Teaching Workload and Performance: An Empirical Analysis on Some Selected Private Universities of Bangladesh

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Abstract:

The study was conducted to endeavor the relationship between workload and performance for Bangladeshi university teachers. Workload has been assumed to be independent factor having three sub-categories: time spent in teaching, administrative activities and co-curricular responsibilities. Teaching performance was the dependent variable having three sub-categories: quality of teaching delivery, quality & quantity of research & training and implementation of new technology in teaching. 250 teachers from different categories of fifteen universities were chosen as participants through convenience sampling. Pearson's correlation and regression analysis had been carried out to find the relationship between the variables. It was revealed that most independent variables are positively and strongly correlated with the dependent variables except time spent on teaching & implementation of new technology and administrative activities & implementation of new technology which are negatively correlated. The study indicates that to perform better, workload management should be appropriate and adjusted. The study will hopefully help the university management, academic researchers and trainers to formulate and implement an effective workload management system.

Key Words: Higher education, Workload, Teaching performance, Teacher, University.

1. Introduction

There are 37 public and 85 private and 3 foreign universities in Bangladesh (University Grants Commission, 2016). Private universities in Bangladesh are dependent mainly on the tuition fees provided by the students. Therefore, unlike public or foreign universities, they mainly focus on cost control with their regular academic and development activities. Faculty members of private universities have to maintain strictly a definite period of time at his/her room as either office or consulting hour. In addition to that, some academicians in private universities often have to undertake administrative posts with their usual job responsibilities. These additional time hours spent are increasing their workload.

As the employees of highest educational institutions, university teachers might not be expected to undertake any additional responsibilities without appropriate additional benefit. Private universities were the reason identified for high academic and administrative workload. Very few private universities in Bangladesh provides the opportunity to study, research and engage in other forms of professional development while some universities have made the teaching profession more attractive by providing attractive compensation package.

Recent trend in university teaching in Bangladesh predicts that teachers, especially private university teachers are being engaged in more and more administrative responsibilities with or without additional benefit. The most negative part of such involvement is that it will reduce the time spent on research and development activities for them which are the core indicators for a teacher's performance. It should be noted here that the scenario is different for public and private universities where public university teachers are more relaxed but private university teachers are usually overloaded.

2. Research Gap and Rationale of the Study

Although a lot of researches were conducted in finding the relationship between workload and performance, most of them were done in western developed countries. There is a great deal of difference in perception of workload between other countries and Bangladeshi context. Therefore, considering the practical aspects of Bangladeshi higher education industry, there have been a few studies conducted so far. The study is aimed at identifying the tentative impact of faculty members' workload on their teaching performance and if there is any relationship exists, whether is it significant or not. The study is expected to be helpful for the university authorities to determine the realistic faculty workload and also how to increase their teaching and research performance as a whole.

3. The Changing Nature of Teaching

Teaching is not now as it was about 20 years ago because of ever changing adoption of technology. The lecture delivery has now upgraded from traditional chalk and duster to power point slides. Also, the assessment method has been changed to different alternatives. Previously, it was limited to only written test and interview, whereas many university teachers now adopting power point presentation, practical assignments, case based assignments, industrial tour, and so on. However, Riordan (1993) points out that the dominant affordances of teaching in higher education continue to be restricted to i) lecturing and delivering or presenting information and to ii) teaching taking place predominantly within the classroom (O'Sullivan and Samarawickrema, 2008). A technology of education approach therefore advocates that university teachers as educators think deeply and carefully about what and how they want their students to learn (Ramsden, 2003), placing emphasis on active participation and the social aspects of learning yet guided by the discipline they teach in serving as the framework for the design of learning experiences which will "… ensure that students develop the understanding and abilities they need in order to respond to and shape the world in which they live" (Riordan, 1993).

4. The Concept of Teaching Workload and Performance

The concept of teaching workload in Bangladesh is not confined to the regular teaching activities like taking classes, preparing lesson plan, evaluating the scripts, attending training programs and conferences. Here the teachers have to involve themselves in different non-academic activities

like proctoring, coordinating different university activities, taking various administrative posts (other than academic) etc. As a whole, a teacher normally spends 40 to 48 hours in his/her workplace depending on the responsibilities he holds. However, this scenario varies from university to university.

On the other hand, performance of a university teacher is based on his dedication to the job, the percentage of success of students, research and development, active communication between him/he and students etc.

In this study, the workload (independent variable) have been assumed to be time spent on teaching (regular), administrative (additional) and co-curricular responsibilities. On the other hand, three components of performance (dependent variable) are quality of teaching delivery, quantity and quality of research & training and implementation of new technology in teaching.

5. Literature Review

Conventionally, universities have defined the role of academic staffs to three domains of teaching, research and service with primary emphasis placed upon the teaching and research aspects and secondary upon service or administration (Houston et al., 2006). In an increasingly demanding and growing environment of administrative activities, teachers are now gradually undertaking the complex and hectic responsibilities of administrative jobs that are related to the institution. Universities are the only organizations focused on dual core functions of knowledge creation and knowledge transmission through the process of research and teaching (Romainville, 1996). The job life of a university academic staff is predominantly framed and shaped by commitments and performance in these functions (Peter et al., 2014).

Jenkins (2004) noted with existing evidence that commitments to teaching and research can be either synergistic and complementary or antagonistic and competing. He (Jenkins, 2004) argued that the relationship between research, teaching, broader work expectations and rewards need to be defined and managed at the institutional, departmental and individual levels to avoid potentially undesirable effects and counterproductive behaviors. Leslie (2002) found that salary and job satisfaction were not correlated and that faculty (who spent the majority of their time in teaching) reported a preference for being rewarded for teaching effectiveness.

Kerr (1975) noted that the society hopes that the teachers specially the university teachers will not neglect their teaching responsibilities, but reward them almost entirely for research and publications. He (Kerr, 1975) added that it is rational for a university teacher to concentrate on research, even to the detriment of teaching and at the expense of their students. McInnes (1999-2000) found that the level of communication remains high with academic staffs attributing this to intrinsic motivators rather than extrinsic factors such as salary and working conditions. Challenge, variety and autonomy are the key elements of the academic staffs to engage in core activities like critical thinking, reflection and collegial interactions in the context of disciplinary interests and expertise (Winter et al., 2000). Flexibility and autonomy are the key factors in becoming and remaining an academician (Bellamy et al., 2003).

In New Zealand, tertiary reforms have sought to refine the role of higher education and define university linkages to enhance national economic development and to make universities more

accountable to the government, students as consumers and the public in general (Patterson, 1996), while subjecting them to more centralized control mechanism. Where pursuit of the knowledge society has resulted in increased pressures and performance expectations, workloads of academic staffs have been influenced directly (Philip and James, 2015). Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) noted that as academic work expanded to meet growing expectations, universities and individual academicians have responded through "accumulation and accretion" rather than adaptation. McInnes (2000) highlighted the need to investigate workload issues such as increased stress on staff, development of creative solutions and sustaining the primary sources of work satisfaction that best promotes quality.

Sullivan (1997) and Chalmers (1998) found that staffs were reporting increased work related stress associated with the academic work and more and more work related illness or injuries like headache, constipation, epilepsy, insomnia etc. in compared to previous years. As a result, workload systems management has increasingly been a factor in recent years in contract negotiations and collective employee agreements (Peter et al., 2014).

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On the other hand, performance of a university teacher is based on his dedication to the job, the percentage of success of students, research and development, active communication between him/he and students etc.

In this study, the workload (independent variable) have been assumed to be time spent on teaching (regular) (IV_1), administrative (additional) (IV_2) and co-curricular responsibilities (IV_3). On the other hand, three components of performance (dependent variable) are quality of teaching delivery (DV_1), quantity and quality of research & training (DV_2) and implementation of new technology in teaching (DV_3).

5.1.1 Quality of Teaching Delivery

A very essential factor of teaching performance is how the teacher delivers his/her lectures to the students, i.e. quality of delivering the lecture. MacGregor (2007) proposed that a quality lecture should have i) a clear purpose of the lesson as well as the expected outcome(s), ii) built background by linking concepts to student background, past learning and key vocabulary, iii) a clear structural idea to all the students and allows for different pathways according to student needs, iv) a variety of questioning strategies and used to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills, v) approved adequate time for the students to respond, vi) instructional approaches that are adapted to meet the needs of diversified learners, and vii) a well instruction to meet the proficiency levels of all the students in a classroom (The Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc., 2007).

5.1.2 Quantity and Quality of Research & Training

Another performance dimension of in teaching is the quantity and quality of research has teacher has and the amount of training he/she received. This is especially true for university teachers where there is a proverb well circulated "publish or perish". A teacher must publish a good amount of articles published in referred journals with a good reputation; he/she should attend in national and international seminars, conferences, workshops and training programs to gather and develop up to date knowledge and information about teaching, learning and development.

5.1.3 Implementation of New Technology in Teaching

The application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is changing the organizational setup and delivery of higher education at almost every year. The pedagogical and socio-economic forces that have driven the higher learning institutions to adopt and incorporate ICTs in teaching and learning include greater information access; greater communication; synchronous and asynchronous learning; increased cooperation and collaboration, cost-effectiveness and pedagogical improvement (Sife, Lwoga and Sanga, 2007). However, ICTs have not permeated to a great extent in many higher learning institutions in most developing and underdeveloped countries due to many socio-economic and technological shortages. However, application of technology information system has been an inevitable part of modern teaching.

6. Research Hypotheses and Conceptual Framework

From the introduction and literature review part of this study, the following hypotheses might be developed.

H$_1$: There is a positive and significant relationship between workload (teaching and non-teaching) and teaching performance.

H$_2$: There is a positive but insignificant relationship (teaching and non-teaching) between workload and teaching performance.
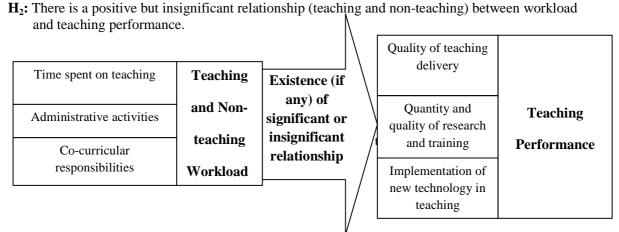

Figure-1: Conceptual Framework

7. Research Methodology and Methods

In this study, convenience sampling has been used since the numbers involved were the academic teaching staffs at the main campuses not the distance campuses. The intention of the research was to find out whether workload has any direct or indirect impact on teaching performance and, if there is any relationship, is it significant or not.

7.1 Research Design

In this study, descriptive method has been adopted. Descriptive design helps to answer questions concerning the current status of the respondents under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Descriptive research can include multiple variables for the study (Borg and Gall, 1996). Description emerges following creative exploration and serves to organize the findings in order to fit them with explanations and then test or validate those explanations (Krathwoh, 1998). Kothari (2009) pointed out that descriptive research studies are concerned with specific predictions, narration of facts and characteristics concerning individuals, groups or situations.

7.2 Target Population

The target population is composed of fifteen private universities. The category of staff focused on were the academic teaching staffs ranging from lecturers to professors. The total numbers of participants in this study were 250. The researcher targeted the teaching staff members since the main function of private universities are quality of teaching delivery, quantity and quality of research & training and implementation of new technology in teaching which is formulated, implemented and monitored by themselves.

7.3 Data Collection Method

A questionnaire was provided to each respondent and picked later. The questionnaire included both open ended and closed ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into three parts namely, demographic variables, teaching practices and expected performance from them. Where additional information was required, semi-structured interviews were conducted.

7.4 Questionnaire Design

A questionnaire was designed in a five point Likert scale to measure the relationship between workload and performance. Five point Likert type scale has been used in the questionnaire to measure HR practices where 5 was considered as strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for no comment, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. The questionnaire had 66 questions altogether.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were used. Qualitative data were applicable as meanings were based on expressions through words and analysis was conducted through the use of conceptualization. Quantitative data were applicable because meanings were derived from numbers and analysis was conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics (Mark et al., 2007). The information were coded and analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software package.

Table-1
Questionnaire distribution according to category (Independent variables)

Category	No. of Questions in the Questionnaire
Time spent on teaching	7
Administrative or non-teaching activities	9
Co-curricular activities	11

Total questions	27

Table-2
Questionnaire distribution according to category (Dependent variables)

Category	No. of Questions in the Questionnaire
Quality of teaching delivery	13
Quality and quantity of research and training	15
Implementation of new technology in teaching	11
Total questions	**39**

7.5 Analysis of Data

The Cronbach co-efficient was used to find the inter item consistency reliability (Walsh, 1995). Cronbach alpha for regular teaching was 0.9609, for administrative responsibilities 0.8362, for co-curricular activities 0.9176, for quality of teaching delivery 0.8311, for quality and quantity of research and training 0.7613 and for implementation of new technology in teaching, it was 0.9273. Therefore, it is evident that each instrument's internal reliability was quite satisfactory. Multiple regression analysis was performed to identify the effect and significance level of each independent variable on dependent variables.

8. Results and Discussions
8.1 Pearson's correlation between independent and dependent variables

Table 3
Pearson's correlation between the components of workload and performance

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables		
	Quality of Teaching delivery	Quality and quantity of research and training	Implementation of new technology in teaching
Time spent on teaching	0.12	0.23	-0.39
Administrative or non-teaching activities	0.34	0.97	-0.005
Co-curricular activities	0.57	0.83	0.35

Table-3 shows that almost all the dependent and independent variables (expect between time spent on teaching & implementation of new technology and administrative or non-teaching activities & implementation of new technology in teaching) are positively correlated with each other. Among them, there is a strong positive correlation between co-curricular activities and quality of teaching delivery; between administrative or non-teaching activities and quality & quantity of research & training; and between co-curricular activities and quality & quantity of research & training.

8.2 Regression Analysis

The strengths of influence that each independent variable had on the dependent variable were determined by multiple regression coefficients of the independent variables. The influence of each independent variable is shown in Table-3.

Table 4
Results of Regression Analysis

Independent Variables	(β)	Standard Error	Significance	R^2
Regression Analysis of Teaching Performance(Overall):				
Time spent on teaching (IV_1)	0.33	0.11	0.001	
Administrative or non-teaching activities (IV_2)	0.21	0.23	0.003	0.43
Co-curricular activities (IV_3)	0.12	0.07	0.023	
Regression Analysis of Quality of Teaching Delivery (DV_1):				
Time spent on teaching (IV_1)	0.45	0.12	0.022	
Administrative or non-teaching activities (IV_2)	0.39	0.22	0.036	0.33
Co-curricular activities (IV_3)	0.37	0.20	0.009	
Regression Analysis of Quality and Quantity of Research and Training (DV_2):				
Time spent on teaching (IV_1)	0.19	0.17	0.045	
Administrative or non-teaching activities (IV_2)	0.22	0.21	0.039	0.29
Co-curricular activities (IV_3)	0.29	0.13	0.022	
Regression Analysis of Implementation of New Technology in Teaching (DV_3):				
Time spent on teaching (IV_1)	0.51	0.15	0.000	
Administrative or non-teaching activities (IV_2)	0.49	0.21	0.044	0.41
Co-curricular activities (IV_3)	0.33	0.15	0.018	

The results from Table-4 reveal that there is positive relationship between quality of teaching delivery (Dependent Variable-1) and three independent variables. Same result has also been derived between DV_2 and three independent variables (IV_1, IV_2 and IV_3). In case of third dependent variable also, the relationship is positive. In addition, the regression analysis was carried out inbetween the independent variables and the dependent variable as a whole IV_1 and DV ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.05$), IV_2 and DV ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$); and IV_3 and DV ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$). The values of R^2 obtained from different models range from 29% to 43%.

9. Findings and Recommendations

There was an open end part on the questionnaire where the participants were allowed to put their general opinions and suggestions in regard to workload and teaching performance. The main findings observed by them was too much workload (teaching and administrative) is not conductive for their overall teaching performance though they were willing to or have to take them with or without payment. There is a general observation by most of them that excessive workload is mainly make them exhausted at the end of the day which in turn destroying their research capabilities and creating problems in their work/life balance. However, the recommendations found from them have been summarized below:

1. At the preliminary stage of teaching, less workload (teaching and non-teaching) should be provided so that they can allocate more time in research and training.
2. At the mid or upper stages, moderate workload might be given considering the maturity and administrative experience.
3. All the additional loads (teaching and non-teaching) must be provided with appropriate compensation which would keep them motivated.

4. Any additional load (teaching or non-teaching) must not be imposed on anyone, rather it must be provided on the basis of prior participative meeting with the approval of respective faculty member. It will help him/her to adjust the additional load with normal ones.
5. Additional responsibilities must be included in the performance appraisal process.

10. Limitations and Future Scope

The study was limited to the relation between workload and performance only. There might be more other reasons (e.g. intention to carry out research) why a teacher performs good or bad. So the scope was limited in one particular area. Again, the study was limited to a particular culture. A cross-cultural study might have provided different results. Therefore, there is a further scope and opportunities remains for this study in future. The author hopes that this research would be of further help for researchers, academicians and university management teams to identify the reasons of good or bad performance and shape a reasonable workload management that will be helpful for all the stakeholders of a university or any other educational institution.

11. Conclusion

As a noble profession, teachers should be well aware of their duties and responsibilities which they cannot or should not avoid. He or she should be reasonable enough in taking any additional responsibilities that will cost his/her core responsibilities of his/her profession. On the other hand, the authorities should also allocate the additional duties and responsibilities in such a way that will not hamper or destroy the teachers' development.

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