



RESEARCH PAPER

**A Discipline wise Comparison of Challenges and Problems of
Tenure Track Teachers**

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: February 20, 2022 Accepted: June 02, 2022 Online: June 04, 2022 Keywords: Challenges Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), Problems, Tenure Track (TT) Tenure Track Teachers *Corresponding Author aatika.aziz03@gmail.com	The objectives of the study are to explore the problems and challenges encountered by the Tenure Track (TT) teachers in four academic disciplines (Natural Science, Computer science, Social science, and Arts and Humanities) and to identify the strategies employed by the TT teachers in order to address the challenges and problems. Four TT teachers were interviewed for data collection. Through the thematic analysis of the semi structured interviews, several challenges and problems were identified such as, divergent responsibilities, lack of collegial and administrative support, unbalanced family life and less time and resources available for research. TT teachers mentioned that evaluation criteria should be discipline wise specific because the opportunities for publications are different for everyone. Along with the challenges and problems, the participants also shared the ways they address them. Firstly, they try to address the challenge or problem by themselves and then seek their colleagues' help. In few cases, the TT teachers used to consult the higher authorities of the institute, if needed. It is concluded that reasonable workload, sufficient support from institute, amendment in the evaluation criteria with respect to discipline and professional development opportunities can reduce the challenges and problems faced by TT teachers. These amendments would lead towards the efficient working of TT teachers.

Introduction

While maintaining standards for teaching quality hiring competent staff and retaining the talented existing teachers requires great struggle (Guarino, 2006) on the part of higher education institutions. Teacher recruitment has increasingly become a vital phenomenon worldwide. A range of recruiting strategies and schemes have been introduced and implemented appeared in the educational landscape, trending one among them is the Tenure Track System (TTS).

The Tenure Track System was first introduced by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 1915 which aimed to set the route for their faculty members taking them towards professorship (Sheehe, 1994). It seems to be quite

challenging for the upcoming faculty members but at the same time, it provides opportunities for them to polish their academic careers.

The roles of teachers in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) have been reformed rigorously because the responsibilities and demand for work has been increased. Intrinsically, the work performed by teachers has become multifaceted, as their efforts are distributed among various responsibilities including administration, teaching, research, and scholarly work (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

It seems to be quite challenging for the upcoming faculty members but at the same time, it provides opportunities for them to polish their academic careers. TTS has further three phases that are Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor. In the American system, the beginner teachers undergo a strict evaluation process to earn a tenure track position right after the completion of their doctorate. When the tenure track position is awarded; a faculty member is expected to enjoy a mobility period by experiencing a new environment away from the old networks and mentors. When the period ends, additional evaluation is performed which decides that whether the candidate is eligible for a tenured position or he/she should look for another career (Pechar, Park, 2012).

In 2002, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan launched Tenure Track system (TTS) in higher education institutions to bring administrative reforms in the country. Tenure track was the most well known educational reform after the establishment of HEC (Riaz, Jabeen, Salman, Ansari, & Moazzam, 2017).

Beginning of tenure track teachers can be challenging as they have to focus on various aspects like research, service along with full-time teaching. Simultaneously they have to meet institutional demands keeping their family life intact. Boice (2000) noted that the teachers who work under TTS are more likely to suffer stress and dissatisfaction, which ultimately brings discomfort towards their job and workplace behavior.

Teachers have to face different types of challenges in all stages of their career. In earlier phase the challenges are of different nature than the challenges faced as the time passes (Cherubini, 2009). For teachers beginning of their career is demanding and challenging. There is a struggle for survival, discovery, and reality shock. While starting usually the things seem strange and different which leads to the feelings of anxiety and confusion. Huberman 1989 states that in beginning of a career many teachers find that the reality is very much dissimilar from what they had expected. They had entered the field with lots of dreams and expectations.

A few research studies have been conducted concerning the challenges and barriers faced by early career teachers (Boice, 1991; Mullen & Forbes, 2000; Rice et al., 2000; Solem & Foote, 2004; Nir & Zilberstein-Levy, 2006). Their findings proved that teachers' professional lives lack the basic sense of companionship, unstable life dependent on the vague and exploiting tenure system.

The satisfaction level of the faculty and the factors contributing to it are significantly important. Saleem (2019) figured out that there is a significant difference between the job satisfaction of Basic Pay Scale (BPS) and Tenure Track System (TTS) teachers. Compared to the BPS teachers, the TTS teachers are found less satisfied with

the job. . Low job satisfaction of Higher education teachers negatively influence the students. . It is of sheer importance for teachers to perform their teaching, and research responsibilities vigilantly and thus contribute to the success of their students and the institution (Nandan & Krishna, 2013; Ali, 2009). However, no empirical research is available on the reasons of low job satisfaction among TTS teachers.

This study aimed to identify the challenges and problems encountered by the Tenure Track (TT) teachers in different disciplines. Also, its purpose is to find out the ways and strategies through which TT teachers address the challenges and problems.

Literature Review

To uplift the standard of education in higher education institutions, Tenure Track System (TTS) was first introduced in 1915. In the beginning, it was designed with an aim to end the quick termination culture of teachers among institutions (Sheehee, 1994). Teachers working under this system had the freedom to write and speak in the goodwill of their subject, students and they were free from the fear of higher authorities. In the beginning TTS teachers at American institutions went through screening tests of higher difficulty and this took 7 years. Kingman Brewster, former president of Yale University exposed the fact that at Yale TTS ensures permanent job appointment unless or until one gets retired.

In 2002, the foundation of Higher Education Commission (HEC) was laid in Pakistan, through Presidential ordinance. Since its inception, the HEC brought various educational reforms to improve higher education in the country (Riaz, Jabeen, Salman, Ansari, & Moazzam, 2017).

Major reforms including Tenure Track System (TTS), Curriculum (Syllabus criteria), Quality and Control System (Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC), ISO 9001), faculty development programs and some other policies and guidelines were introduced by HEC which resulted in performance improvement of public sector universities. These reforms were initiated as a result of global management reforms. TTS was one of the major reforms under HEC. The word "tenure" originates from the word "period" but it is used as a system in higher education institutions of Pakistan. Those who work under the scheme are termed as Tenure Track Faculty. Usually, teachers who complete their tenure probation period get a permanent placement in the university. One of the major concerns in introducing TTS was that it will improve the performance of teachers in the institutions. As public sector reforms and higher education institutions have always been subject to many types of researches (e.g. Rieder & Lehmann, 2004; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; De Vries & Nemeč, 2013)

Challenges of early Career Teachers

Diverse challenges experienced by the early career teachers have been documented and corroborated in literature (Spencer, 2018). Most salient problems and challenges reported by the teachers included maintaining discipline in classroom, motivating students, communicating with parents, developing student teacher positive relation, opting advanced assessment techniques, management of work load and positive attitude towards colleagues (Cherubini, 2009).

Other than these, feeling helpless, insecure and alienation are some of the common old feelings novice teachers often have (Schatz-Oppenheimer and Dvir, 2014). Consequently, finding ways to cope effectively with stress and workload continues to be strongly based on experience, which in turn potentially makes early career teachers more exposed to emotional exhaustion and burnout. There is a struggle for survival discovery and reality shock. So the feelings of anxiety with unseen fear is commonly experienced.

Mohanty (2004) mentioned some usual problems that all teachers face. Feeling of frustration between graduate teachers with post-graduate and with research degree they develop a sense of frustration and fail to perform their duties with devotion. Highly qualified teachers usually experienced feeling of rejection by not getting better job. Feeling of rivalry and jealousy in the staff members sometimes it is healthy but sometimes unhealthy by some misunderstanding it creates more gap. Feeling of insecurity in teachers on transfer might have some sad experience.

Beginning of a career as a tenure track position is even tougher, during this time teachers are strive to demonstrate the expected level of performance to sustain their tenure. Research studies conducted on tenure track teachers concluded that it is very challenging and stressful time for them. Therefore a systematic and sustained support system is needed by them (Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000).

The stages of career entry in anywhere could be painful or easy. There is a struggle for survival, discovery, and reality shock. Everything in start is usually strange and unfamiliar. So, feeling of anxiety with unseen fear is experienced. According to Huberman (2000) in beginning career stage many beginning teacher find that the daily reality is very different from what they expected in their field. They had entered the field with lots of dreams and expectations.

Saleem (2019) figured out that there is a significant difference between the job satisfaction of BPS and TTS teachers. TTS teachers are less satisfied with the job than BPS teachers. While there is less, or no work done emphasizing on the reasons behind their low satisfaction.

After reviewing the sufficient relevant literature, it is concluded that either there is less, or no work done globally and more particularly in Pakistan related to the challenges and problems of TT teachers. However, one thing has been determined while the need of exploring the challenges and problems has been emphasized. Thus, the current study will explore the challenges and problems faced by Tenure Track teachers and the way they adopt to address those challenges.

Material and Methods

In order to accomplish the research objectives i.e. to identify the challenges and problems encountered by the Tenure Track (TT) teachers of different disciplines and to explore how the TT teacher address the challenges and problems, a case study design was used. The sample of the study included total four Tenure Track teachers (Assistant professors) belonging to four disciplines i.e. (Natural Science, Computer science, Social science, and Arts and Humanities) of University of Education Lahore were selected through purposive sampling.. The data for this paper was gathered through semi structured interviews of TT teachers. The teachers help the researchers to put forward openended questions resulted in detailed responses. Probing

questions were also asked from the participants and they were given the liberty to express their views. To get more consistent and accurate transcription of the interview data, the participants responses were audio taped with their consent. Each interview was lasted for 20-30 mins Field notes were taken by researchers. The validity of the instrument was ensured through taking expert opinion of three university PhD faculty.

Results and Discussion

The interviews data was analyzed by using thematic analysis which is considered a suitable method of analysis for qualitative data analysis particularly interviews (Creswell, 2012). The recorded interviews were transcribed and following five major themes were identified;

- (1) Challenges in terms of Teaching,
- (2) Challenges in terms of research,
- (3) Challenges in terms of institutional culture,
- (4) Challenges in terms of family life,
- (5) Ways adopted by the TT teachers to address the challenges.

Our first research question i.e. “to identify the challenges and problems encountered by the Tenure Track (TT) teachers of different disciplines” was addressed through the analysis of first four themes and the fifth theme proved helpful in answering the second research question “how the TT teachers address the challenges and problems” through the.

To ensure the anonymity of the participants’ identity, instead names, participants’ were assigned codes such as participant 1, participant 2, participant 3 and participant 4. All the participants were male, aged between the ages of 35-45, having PhD degree in relevant subject. Three of them were also working on administrative posts i.e. participant 2 was focal person for accreditation council, participant 3 was in charge of internal examinations and participant 4 in charge of allied subjects. Only participant 1 was not having any administrative responsibility.

Majority of the participants were already working on contract basis in this institute that’s why they applied here. Only participant 1 having 2 years teaching experience in another institute responded

"I applied in many institutions but got selected by this institute."

For the selection of the Tenure Track system most of them responded that they were interested in BPS but there was no other option for them. One of them elaborated that Govt. was putting emphasis to take TT position to promote the system.

"I opted TT position being more active in research and discover new scenarios, TT teacher know that if his performance will not up to the mark the contract may not get extended. So they have to remain more active all the time." (P2, Male)

To begin, we coded data for each participant to identify the patterns of similarities or differences.

Challenges in Terms of Teaching

As the main role of a teacher is teaching, teachers were asked about their time management as teacher, the participants were of the view that along teaching they are often required to perform many other tasks therefore they don't enjoy teaching. Only participant 4 stated that tries to teach well but the race of securing marks as a reward of performing other duties such as, research work, workshops, seminars, etc. create imbalance. It's nearly impossible to perform well and to do justice with teaching.

They extended finding it difficult to manage the teaching responsibilities along with other activities like - research work, workshops, seminars, etc. All of them were in the view that it's nearly impossible for them to perform well and to do justice in all fields.

Challenges in Terms of Research

Most of the participants found it hard to do research along with teaching and other responsibilities. The following statement indicates:

"Research work have less points in evaluation Performa/ criteria but it takes more time and resources" (P 2, Male).

So, this is nearly impossible to manage things and its making job difficult day by day. On the other hand, participant 4 mentioned that:

"There are less chances for him to get published." (P4, Male)

Further they were asked about the opportunities for research they receive from the institution.

"This system is copied from foreign countries as they have more facilities and better infrastructure but Pakistan is a developing country. We lack the basic infrastructure needed for research especially in sciences. If the institution want to implement it in its true sense then more opportunities and time should be given for research. For now institute just emphasize on taking projects but there are less projects and more applicants which creates very much pressure." (P1, Male)

Participants mentioned that for W category papers incentive is given because of position. But they never receive encouraging behavior from institute they have to work on their own.

“Due to less research opportunities it is difficult for me to fulfil the requirements for promotion. But still I have to remain in this position because of no other option.”

(P4, Male)

Challenges in terms of Institutional Culture

Teachers were asked about the behavior of colleagues, all of them pointed that their colleagues are supportive and cooperate with them wherever needed. But when they were asked about the behavior of colleagues in terms of rank one of them replied that,

“It happened very often. Teachers already working on BPS assume that we are taking more salary then them so we should work more. But with the passage of time they understood our situation.”(P2, Male)

Further they added up about the difficulties they face in coordinating with higher authorities.

Participant 1 shared his views that the authorities are not so cooperative.

“As a TT teacher we have to take permission for doing any activity as per criteria for promotion or getting increment they make us feel embrace for just running against marks.”
(P1, Male)

All of them said that they communicate their problems but not ever listened to.

On asking about the liberty of expression of ideas, all of them responded that they have not been involved in such activities because a TT teacher never considered a permanent faculty.

Participants also mentioned a drawback that no training or extra skill is given to them to incorporate the problems they have to face.

Challenges in terms of Family Life

Participant of natural sciences and computer sciences responded that their family life is much affecting due to their work life. They extended that it is nearly impossible for them to maintain a healthy balance between family and work life.

On contrary participants of social sciences and arts and humanities replied that they don't have to suffer more because of less research work involvement.

“They extended their view achievement of targets is stress full. We lack in basic infrastructure for research. Time for evaluation is too short to prepare ourselves. Most stress full thing is the system is not implemented in its true sense.”(P1, Male)

Participant 2 responded that there are several things that make job stress full:

"Firstly we are not involved in decision making. Secondly subjects are not allocated as per expertise. Thirdly additional courses are not allocated. Fourthly, can't work on administrative post and also no training is given."

Participant 3 added:

"He has to do more nonacademic duties also less research opportunities. He extended his answer with his view that teaching and research should be separated at university level. More research work should be given to a researcher with lesser courses. Being a faculty member in social sciences it is rather more difficult to publish your research and to choose an impact factor journal being acceptable to the HEC natural sciences."

Having the same views as abovementioned participants, participant 4 mentioned some problems:

"There are less opportunities for publications for arts and humanities and no job security for all. Having same performa of evaluation for social sciences and sciences is totally unfair. As they are having more research (publication and projects) opportunities than us."

Tenure Track teachers were asked about the ways they adopt to address the challenges and problems. All of them reported that firstly they try to resolve by their selves after that they consult with their colleagues. If they do not find solution, then present their problems before the authorities of the institute.

Ways adopted by the TT Teachers to address the Challenges

All of them mentioned that firstly they try to address the challenges by themselves. If they don't find any way out, then they discuss with their colleagues and then to the higher authorities. They further extended that the nature of the challenges matters a lot.

"I have to face shortage of research related equipment or resources, so he found out the way of collaboration with other universities." (P 1, Male)

"I am nearly unable to meet his expends with his current salary package, so he found out the way to take extra credit hours." (P 2, Male)

"I try to manage my workload by giving extra time at university." (P 3, Male)

"A major challenge I have to face is to get published my research in international journal that is nearly impossible as he only can found some National journals to get published. To address this challenge I am trying to raise my voice." (P 4, Male)

Discussion

This study discloses challenges and problems faced by the Tenure Track teachers of different disciplines of University of Education Lahore. With time the demands from higher education teachers have extended, (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006; Cohen, 2008) and the teachers have now become multifaceted because their efforts are directed toward various dimensions such as administration, teaching, research, and scholarly work. Analysis of the interviews shows that the Tenure Track teachers have lost peace of mind since their joining. These results also support Saleem

(2019) findings highlighting the low satisfaction level of TT teachers comparative to BPS teachers in Pakistan.

The findings sported by the findings of the earlier study (Boice, 2000) that teachers who work under TTS are more likely to suffer stress and dissatisfaction, which ultimately brings discomfort towards their job and workplace behavior. TT teachers in this study reported that it is nearly impossible for them to do justice with all fields. That causes stress in their lives.

In addition, TT teachers mentioned that evaluation criteria is not up to mark as it should be discipline wise specific because the opportunities for publication is different for everyone. So, chances of promotion get reduced.

Conclusion

The data revealed some challenges and problems faced by Tenure Track teachers i.e. divergent responsibilities, unbalanced family life, less time and resources for research, less collegial and administrative support. Some of these issues were due to lack of time management because of excessive work. Participants stressed on changing the criteria of evaluation and marks distribution with respect to discipline as opportunities yet not same for everyone. However, participants also highlighted the ways how they address all the problems and challenges. Firstly, they try to resolve by their selves by collaborations for research, giving extra hours in the institute and by compromising their family life. TT teachers mentioned that sometimes they consult their colleagues as well. Higher officials of the respected institute also consulted if needed. They are also followed by the association specifically for Tenure Track teachers but not every time they get positive response. It is concluded that time management, sufficient support from institute amendment in the evaluation criteria with respect to discipline and professional development opportunities which lead towards the efficient working of TT teachers and would be helpful for them to face less challenges and problems.

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