this study, these areas have emerged as both opportunities for growth and challenges to be addressed, underscoring the policy's potential to revolutionize academic excellence. Successful implementation, supported by a culture of continuous improvement and collaborative stakeholder engagement, is vital for achieving these aspirations and strengthening public trust in Pakistan's higher education system.

5.6 Recommendations

According to the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were formulated.

1. As a result of Conclusions 1 and 14, the HEC and universities may allocate dedicated funds and establish clear financial management protocols. They may also develop centralized data systems and improve interdepartmental coordination to support program coordinators in their administrative tasks. Additionally, the HEC may advocate for increased budgetary allocations, ensure transparent resource distribution, and enable grant access for policy-aligned initiatives.
2. Based on Conclusion 2, which highlights faculty resistance to change and unclear curriculum structures, the HEC may take proactive steps to support smoother policy implementation. To overcome these challenges, the HEC may issue simplified and standardized curriculum guidelines and organize change management workshops to help faculty adapt to new approaches. These efforts may include orientation programs

that clearly explain evaluation criteria and the pedagogical rationale behind the reforms, thereby easing the transition for both faculty and academic administrators.

3. Based on Conclusion 3, which identifies inadequate communication and collaboration between faculty and administration as a barrier to effective implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023, universities and higher education institutions may take specific steps to strengthen coordination. To resolve these communication barriers, institutions may establish formal feedback loops and schedule regular coordination meetings between faculty and administrative staff. Additionally, training programs focused on evaluation systems may be introduced to enhance shared understanding of policy expectations and promote consistent implementation practices.
4. Based on Conclusion 4, which highlights teachers' positive perceptions of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 particularly in areas of faculty development and aligned assessment practices while also noting academic challenges such as PLO integration, limited collaboration, and grading stress, higher education institutions and the HEC may take targeted actions to sustain and strengthen faculty engagement. To build on these positive teacher perceptions, institutions may prioritize continuous professional development programs, promote structured peer collaboration, and introduce stress management support mechanisms. Furthermore, practical workshops focused on integrating Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) into course objectives may be developed to improve curriculum alignment.
5. Based on Conclusion 5, which highlights inconsistency and lack of clarity in faculty performance evaluation, the HEC may take steps to improve performance evaluation by standardizing faculty performance indicators across institutions. Additionally, administrators may be trained on applying these metrics effectively to ensure accountability and support faculty growth.
6. Building on Conclusion 6, which identified notable gaps in policy clarity and communication at both administrative and academic levels, the HEC may enhance policy clarity by ensuring timely dissemination of updated policy documents and conducting regular policy briefings for faculty and program coordinators. A centralized digital portal for policy-related resources may also support consistent understanding and implementation across institutions.
7. Building on Conclusion 7, which highlighted faculty resistance to adopting new

approaches under the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 as a major academic-level challenge, institutions may reduce this resistance by promoting mentorship programs where early adopters of the policy support their peers. Additionally, sharing success stories of policy-compliant teaching practices across departments may foster a culture of collaboration and openness to change.

8. Building on Conclusion 8, which emphasizes the importance of faculty training and professional development for successful implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023, universities and the HEC may reinforce professional growth among teachers by institutionalizing sustained investment in development programs. This includes refresher courses, peer networking opportunities, and incentive mechanisms that encourage continuous learning and engagement.
9. Based on Conclusion 9, which highlights program evaluation and interdepartmental coordination as major administrative challenges in implementing the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023, universities and higher education institutions may strengthen the capacity of program coordinators and departmental staff by implementing automated tracking systems and forming interdepartmental task forces. These initiatives can help streamline evaluation standards and ensure equitable workload distribution.
10. Based on Conclusion 10, which highlights strong alignment between current assessment practices and policy expectations under the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023, academic institutions may maintain momentum in effective assessment practices by periodically reviewing and refining marking rubrics. They may also promote consistency by sharing model evaluation practices across departments. These efforts will support teachers and academic units in sustaining quality assessment mechanisms.
11. Based on Conclusion 11, which emphasizes that curriculum design under the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 reflects growing responsiveness to diverse student needs and creativity, academic institutions and department heads may strengthen curriculum responsiveness by providing faculty with targeted training in inclusive instructional design and student-centered teaching strategies. These efforts will help embed student engagement and creativity more deeply in course planning and delivery.
12. Building on Conclusion 12, which indicates ongoing academic-level challenges

despite a shift to student-centered learning, quality assurance units may take the lead in developing comprehensive monitoring frameworks that include standardized benchmarks, faculty compliance audits, and periodic quality reviews. These tools will help institutions identify gaps in PLO implementation and strengthen accountability in policy execution.

13. Building on Conclusion 13, which highlights the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023's potential to enhance higher education through standardized curricula, institutional autonomy, and quality systems, university leadership and academic management bodies may harness this potential by aligning internal strategies with the policy's key pillars. This includes fostering interdisciplinary research, reinforcing institutional quality assurance mechanisms, and promoting collaboration among faculty, administrators, and external stakeholders to drive academic innovation and excellence.
14. Based on Conclusion 15, universities and higher education institutions may enforce structured feedback mechanisms and institutional communication protocols to bridge communication gaps between administrators and faculty. These strategies aim to align perceptions and foster mutual understanding regarding policy implementation.

5.7 Recommendations for Future Studies

Enhanced Research Recommendations for HEC 2023 Undergraduate Policy Implementation. To further strengthen the implementation of the HEC 2023 Undergraduate Policy, the following research recommendations are proposed.

1. Institutions may undertake thorough needs assessments to identify the specific resources (financial, human, and infrastructural) required to successfully implement policies.
2. Research may investigate the potential of learning management systems (LMS), artificial intelligence (AI), and big data analytics in streamlining policy implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.
3. Studies may examine the impact of professional learning communities, peer mentoring, and collaborative research projects on faculty engagement with policies and their subsequent implementation.
4. Research may analyze student perceptions of policy-driven academic changes, including student-centered learning models, internship programs, and competency-

based assessments.

5. Institutions may assess how to effectively integrate student feedback mechanisms to ensure policies remain relevant to student needs and evolving job market trends.
6. Comparative studies may be conducted to identify the most effective evaluation methodologies (surveys, case studies, experimental designs) for higher education institutions.
7. Future research on these critical areas can inform policy adjustments, improving higher education quality and effectiveness.

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROGRAM COORDINATORS

The following questions are related to the Implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy. Challenges and Prospects. This study aims to analyze the challenges faced by program coordinators, teachers, and chairpersons during the implementation of the HEC 2023 Policy. This research focuses on the challenges faced by program coordinators, teachers, and chairpersons during the implementation of the HEC 2023 Policy and which opportunities are provided by the HEC 2023 Policy.

Obtained data will be only used for research purposes. You are requested to please read out the questions carefully and answer according to your own experience and best understanding.

Part I

Demographic information:

Name (Optional)

Please tick (✓) the relevant box

Designation:

Professor ☐ Associate professor ☐ Assistant professor ☐ Lecturer ☐

Assigned Role:

Chairperson ☐ Teacher ☐ Program coordinator ☐

University Name

IIUI ☐ NUML ☐

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age: Please tick (✓) the relevant box

| Less than 25 years | 25-30 years | 30-35 years | 35-40 years | 40-45 years | 45-50 years | 50-55 years | 55-60 years | Above 60 years |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Working experience:

Please tick (✓) the relevant box

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Less than 5 years | 5-10 years | 10-15 Years | 11-15 Years | 11-20 years | 21-25 years | More than 25 years |
| | | | | | | |

Part II

Answer the following questions in such a manner that indicates the degree to which you agree with the statement. Tick (✓) the appropriate option.

- 1 Strongly Agree (SA)
- 2 Agree (A)
- 3 Neutral (N)
- 4 Disagree (DA)
- 5 Strongly Disagree (SDA)

Challenges by program coordinators

| Sr# | Questions | SA | A | N | DA | SDA |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 1 | Limited financial resources provided to the universities hinder the implementation of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023. | | | | | |
| 2 | Managing program data/evaluation is challenging regarding the importance of HEC undergraduate policy 2023. | | | | | |
| 3 | Effective communication with faculty members are difficult for the effective implementation of HEC undergraduate policy 2023. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 4 | Coordinating with other departments is difficult to discuss and implement HEC undergraduate Policy 2023. | | | | | |
| 5 | Faculty members are aware of the requirements of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. | | | | | |
| 6 | The credit hour requirements outlined in HEC's undergraduate Policy 2023 are manageable for students | | | | | |
| 7 | The entrance test marks as per HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 accurately reflect students' academic abilities. | | | | | |
| 8 | The HEC 2023 policy's curriculum requirements are clear | | | | | |
| 9 | Mismanagement affects the implementation of HEC undergraduate Policy 2023 by program coordinators. | | | | | |
| 10 | HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 verifies program adherence to meet the quality expectations. | | | | | |
| 11 | Assessment methodologies used in our program are aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 . | | | | | |
| 12 | Programs are designed according to HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 to accommodate diverse student needs. | | | | | |

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Answer the following questions in such a manner that indicates the degree to which you agree with the statement. Tick (✓) the appropriate option.

- 1 Strongly Agree (SA)
- 2 Agree (A)
- 3 Neutral (N)
- 4 Disagree (DA)
- 5 Strongly Disagree (SDA)

| Sr# | Questions | SA | A | N | DA | SDA |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 1 | The faculty training program enhances your teaching and mentoring skills as per HEC undergraduate Policy 2023. | | | | | |
| 2 | The student assessment methodologies used in our program are aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. | | | | | |
| 3 | Our program's monitoring and evaluation processes are effective and aligned with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. | | | | | |
| 4 | Lack of collaboration among teachers hinders the effective implementation of the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023. | | | | | |
| 5 | Communication among teachers regarding the implementation of HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 is required. | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 6 | Departmental meetings facilitate discussions on HEC undergraduate Policy 2023 implementation. | | | | | |
| 7 | Integrating PLOs into course objectives remained challenging for teachers. | | | | | |
| 8 | The HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 structured breakdown of marks has helped to refine your institution's assessment framework and enhance student evaluation processes. | | | | | |
| 9 | You familiar with the course registration requirements in the portal (LMS/CMS) according to the HEC undergraduate policy 2023. | | | | | |
| 10 | Creating a friendly environment for Students is necessary under the provisions of the HEC 2023 undergraduate policy. | | | | | |
| 11 | Focusing on research and innovative skills is required under the provisions of the HEC undergraduate policy 2023. | | | | | |
| 12 | Creating a creative environment is necessary for students under the provisions of undergraduate policy 2023. | | | | | |

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHAIRPERSONS

Q.No.1 What challenges have you faced in your department in evaluating faculty performance regarding policy implementation of HEC undergraduate policy 2023?

Ans:

Q.No.2 What strategies are employed by your department to assess student learning at various levels of Bloom's Taxonomy in your program?

Ans:

Q.No.3 The HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 demanded a break-up of marks. What difficulties did you face in applying it in your department?

Ans:

Q.No.4 What challenges have you faced in developing program specification forms aligned with HEC undergraduate policy 2023 in your department?

Ans:

Q.No.5 How is the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 contributing to promoting quality education?

Ans:

Q.No.6 What difficulties have you faced while aligning the courses with HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 requirements?

Ans:

Q.No.7 What difficulties have you encountered in revising your department's curriculum to align it with the HEC Policy 2023 requirements?

Ans:

Q.No.8 What are the challenges you are facing in implementing the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 in your department?

Ans:

Q. N0.9 What challenges have you faced in beginning training programs for faculty members on the HEC Policy 2023 requirements?

Ans:

Q.No.10 How do you motivate faculty members working in your department to adapt to HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 changes?

Ans:

Q.No.11 How do you address students' concerns and feedback regarding meeting out the requirements pertaining to the changes mentioned in the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023 changes?

Ans:

Q.No.12 What hurdles you have encountered in ensuring institutional compliance with the HEC Undergraduate Policy 2023?

Ans:



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DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

CERTIFICATE OF VALIDATION

Research Title: IMPLEMENTATION OF HEC UNDERGRADUATE
POLICY 2023: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

By: Ms. Uzama Akbar (3-FOE/MSEDU/S23), MS Scholar

This is to certify that the attached research instruments, developed by Ms. Uzama Akbar, MS scholar in Teacher Education from the International Islamic University, Islamabad, have undergone thorough validation by me. It is affirmed that the instruments, designed in alignment with the research objectives, meet the standards for adequate face and content validity. The research instruments, which include:

1. Close-ended questionnaire for Program Coordinators and Teachers (quantitative tool).
2. Open-ended questionnaire for Chairpersons/HODs (qualitative tool).

The above tools have successfully passed the examination and have proven substantially helpful for her thesis.

CERTIFIED BY:

Name: Dr. Humaira Akram

Designation: Assistant Professor

Institution: IIUI

Department: Teacher Education

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 17 December 2024



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CERTIFIED BY:

Name: Dr. Munazza Mahmood
Designation: Assistant Professor
Institution: IUI
Department: ELM
Signature: [Signature]
Date: 17/07/25