

Academic staff's perceptions of Implementing Policies in Jordanian Universities

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Abstract:

This descriptive quantitative study aimed at exploring the implementation of policies in Jordanian universities as perceived by academic staff members. Data was collected from 590 academic staff members working in Jordanian universities through a self-administered questionnaire. After confirming the normality, validity and reliability of research instrument, further statistical analysis was carried out to test the questions and hypothesis (mean, standard deviation, t-test, Bivariate Pearson Correlation coefficient, and ANOVA). Findings showed there was a medium to high implementation for such policies at Jordanian universities. The result also showed a significant difference in the implementation according to the universities' sector; private universities rated higher implementation of their policies than governmental ones. However, results revealed there were no significant differences concerning academic ranking or academic position of staff members regarding their perception for the implementation of universities' policies. Finally, result revealed a strong significant relationship between universities' policies variables.

Key Words: Jordanian Universities, Middle East University (MEU), Universities' Policies, Governance Board.

1. Introduction:

Governance in corporate organization is used to describe how the board directs the corporation and how the laws, rules and customs can be applied accordingly. Therefore, corporate governance consists of set of laws, rules, policies, customs, processes, and institutions affecting the way people administer, direct or control a corporation. Applebaugh (2010) defined governance as the rules of the political system to solve conflicts between actors and adopt decision. The Corporate Governance of Iconic Executives (2011) said governance structures and principles identify the distribution of rights and responsibilities among different participants in the corporation and include the rules and procedures for making decisions in corporate affairs. Goergen (2012) claimed corporate governance is concerned with mitigation of the conflicts of interests between stakeholders. Hufty (2011) pronounce governance refers to "all processes of governing, whether undertaken by a government, market or network, whether over a family, tribe, formal or informal organization or territory and whether through laws, norms, power or language". Finally, Bevir (2013) related governance to "the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions"

It seems that governance is directly and indirectly related to corporate policy. Investors World (2015) defined corporate policy as a formal declaration of the guiding principles and procedures by which a company will operate, corporate policies established by its board of directors or a senior management policy committee. Business Dictionary (2015) stated guidelines and policies are formulated by the organization's board of directors, corporate policy can affect organization's objectives, operations, and plans. University of Sydney (2015) described policy as a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. Policies are generally adopted by the board of or senior governance body within an organization.

Universities and academic institutions are not exceptional; they have a wide variety of stakeholders with different interests, so they need a good governance board with good policies to respond to evolving challenges. Blake (2007) stated academic governance within higher education is a complex decision-making process that creates university's policies and actions. Sanchez and Elena (2010) said today Higher Education Institutions have to respond to an increasing number of societal and economic demands. Blackmore, et. al. (2011) mentioned the past three decades have witnessed radical changes to universities, largely due to the influence of neoliberal ideology. Cerulli and Reale (2011) claimed universities' policy makers want to improve the quality of the universities' outcomes to better productive and more efficient. Aurangzeb and Asif (2012B) pronounced during the last two decades, the ratio of degree qualifications has increased significantly which created new challenges. Stefenhagena (2012) proclaimed the institutional governance issues are becoming more complicated and the relationship between good governance and university effectiveness becomes central. Mignot-Gerard (2013) proclaimed universities worldwide have undergone major organizational transformations in the past two decades. Kavasakalis (2013) articulated that universities have experienced many changes since they first appeared. Oba (2013) clarified in recent years; numerous governments have proceeded with reforms with a view to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of university systems.

Switkes (2013) clarified that the ten campuses of the University of California rely on a single policy document for academic personnel policy. Thanalerdsopit, et. al. (2014) highlighted that due to changes in the economic, political and educational landscape in Thailand, universities

require significant management changes. Asimwe and Steyn (2014) mentioned the issue of university governance has become the subject of intense debate globally; governance systems have to be responsive to the changing demands of university stakeholders. Shattock (2014) stated governance is becoming increasingly important in universities just as it is in the wider world of commerce and banking. Usman (2014) said the role of boards of governors is maintaining quality of education in both public and private sector universities. Ashraf (2014) concluded China has made a lot of policies and reforms during this massive expansion of its higher education system. Man and Yanqiang (2014) articulated that university governance has undergone within three paradigms, i.e. essentialism, structuralism and culturalism, and now is moving towards post-modernism paradigm. Sundaram (2015) claimed that there is a need for a common code of governance structure for universities of 21st Century in order to enable them to perform many additional complex functions in the era of globalization.

It is well documented that the role and success of corporate governance can be tested by its successful implementation of its policies. Therefore, it seems that it is pivotal to investigate the implementation of policies in Jordanian Universities. This study is dedicated to explore how Jordanian universities implement policies that were set by governance board in real life. The best stakeholders to assess policies implementation are the employees of the university, especially, academic staff members who are exposed to and directly in contact with governance, students and society as a whole. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore the implementation of Jordanian universities for their policies as perceived by academic staff members.

2. Methods and Procedures:

2.1. Participants

A stratified random sample of 700 academic staff was chosen from 17 Jordanian governmental and private universities. An a priori power analysis indicated a suggested sample size of 368 participants to be able to generalize the results to the total population of academic staff. A 5% margin of error, and a 95% confidence level, was used for a population of 3,000 with a 50/50 response distribution regarding whether or not institutions implement university's policies. To obtain the preferred minimal response rate of 50%, the number of surveys mailed to the random sample was 750 ($368/0.5=736$, rounded up to 750).

2.2. Instrument

A 4-page, 78 item, 5-point Likert scale questionnaire (where 1 means very low implementation and 5 means very high implementation), was designed based on a comprehensive literature review of university policies. Face validity was established by writing questionnaire items based on the published literature. A panel ($n = 6$) with expertise in the areas of survey research, policies, and post-secondary settings reviewed and modified the questionnaire to establish content validity.

Additionally, experts were asked to score the appropriateness of each survey item as "not appropriate" (scored -1), "appropriate" (scored 0), or "very appropriate" (scored +1) in order to obtain a content validity ratio (CVR). For example, an item would be included if it received 2 "not appropriate" scores and 4 "very appropriates" or 1 "not appropriate," 2 "appropriates," and 3 "very appropriates." The potential range for the CVR is -1 to +1, with positive ratios indicating adequate expert agreement (Salkind, 2006). All items included in the analysis had a CRV ranging from 0.3 to 1.0, suggesting that the items were valid. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was

used to determine internal consistency and it revealed a good reliability ($\alpha=0.975$) (Letwin, 1995 & Klinc, 1999).

2.3. Procedure

Middle East University (MEU) Institutional Review Board provided approval for this study. A 4-wave mailing procedure was used. Wave 1 consisted of a pre notification postcard. Waves 2 through 4 consisted of a personalized, signed cover letter, survey instrument on light yellow paper, and a self-addressed return envelope. Wave 2 was mailed 1 week after wave 1, whereas waves 3 and 4 were mailed at 3-week intervals to non - responders to increase the final response rate (King et al, 2001).

2.4. Data Analysis

Within numerous variables, categories were collapsed to accommodate for limited responses within a given category. This permitted arrangement of data for valid statistical analyses. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0 for Windows (SPSS, Chicago, Illinois) was used to conduct data analyses. Descriptive statistics, Independent sample t-test, ANOVA and Bivariate Pearson Correlation were conducted for all variables.

3. RESULTS:

3.1. Response Rate

The number of completed surveys returned (n=611) exceeded the suggested sample size from the power analysis (n =368), an indication of adequate power. The number of invalid surveys (n = 21) were subtracted from the denominator before calculation of the response rate. The response rate for the 750 randomly selected academic staff was 78.6%.

3.2. Demographic and Background Characteristics

Table (1) shows that only 103 (17.5%) of participants were from government universities, while the remaining 487 (82.5%) were from private universities. Only 92 (15.6%) of participants were full professors, 138 (23.8%) were associate professors and 360 (61%) were assistant professors. Finally, 34 (5.8%) participants were acting as faculty dean, 100 (16.9%) were working as head of department and 456 (77.3%) were from academic staff member.

Table (1): Demographic Frequency and Percentage

	Dimension	Frequency	Percent
Sector	Government	103	17.5
	Private	487	82.5
	Total	590	100.0
Academic Ranking	Professor	92	15.6
	Associate	138	23.4
	Assistant	360	61.0
	Total	590	100.0
Position	Dean	34	5.8
	Department Head	100	16.9
	Academic Staff	456	77.3
	Total	590	100.0

On the other hand, Table (2) shows that the means of policies' variables rated from 3.50 to 4.19 with standard deviation from 0.655 to 0.976. This indicates that there is a semi agreement among academic staff members on medium to high implementation of universities' policies variables. The average mean of all universities' policies variables implementation is 3.78 with standard deviation 0.671. This reveals that the Jordanian universities are highly implementing their policies. T-value confirms the results, where t-value rated more than t-tabulated which estimated to be 1.960.

Table (2): One-Sample Statistics: Means, Standard Deviation and t-Actual Value for all Items and Variables

No	Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-Value	Sig.	Implementation
1	Social responsibility	4.04	0.683	36.978	.000	High
2	University reputation and image	4.03	0.722	34.523	.000	High
3	Concerns for quality	4.19	0.731	39.466	.000	High
4	Faculty members	3.52	0.976	12.993	.000	Medium
5	Students Services	3.67	0.764	21.226	.000	High
6	Planning for new programs	4.11	0.655	40.978	.000	High
7	Administrative staff members	3.52	0.911	13.822	.000	Medium
8	Governance and administration	3.58	0.836	16.800	.000	Medium
9	Variety of university resources	3.78	0.709	26.650	.000	High
10	Scientific research	3.79	0.875	21.923	.000	High
11	International cooperation	3.97	0.794	29.424	.000	High
12	Faculty and administrative staff skills	3.60	0.973	14.943	.000	Medium
13	Information availability and E-learning	3.72	0.837	21.008	.000	High
14	Activities and Events	3.81	0.842	23.275	.000	High
15	Concerns about feedbacks	3.51	0.935	13.262	.000	Medium
16	Cultural diversity	3.96	0.761	30.590	.000	High
17	Voluntary work	3.64	0.863	17.850	.000	Medium
18	Action plans	3.77	0.820	22.545	.000	High
19	Organizational culture	3.82	0.807	24.497	.000	High
20	Protocols	3.79	0.826	23.142	.000	High
21	Open communication channels and continuous learning	3.50	0.905	13.379	.000	Medium
22	Intended learning outcomes	3.79	0.891	21.495	.000	High
23	University ranking and accreditation	3.78	0.968	19.491	.000	High
24	Ethics and integrity	3.93	0.962	23.468	.000	High
	Average mean for all	3.78	0.671	28.295	.000	High

Test Value = 3, Sig. = 0.05, t-Tabulated=1.960.

However, Table (3) shows that there is a significant difference between the perception of academic staff members related according to universities' sector (government and private), where t = -5.925, sig. = 0.000 for government, and t = -5.835, sig. = 0.000 for private. Private universities rated higher implementation of their policies (where the mean is 3.855 with standard deviation 0.650) than governmental universities (where their mean rated 2.436 with standard deviation 0.665).

Table (3): Group Statistics and Independent Samples Test for Sector

Sector	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variances Assumption	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.
Government	103	3.436	.665	Equal variances assumed	.162	.688	-5.925	588	.000
Private	487	3.855	.650	Equal variances not assumed			-5.835	146.085	.000

Table (4) shows that there is no significant difference in the academic ranking of academic staff members (professor, associate and assistant professor), where $F=1.639$, $sig.=0.195$. Table shows that they are almost similar in their perception towards the implementation of universities' policies.

Table (4): Descriptive and ANOVA test for Ranking:

Academic Ranking	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variances Assumption	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Professors	92	3.898	.660	Between Groups	1.473	2	.737	1.639	.195
Associate Prof.	138	3.767	.620	Within Groups	263.758	587	.449		
Assistant Prof.	360	3.758	.691	Total	265.231	589			

Table (5) shows that there is no significant difference in the academic position of academic staff members (dean, head of department and staff member), where $F=1.367$, $sig. =0.256$. Table shows that they are almost similar in their perception towards the implementation of universities' policies.

Table (5): Descriptive and ANOVA test for Position:

Position	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variances Assumption	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Deans	34	3.940	.582	Between Groups	1.230	2	.615	1.367	.256
Head of Departments	100	3.824	.607	Within Groups	264.001	587	.450		
Academic Member	456	3.761	.690	Total	265.231	589			
Total	590	3.782	.671						

A Bivariate Pearson Correlation coefficient is used to test the relationships between universities' policies variables. Results show that all variables are strongly related to each other, where r was rated between 0.411 and 0.819. Therefore, any change in one variable will strongly and significantly affect other variables. At the same time, all variables have strong and significant relationships with the total mean of implementation, where r ranges between 0.634 and 0.871. Therefore, each variable is strongly and significantly affecting the total mean of universities' polices implementation.

3.3. Discussion

Findings show that there is a semi agreement between academic staff members on a level of medium to high implementation of universities' policies variables. This reveals that the Jordanian universities are highly implementing their policies. T-value confirms these results. It also shows that there is a significant difference between Jordanian universities regarding their implementation of universities' policies. The current study results have been supported by many authors who discussed the importance of governance and policies within universities worldwide.

Brown (1999) concluded that faculty participation is important in decisions where faculty members have better information and better incentives than administrators or trustees. Cerulli and Reale (2011) stated policy responsiveness helps universities to positioning universities according to their responsiveness toward types of incentives which affect their performance. Akomolafe and Ibijola (2012) indicated that a significant relationship between organizational effectiveness and the rationale for students' participation in university governance. Aurangzeb and Asif (2012A) confirmed that good governance and management have positive on performance. Aurangzeb, and Asif (2012B) showed that there is significant relationship among the university governance and the level of employment. Bakioglu and Dalgic (2012) revealed that globalization has affected university policies in the areas of goals, marketing policies and the professional development opportunities provided for academics. Kavasakalis (2013) showed that the majority but not all academic community members have common beliefs and values concerning the university. Tenglewier, et. al. (2014) showed employee participation, play a critical role in enabling the university to obtain their desired competitive strategy and practice. Muljo, et. al. (2014) indicated there were 18 factors that affect the optimization of the implementation of good governance principles. Shattock (2014) stated combination of collegiality, co-optation, and control appear to have been successful in obtaining shared governance. Asiimwe and Steyn (2014) concluded that to build and sustain effective university governance, the following building blocks are critical: professional competence of members of the university board, quality governance structures, a participatory planning process and board participation in management. Finally to compare apple with apple, Wagfi (2014) study results showed that there was a medium degree of satisfaction of governance application in the private universities, while participation of decision making was low

The current study is in disagreement with some previous studies regarding some results related to implementation of universities' policies variables. Sanchez and Elena (2010) showed that real autonomy may be difficult to effectively implement without rethinking, and eventually changing, the university governance system. Arslan (2013) indicated that the members of board of trustees do not fulfill effectively their responsibilities and they need to improve their ability to provide better governance in the universities. Ashraf (2014) showed challenges for students in making choice for university because different governmental policies in different provinces creates imbalance between students and universities. Thanalerdsopit, et. al. (2014) showed the management challenges of higher education are specific to individual faculties and universities. Beg and Ashok (2015) indicated that various obstacles in universities are restraining efficient governance.

Finally, the current study result shows that there is a significant difference between the perceptions of academic staff members related to universities sector (government vs. private) where private universities rated higher implementation of their policies than governmental

universities. However, it also shows that there is no significant difference among in the academic ranking of academic staff members (professor, associate and assistant professor), they are almost similar in their perception of the implementation of universities' policies, and there is no significant difference in the academic position of academic staff members (dean, head of department and staff member), they are almost similar in their perception of the implementation of universities' policies. Finally, analysis shows that all variables are strongly related to each other, therefore, any change in one variable will strongly and significantly affect other variables. At the same time, all variables have strong and significant relationships with total mean of universities' policies implementation, therefore, each variable is strongly and significantly affecting the total mean of universities' polices implementation. This result is supported by Usman (2014) indicated that the private sector boards are more efficient than public sector boards that lack autonomy and are under strong political influence.

4. Conclusion:

Jordanian Universities are performing well compared to many other universities in the area and in the third world in terms of governance, but stating so does not mean that there are no gaps to be fulfilled. The struggle to prepare/attracts, maintain and retain talented people and best university graduates are escalating not only among organizations, but also among countries. Universities' policies are affecting the quality of teaching and quality of graduation outcome (graduates) not only to match with market needs, but also to come with something new. Universities should adopt policies on how to capture, maintain and retain best talented people whether students, employees or academic staffs.

Limitations and Recommendations:

The results and conclusion of this study should be interpreted in the light of the following limitations, which can be further developed to be recommendations:

1- Data collection was restricted to the period when study was conducted affecting the quality and quantity of collected data i.e. this study presents a snapshot research that does not consider feedback effects. Therefore, a longitudinal study to investigate the dynamic features of universities' policies would provide further robust results.

2- The research results are based on data collected from academic staff members. Therefore, it may have limited generalizability. Further work including samples from different stakeholders will help mitigate the issue of generalizing conclusions.

3- The study sample was restricted to Higher Education industry; it focuses on one type of industry. Further testing might consider a cross-sectional group of participants from a wide variety of industries, to test the degree to which the study results can be generalized to other organizations or industries.

4- The study was carried on Jordanian organizations. Generalizing Jordanian results to other countries may be questionable. Further empirical researches involving data collection over diverse countries are needed.

5- Lack of comparative studies in Jordan and other countries. Therefore, comparative researches with other universities (local, regional and international) are necessary in the future.

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