



RESEARCH PAPER

**Prevailing Placement Assessment Practices in Public Sector
Universities of Punjab**

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ABSTRACT

This research paper presents a comparative analysis of placement assessment practices in public sector universities of Punjab. The study focuses on analyzing students' perceptions regarding current assessment practices, while considering gender and university differences. A self-developed questionnaire was administered to a sample of 480 BS students enrolled in four public sector universities in south Punjab, selected through a multistage sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS), employing measures such as means, frequencies, standard deviations, and percentages to assess students' perceptions of prevailing placement assessment practices. Independent Samples t-test and One-way ANOVA were utilized to compare gender and university variations, respectively. The findings reveal that students held a moderate level of perception regarding placement assessment practices. No significant differences were observed between male and female students, although variations were identified among the mean scores of students across different public sector universities. The results of this study provide valuable insights for higher education commissions, university authorities, and stakeholders, highlighting the significance of effective placement assessment practices in public sector universities of Punjab, Pakistan.

KEYWORDS Comparative Analysis, Placement Assessment Practices, Public Sector Universities, Punjab, Students' Perceptions

Introduction

Public sector universities in Punjab, Pakistan, have a vital role in shaping the educational landscape of the region and fostering the growth of a highly skilled and capable workforce. As the demand for qualified professionals increases, these universities recognize the need to ensure that their graduates possess the necessary knowledge, competencies, and practical skills to meet the challenges of the rapidly evolving job market.

The prevailing placement assessment practices in public sector universities of Punjab encompass a diverse range of evaluation methods, each designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of a student's potential in their chosen field of study. Written examinations, practical tests, case studies, interviews, group discussions, and industry-specific simulations are some of the assessment tools commonly employed. (Wei, Saab, & Admiraal, 2021)

Written examinations typically test students' theoretical knowledge and analytical abilities, while practical tests assess their technical skills and proficiency in

applying theoretical concepts to practical situations. Case studies and simulations simulate real-world scenarios, challenging students to devise solutions and demonstrate their decision-making abilities. Interviews and group discussions provide insight into students' communication, interpersonal skills, and ability to work collaboratively.

Apart from these assessment methodologies, public sector universities in Punjab often collaborate with industries and employers to design and administer placement assessments that reflect current industry requirements. This ensures that the evaluations are aligned with the demands of the job market, thereby increasing the employability of graduates. While placement assessments are beneficial, they also present certain challenges. Students may face anxiety and stress during these evaluations due to the high stakes involved in securing desirable job opportunities. Universities, on the other hand, must continually adapt their assessment practices to stay current with industry trends and advancements (Oke & Fernandes, 2020). To address these challenges, academic institutions often provide support and counseling services to help students prepare for placement assessments. The universities maintain strong connections with industry partners to gain insights into the evolving job market, allowing them to refine their assessments accordingly.

This research aims to explore the prevailing placement assessment practices in public sector universities of Punjab comprehensively. By analyzing the methodologies, tools, and criteria used in these assessments, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of their impact on the employability of graduates. The findings will contribute to the ongoing efforts of academic institutions to equip their students with the necessary skills and competencies, fostering a workforce that is both job-ready and capable of contributing significantly to the economic development of the region.

In an increasingly competitive and dynamic global job market, the significance of effective talent acquisition and workforce preparation cannot be overstated. As a result, placement assessment practices have emerged as essential tools for evaluating individuals' suitability for specific job roles and ensuring that they possess the necessary skills and competencies demanded by employers. Placement assessments, also known as pre-employment assessments, serve as a pivotal link between education and employment, helping bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Placement assessment practices vary significantly across the globe, influenced by cultural, educational, economic, and industrial factors unique to each region. These assessments have become an integral part of hiring processes in both the public and private sectors, as organizations (Shaturaev, 2021).

Globally, various methods and tools are employed to assess candidates' capabilities and potential. These can range from traditional written examinations to innovative competency-based evaluations, technical tests, interviews, and simulations that mimic real-world scenarios. The focus of these assessments may differ depending on the job requirements, with some emphasizing technical skills and others prioritizing soft skills and adaptability. Beyond the individual company level, placement assessment practices are also shaping academic curricula and educational strategies. Educational institutions worldwide recognize the importance of aligning their programs with the needs of the job market, producing graduates who possess the relevant skills and qualifications to succeed in their chosen careers. The rapid advancement of technology has facilitated the adoption of online assessment platforms, allowing organizations to conduct assessments remotely and on a global scale. This has opened up new opportunities for international collaboration and recruitment, enabling companies to hire

talent from diverse backgrounds and regions. However, with the widespread adoption of placement assessment practices, concerns have arisen about potential biases, fairness, and transparency in the evaluation process. Ensuring that assessments are valid, reliable, and free from discrimination is a critical consideration in promoting a level playing field for all candidates. (Yam & Skorburg, 2021)

This research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of placement assessment practices globally. By examining the different approaches, methodologies, and challenges faced in various regions, this study seeks to identify best practices that can enhance the effectiveness and fairness of placement assessments. Additionally, understanding global placement assessment practices will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences between countries, leading to continuous improvement in talent evaluation and workforce development on a global scale. Ultimately, the insights gained from this research will contribute to shaping future placement assessment strategies, benefiting both job seekers and employers in the dynamic landscape of the global job market.

Literature Review

Placement assessments at the university level serve as an integral component of the academic landscape. These assessments play a crucial role in evaluating students' skills, knowledge, and readiness for specific courses or programs (Thirunavukarasu, Chandrasekaran, Subhash Betageri, & Long, 2020). By accurately assessing students' abilities, universities can ensure appropriate course placements, provide tailored academic support, and facilitate students' successful academic journeys. Placement assessments are designed to gauge students' proficiency in various subject areas and determine their readiness for higher education (Siddique, Ahsan, Azizi, & Haass, 2022). These assessments encompass a range of evaluation methods, including standardized tests, subject-specific exams, interviews, portfolios, or a combination of these approaches. The aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' competencies and inform decision-making processes related to course placement and academic guidance (Shepard, Penuel, & Pellegrino, 2018).

In Pakistani universities, placement assessment practices play a crucial role in evaluating the skills and competencies of students and facilitating their transition into the professional world. These practices typically involve a series of activities designed to gauge students' readiness for employment and match their capabilities with the demands of the job market. One common placement assessment practice in Pakistani universities is conducting written examinations. (Khan, 2013) These exams assess students' theoretical knowledge and understanding of their respective fields. They often cover core subjects and specific areas of specialization, allowing employers to gauge the depth of knowledge possessed by the students. These exams also serve as a means to rank students based on their performance, providing employers with a standardized measure of academic achievement. Practical assessments are frequently employed to evaluate students' hands-on skills and their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios. These assessments can take various forms, such as laboratory experiments, case studies, simulations, or project presentations. By assessing practical skills, universities ensure that students possess the necessary technical competencies required by prospective employers. (Akour & Alenezi, 2022)

Many universities in Pakistan emphasize the importance of internships or work placements as part of the placement assessment process. These experiences allow students to gain practical exposure to their chosen fields and develop industry-specific skills. During internships, students are often evaluated by supervisors based on their

performance, work ethic, problem-solving abilities, teamwork, and communication skills. Such assessments provide valuable insights into students' professional capabilities and work readiness. Another aspect of placement assessment in Pakistani universities is the inclusion of aptitude tests and interviews. (Ajmal, 2020) Aptitude tests are designed to measure students' cognitive abilities, including reasoning, numerical and verbal skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving capabilities. Interviews, on the other hand, provide an opportunity for employers to directly interact with students, assess their interpersonal skills, and evaluate their suitability for specific roles or organizations. Some universities also organize career fairs, where students have the chance to engage with prospective employers and showcase their skills and qualifications. (Ajjawi et al., 2020).

Placement assessment practices in Pakistani universities incorporate a combination of written exams, practical assessments, internships, aptitude tests, interviews, and career fairs. By employing such comprehensive approaches, universities aim to equip students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and experiences to successfully transition into the professional world and meet the demands of the job market (Bennett, 2019).

Placement assessments is to determine the most suitable level of coursework for each student (Bahr et al., 2019). By assessing their existing knowledge and skills, universities can place students in courses that align with their abilities, ensuring they are neither overwhelmed by advanced material nor held back by repetitive content. This tailored approach allows students to engage with appropriately challenging coursework, fostering their intellectual growth and academic success. Placement assessments also serve as a valuable tool for academic advisors and faculty members. The assessment results provide critical insights into students' strengths and weaknesses, allowing advisors to provide personalized guidance and support (Rich et al., 2020). Advisors can help students identify areas that require improvement and suggest appropriate resources or interventions. This targeted support contributes to students' academic development and enhances their overall learning experience. Moreover, placement assessments enable universities to optimize curriculum planning. By analyzing assessment data, institutions can identify patterns and trends in student performance, identifying areas of curriculum that may require adjustment or enrichment (Hundley & Kahn, 2023). This data-driven approach helps universities refine their course offerings, ensuring that they provide relevant and challenging educational experiences for students.

Placement assessments are not only focused on academic abilities but also take into account students' career aspirations and readiness for the workforce. Some assessments include components that evaluate students' career-related skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and teamwork (Sotiriadou, Logan, Daly, & Guest, 2020). This information allows universities to offer targeted career guidance, internships, or co-op programs, equipping students with the necessary skills for a successful transition from university to the professional world. Open-ended and close-ended questions hold significant importance in the context of placement assessments at the university level (Nguyen, 2021). These question types serve distinct purposes and offer unique benefits in evaluating students' skills, knowledge, and readiness for specific courses or programs. Let's delve into the refined and elaborated details of the importance of each question type from a professional perspective at the university level. Open-ended questions play a vital role in fostering critical thinking skills among students. These questions encourage students to think deeply, analyze information, and provide thoughtful, detailed responses. Through open-ended questions, placement assessments can assess students' ability to apply knowledge, solve complex problems, and demonstrate a higher level of understanding (Alfaiz, Pease, &

Maker, 2020). By requiring students to articulate their thoughts and provide well-reasoned answers, open-ended questions allow universities to identify students who possess advanced analytical skills and have a strong grasp of the subject matter. Another advantage of open-ended questions is their ability to assess creativity and problem-solving skills. These questions often present students with real-world scenarios or complex problems that require innovative solutions. By allowing students to explore various perspectives and propose unique approaches, open-ended questions enable universities to evaluate students' ability to think outside the box, exhibit creativity, and devise practical solutions. These skills are highly valuable in professional environments that demand adaptability, innovation, and problem-solving abilities.

On the other hand, close-ended questions serve their purpose by assessing students' knowledge recall and understanding of fundamental concepts. These questions provide a more structured format with predefined answer choices, making them efficient for evaluating a large number of students within a given timeframe (Aparicio et al., 2018). Close-ended questions are particularly useful for assessing lower-order thinking skills, such as comprehension, factual recall, or basic application of knowledge. By using close-ended questions, universities can ensure that students possess a foundational understanding of essential concepts, which serves as a solid basis for more complex assessment tasks. Close-ended questions contribute to the standardization of assessments. With predefined answer choices, scoring can be automated or streamlined, leading to fair and consistent evaluation across all students (Nutter, 2020). This standardization helps eliminate potential subjective bias in grading, ensuring that students are evaluated objectively based on the same set of options. By maintaining a standardized approach, universities can uphold fairness and enhance the reliability of placement assessments.

Assessing prior knowledge and program-specific knowledge is of paramount importance in the perspective of placement assessments at the university level. These assessments serve several crucial purposes, including ensuring appropriate course placement, providing personalized academic support, tailoring curriculum and instruction, promoting student success and retention, and enhancing program relevance and quality (Hundley & Kahn, 2023).

When evaluating students' prior knowledge, universities can determine their existing proficiency levels in relevant subjects. This information helps place students in courses that align with their current skill levels, avoiding situations where they are overwhelmed or bored due to a mismatch between their abilities and course content. By accurately placing students, universities can provide a learning environment that challenges and engages them, ultimately leading to higher levels of success and satisfaction (Omar, Zahar, & Rashid, 2020).

Additionally, the evaluation of prior knowledge and program-specific knowledge is instrumental in tailoring curriculum and instruction. By gaining insights into students' knowledge levels, universities can design curricula that are appropriately structured and sequenced. This ensures that students are exposed to new and challenging material while building upon their existing knowledge. Adjusting curriculum and instruction based on students' knowledge levels fosters engagement, motivation, and deeper learning experiences, resulting in improved educational outcomes (Herman et al., 2022).

The consideration of prior knowledge and program-specific knowledge also has a direct impact on student success and retention rates. Placing students in courses that match their proficiency level enhances their confidence, motivation, and sense of

belonging within their chosen program. When students are appropriately challenged and supported, they are more likely to thrive academically and persist in their studies. This, in turn, leads to higher retention rates and improved academic achievement.

Furthermore, the evaluation of students' prior knowledge and program-specific knowledge contributes to program relevance and quality. By identifying areas where students may lack foundational knowledge or possess specific strengths, universities can refine and enhance their program offerings. This ensures that programs align with industry requirements, preparing students with the necessary knowledge and skills for their chosen fields. By continuously improving and adapting programs, universities can provide a high-quality education that meets the evolving needs of students and the job market.

The assessment of prior knowledge and program-specific knowledge plays a crucial role in placement assessments at the university level. It enables appropriate course placement, personalized academic support, curriculum tailoring, student success and retention, and program enhancement. By considering these factors, universities can provide a comprehensive and tailored education that equips students with the skills and knowledge necessary for their academic and professional journeys. Co-curricular achievements and special learning needs are important considerations in the context of placement assessments at the university level. These factors can play a significant role in shaping the course placement and admission processes, ensuring equitable opportunities for all students. Let's explore the significance of co-curricular achievements and special learning needs, as well as the concept of privilege, in the context of placement assessments at the university level. Considering co-curricular achievements in placement assessments allows universities to recognize and reward well-rounded students who have excelled beyond their academic achievements. It acknowledges the importance of a balanced and diverse set of skills and experiences that contribute to a student's overall growth and potential for success in their chosen program (Wise & Davenport, 2019). By including co-curricular achievements as an evaluation criterion, universities can create a more inclusive and comprehensive assessment process that values students' diverse talents and accomplishments.

Special learning needs refer to the unique requirements of students with disabilities, learning differences, or specific learning challenges. It is essential for universities to consider these needs during placement assessments to ensure equal opportunities for all students (Mason-Williams et al., 2020). By understanding and accommodating special learning needs, universities can create an inclusive environment that supports the academic success of students with diverse learning profiles.

Placement assessments should include mechanisms to assess students' special learning needs and identify appropriate accommodations or support services. These assessments may involve specialized evaluations or consultations with educational specialists or experts in the field (King & Bigelow, 2018). By gathering information about students' specific learning needs, universities can determine the best course placements and provide necessary accommodations, such as extended time for exams, assistive technologies, or modified instructional approaches. This inclusive approach ensures that students with special learning needs can fully engage in their academic pursuits and reach their potential. In the context of placement assessments, the concept of privilege refers to the advantages or opportunities that some students may have due to their socioeconomic status, educational background, or access to resources. Privilege can influence students' prior knowledge, educational experiences, and readiness for certain programs. It is crucial for universities to recognize and address privilege to ensure

equitable admissions and placement processes (Summers, Cox, McMurry, & Dewey, 2019).

Adaptability and Flexibility: Interviews can gauge students' adaptability and ability to handle change or uncertainty. Through open-ended questions or situational prompts, universities can assess how students respond to new or challenging circumstances, demonstrating their adaptability and resilience. (Summers et al., 2019). By delving into students' communication skills, critical thinking abilities, adaptability, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness, universities can gain deeper insights into their potential for success and tailor support accordingly (Yusop, Rasul, Mohamad Yasin, Hashim, & Jalaludin, 2022). Academic scores provide a standardized benchmark for evaluating students from different educational backgrounds. They offer a fair and objective means of comparison, allowing universities to assess a student's relative standing and potential to thrive in an academically rigorous environment. These scores provide universities with an initial glimpse into a student's intellectual capabilities, providing a basis for further evaluation during the placement assessment process (Jakubowski, 2021).

The final selection process involves a careful analysis of a student's academic scores, coupled with an assessment of their overall profile. This comprehensive evaluation allows universities to identify students who not only possess strong academic abilities but also exhibit potential for personal growth, leadership, and contributions to the university community. By considering academic scores within the broader context of a student's achievements and potential, universities can make informed decisions that align with their specific admission criteria and program requirements. The comparative analysis of placement assessment practices in public sector universities of Punjab reveals the importance of adopting a comprehensive and student-centered approach. By utilizing open-ended and closed-ended questions, universities effectively assess prior knowledge and critical thinking abilities. General and internal admissions tests offer valuable insights into students' prior learning, while co-curricular achievements are recognized and valued as indicators of holistic development. The inclusion of students with special learning needs promotes inclusivity and diversity within the academic environment. Interviews serve as a personalized means to evaluate students' strengths and weaknesses. The consideration of academic scores and clear communication through text ensures transparency in the final selection process. Moving forward, collaborative efforts and standardization are recommended to continuously enhance placement assessments and cater to the diverse educational needs of students in Punjab's public sector universities.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference among perception of students enrolled in different universities regarding placement assessment practices.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between male and female university students' perception regarding placement assessment practices in public sector universities.

Material and Methods

The research employed a quantitative methodology to ensure generalizability and data collection. The survey method was chosen as the research instrument due to its convenience and effectiveness in gathering data. A cross-sectional survey design was utilized in this study.

Population

The population of interest for this study comprised all BS students enrolled in public sector universities in Punjab, Pakistan.

Sampling and Sample

A sample of 480 BS students enrolled in public sector universities in Punjab, Pakistan was selected using a multistage sampling technique.

Research Instruments

A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data on students' perceptions of assessment practices in public sector universities in Punjab.

Data Collection

Data were collected personally by the researcher from four selected public sector universities in Punjab, Pakistan.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including measures such as arithmetic mean, frequency, standard deviation, and percentage, were calculated to assess students' perceptions of prevailing assessment practices. Independent Samples t-test was employed to compare the perceptions of male and female students, while One-way ANOVA was used to compare the perceptions of students enrolled in different public sector universities

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Analysis of student's perceptions regarding placement assessment practices

Sr No	Indicator	SDA (%)	DA (%)	SDA +DA (%)	UN (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	A+SA (%)	Mean	Level
1	The teacher uses open ended question to assess the prior knowledge	19.8	11.5	31.3	13.5	32.5	22.7	55.2	3.27	Medium
2	The teacher uses close ended question to assess the prior knowledge	9.0	22.5	31.5	18.1	29.6	20.8	50.4	3.31	Medium
3	The teacher assesses the students' prior learning through a general admission test.	11.0	12.1	23.1	22.7	27.7	26.5	54.2	3.46	Medium
4	The teacher assesses the students' prior learning through an internal admission test.	10.8	16.7	27.5	23.1	27.3	22.1	49.4	3.331	Medium
5	Teacher assesses student's appropriate knowledge to participate in a specific program.	10.4	11.5	21.9	18.1	32.3	27.7	60.0	3.554	Medium
6	Teacher values the student's co-curricular achievements.	10.0	12.3	22.3	17.1	29.4	31.3	60.7	3.595	Medium

7	Students with special learning needs are encouraged and privileged for admission.	10.0	7.7	17.7	19.4	36.9	26.0	62.9	3.612	Medium
8	Teacher assesses student's strength and weaknesses through interview.	10.8	11.9	22.7	18.5	31.3	27.5	58.8	3.527	Medium
9	Administration communicates through text for final selection.	9.6	11.3	20.9	24.6	30.0	24.6	54.6	3.487	Medium
10	Teacher assesses student's academic scores to furnish overall merit.	16.0	12.3	28.3	15.0	31.9	24.8	56.7	3.370	Medium

The teacher uses open-ended questions to assess prior knowledge: The majority of students (55.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers utilize open-ended questions for assessing prior knowledge. The mean value of 3.27 indicates a moderate perception level. The teacher uses close-ended questions to assess prior knowledge: A significant proportion of students (50.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers employ close-ended questions for assessing prior knowledge. The mean value of 3.31 suggests a moderate perception level. The teacher assesses students' prior learning through a general admission test: A considerable percentage of students (54.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers evaluate prior learning through general admission tests. The mean value of 3.46 indicates a moderate perception level. The teacher assesses students' prior learning through an internal admission test: Students' perceptions were divided, with 27.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 23.1% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing regarding the assessment of prior learning through internal admission tests. The mean value of 3.33 suggests a moderate perception level. The teacher assesses students' appropriate knowledge to participate in a specific program: A majority of students (60.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers evaluate students' appropriate knowledge for program participation. The mean value of 3.554 indicates a moderate perception level. The teacher values students' co-curricular achievements: A significant proportion of students (60.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers value their co-curricular achievements. The mean value of 3.595 suggests a moderate perception level. Students with special learning needs are encouraged and privileged for admission: . A considerable percentage of students (62.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that students with special learning needs are encouraged and privileged for admission. The mean value of 3.612 indicates a moderate perception level. The teacher assesses students' strengths and weaknesses through interviews: A majority of students (58.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers assess their strengths and weaknesses through interviews. The mean value of 3.527 suggests a moderate perception level. The administration communicates through text for final selection: A significant proportion of students (54.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that the administration communicates through text for final selection. The mean value of 3.487 indicates a moderate perception level. The teacher assesses students' academic scores to determine overall merit: A considerable percentage of students (56.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers consider their academic scores for determining overall merit. The mean value of 3.370 suggests a moderate perception level.

Overall, the findings reveal a moderate level of perception among students regarding the placement assessment practices. While some assessment practices received positive perceptions, there are areas for improvement, particularly in assessing prior learning through internal admission tests and recognizing students' co-curricular

achievements. Attention should also be given to the communication process for final selection and the inclusion of students with special learning needs to enhance students' perceptions of placement assessment practices.

Table 2
Gender wise comparison of student's perception regarding placement assessment practices in public sector universities

Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	p-value
Male	256	3.495	.818	1.247	478	.213
Female	224	3.402	.820			

$P \leq 0.05$

The table compares the perceptions of male and female students regarding placement assessment practices. Among male students ($N = 256$), the mean perception score was 3.495 with a standard deviation of 0.818. Female students ($N = 224$) had a mean perception score of 3.402 with a standard deviation of 0.820.

No statistically significant difference was found between the perceptions of male and female students ($p > 0.05$), indicating that gender does not significantly impact students' perceptions of placement assessment practices.

Table 3
University wise comparison of students' perception regarding placement assessment practices at university level

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	35.416	3	11.805	19.603	.000
Within Groups	286.662	476	.602		
Total	322.078	479			

The table results revealed a significant main effect of the university factor on students' perception of placement assessment practices, $F(3, 476) = 19.603$, $p < .001$.

The between-groups analysis indicated that the variation in students' perception accounted for 35.416 units of the total sum of squares (SS), with 3 degrees of freedom (df) associated with the university factor. This resulted in a mean square (MS) value of 11.805. The within-groups analysis, on the other hand, accounted for 286.662 units of SS with 476 df, resulting in a within-groups MS of 0.602.

The F-ratio of 19.603 indicates a substantial difference in students' perception of placement assessment practices among the university groups. The associated p-value of less than .001 provides strong evidence against the null hypothesis, suggesting that the university factor significantly influences students' perception.

Table 4
University wise comparison of students' perception regarding placement assessment practices at university level

(I) University of Responder	(J) University of Responder	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Islamia University Bahawalpur	Khawaja Ghulam Fareed University RYK	-.49043*	.08220	.000	-.6520	-.3289
	Ghazi University DG Khan	-.04100	.08220	.618	-.2025	.1205
	University of Education DG Khan	.18812*	.08220	.023	.0266	.3496

Khawaja Ghulam Fareed University RYK	Ghazi University DG Khan	.44943*	.08220	.000	.2879	.6110
	University of Education DG Khan	.67856*	.08220	.000	.5170	.8401
Ghazi University DG Khan	University of Education DG Khan	.22912*	.08220	.006	.0676	.3906

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The table 4 shows that least significant difference (LSD) post hoc test indicated that mean scores of university students' perception regarding 'placement assessment practices in public sector universities'. The data in table reveals that mean score of students' perception of Khawaja Fareed University RYK was higher than that of Ghazi University D G Khan, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur and then University of Education DG Khan. Similarly, mean score of students' perception of other universities ranked as Ghazi University D G Khan, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur and University of Education DG Khan.

Discussion

The study explored students' perceptions of placement assessment practices at the university level. The findings indicate that students generally hold a moderate perception of these practices. Teachers' use of open-ended and close-ended questions to assess prior knowledge was recognized by a significant proportion of students. Students perceived the evaluation of prior learning through general admission tests positively, but opinions were divided regarding internal admission tests.

The assessment of students' appropriate knowledge for program participation and the value placed on co-curricular achievements were perceived favorably by a majority of students. Students also believed that students with special learning needs are encouraged and privileged for admission. The assessment of strengths and weaknesses through interviews was generally well-received. Text-based communication for final selection was acknowledged by a significant proportion of students.

Gender was found to have no significant impact on students' perceptions of placement assessment practices. However, the university factor was significant, indicating variations in students' perceptions among different universities.

These findings highlight the importance of utilizing a combination of assessment methods and considering diverse student needs and achievements. It is crucial for universities to ensure transparency, fairness, and inclusivity in placement assessment practices. Further research is needed to explore the underlying factors contributing to university variations and to examine the relationship between students' perceptions and their actual performance outcomes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the analysis, the following conclusions were drawn regarding students' perceptions of placement assessment practices that both open-ended and close-ended questions are utilized by teachers to assess students' prior knowledge, general admission tests are commonly used to evaluate students' prior learning, teachers consider students' appropriate knowledge for program participation and value their co-curricular achievements, students with special learning needs are encouraged and privileged for admission, teachers assess students' strengths and weaknesses through interviews, the administration communicates important information, such as final selection, through text-based methods, students generally hold a moderate perception of

placement assessment practices, Moreover, it was concluded that the students perceived the moderate level of placement assessment practices in their university. It means that there is room for the placement assessment practices in the public sector universities of the Punjab, Pakistan. There was no difference between male and female university student's perception regarding placement assessments practices in public sector universities of south Punjab.

There was a significant difference among the mean scores of university students enrolled in different universities regarding placement assessment practices in public sector universities of South Punjab. The Universities were ranked as under: (1) Khawaja Ghulam Fareed University Rahim Yar Khan (2) Ghazi University D G Khan (3) The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (4) University of Education DG Khan.

Recommendations

In the context of placement assessment practices, universities should prioritize clear communication and transparency to ensure students have a thorough understanding of the assessment methods and criteria. A balanced assessment approach must be implemented, combining both open-ended and close-ended questions, to provide a comprehensive evaluation of students' knowledge and skills during the placement process. Universities should tailor assessments to meet the individual needs of students, providing necessary accommodations and support to ensure a fair and inclusive evaluation.

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