

A Study of Research Trends at Master Level in Education in the Universities of Punjab: Period from 1988 to 2008

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Abstract

The present study purports to explore research trends at Master level in education departments of different universities of the province of Punjab from 1988 to 2008. The objectives of the study were to analyze research areas and methodologies, give critical review on research studies, and classify and compare research activities of Master level theses in education departments of the selected universities of Punjab. The population for the study comprised of public sector universities of Punjab while the sample consisted of five universities; namely, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, Government College University Faisalabad, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, University of the Punjab Lahore, and University of Sargodha. The study was based on documentary analysis of the research theses conducted in education departments of the selected universities. The researchers collected 1132 research theses from the available sample and analyzed their abstracts to classify and quantify the studies into different areas and methodologies. It was concluded that a few research areas were greatly addressed whereas some research areas were ignored by the research scholars. For instance, the results indicate that the majority of research scholars worked in the area of teacher education and ignored the area of guidance and counseling. Therefore, it is recommended that the ignored areas should be focused in future studies. In addition, an encyclopedia of research activities should be developed at provincial and national level and its copies should be provided to all the universities to promote research culture at university level.

Keywords: Research trends, Research scholars, Research areas, Methodologies

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Introduction

Education develops the personality of an individual to make him/her suitable for ideal social values and collective social life of society. Dynamic nature of values of life is an admitted fact while research in education plays a key role to develop society according to new scenario of changing social values of life. Research in education is logical, formal, systematic and an intensive process of scientific inquiry (Tuckman, 1999). It comprises of well-structured investigation to record and report results and conclusions (Best & Kahn, 2007; Gay, 2007). Research is an integral part of university education system and it also provides basic foundations for the development of life. Therefore, each discipline and department has a separate research and development section (Opie, et al., 2004). Educational researchers in Pakistan are facing different problems like shortage of relevant literature, decision making about their research area and specified titles. Many of the researchers repeat previous research works. Abstract writing is description of summary of research area, methods and results of the study. It is an important section of summary about systematic and structured procedures to shortly narrate the larger research work in a few sentences.

Abstract is a basic research element of a research study. It describes research work briefly and comprehensively. As regards the current study, it will help in sharing knowledge and information about the research activities, research areas and applied methodologies. This study will help to create research oriented environment at higher education institutions in Pakistan. Consequently, there will be a rapid increase in publications at national and international level.

The researchers thoroughly studied and reviewed the research studies carried out by Master Level students in the departments of education at the selected universities. The researchers calculated and compared applied methodologies and research areas that were considered for conducting the studies. For this purpose, the researchers followed the following elements to review the research studies conducted by the research scholars at the selected universities.

- Title
- Year
- Degree
- Pages
- Institute
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- Objectives of the study
- Methodology
- Results
- Recommendations

In this respect, a brief introduction of selected universities and education departments are given as follows:

Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) Multan

BZU Multan was founded in 1975 by the then Prime Minister; Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. It was named as Bahauddin Zakariya University in 1979 to accredit the great saint; Bahauddin Zakariya. By 2008, seventy nine affiliated colleges were working under the auspicious of BZU Multan. The education department was set up in 1986 to offer teacher training programs that facilitated advanced studies and research in education for the students of Southern Punjab (Prospectus BZU, 2008).

The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB)

The initial name of Jamia Abbasia was declared as The Islamia University of Bahawalpur in 1975 that comprised of Abbasia and Khawaja Fareed campuses with 10 departments and was allotted 1250 acres land 8 kilometer away from the city Bahawalpur. The department of education was established in 1988 and launched MA Education program to produce qualified teachers, planners, administrators, educationalists, curriculum designers and researchers who can improve the system and standard of education in Pakistan (Prospectus IUB, 2008).

Government College University (GCU) Faisalabad

Post Graduate College Faisalabad was upgraded as university in 2002 and emerged as a leading institute for promoting quality education and research activities in a very short period of time. The university focused to produce highly qualified professionals for all sphere of life especially good administrators, managers, businessmen and educationists. For the betterment of public, it also started teacher education programs (Prospectus GCUF, 2008).

University of Sargodha (UOS)

UOS was established under the Government of the Punjab Ordinance in 2002. After the inception of the university, the education department started MA education immediately on priority basis. Various research oriented courses were appreciated by experts who visited the department time to time to enhance the quality of teaching and research. Young and highly qualified faculty members worked for the uplift of the university (Prospectus & UOS, 2006).

University of the Punjab (PU), Lahore

The University of the Punjab, Lahore was established in 1882. It was the first ever institute of higher studies for Muslim majority areas of the subcontinent. The university established a post-graduate college; namely, Institute of Education and Research (IER) in 1960 in collaboration with the school of education, Indiana University, USA. In the field

of education, it is a pioneer and prestigious for advanced studies in Pakistan. The major aims and objectives of the institute include providing facilities, teaching, and training to the students of Master, M.Phil and PhD in education degrees (Prospectus & PU, 2008).

In view of the situation, the current study aims to analyze and compare different research trends of Master Level theses conducted during past 20 years (between 1988 & 2008) in the education departments at public sector universities to improve the quality of research work. The objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the methodologies and research areas of Master Level theses of education departments of the selected universities.
2. categorize the research theses into different areas of education.
3. compare the research contribution of different universities of Punjab.

Research Methodology

The current study was based on documentary analysis. A documentary analysis type study is considered appropriate since it deals with historical events (Agarwal, 1991). In the present study, content analysis approach was used by the researchers. It focused on calculating and comparing research trends and methodologies applied and areas of research at Master Level in education in Pakistan. For this purpose, the researchers adopted a model to collect data from the selected theses. The model includes name of the researcher, title of the study, year in which the study was conducted, degree for whom thesis was required, institution where the study was carried out, contents, objectives, research methodologies, conclusions and recommendations of the research studies. The collected data were categorized the studies in different areas of research.

The researchers presented results in frequencies and percentages of different research areas and methodologies. In addition, the results of the studies were also compared with each other. The researchers commented on the quality of research work of the studies in a qualitative way that is recommended by Marguerite, Dean, and Katherine (2007). The population comprised of research theses of Master Level from education departments of the selected universities of the Punjab province. Five universities; namely, Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, Government College University Faisalabad, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, University of the Punjab Lahore, and University of Sargodha were selected randomly from all the universities of the province of Punjab. The researchers personally visited the selected universities, their libraries, education departments and information resource centers to collect the data. The researchers arranged and classified data into distinct categories according to applied methodologies and research areas. The research areas of Master Level studies were categorized based on the following aspects of the studies.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Achievement test | 2. Comparative study |
| 3. Curriculum | 4. Educational psychology |
| 5. Measurement, assessment and evaluation | 6. Gender education |
| 7. Guidance and counseling | 8. Sociology |
| 9. Administration, supervision and management | 10. Teaching learning process |
| 11. Teacher education and problems | 12. Abstract writing |
| 13. Teaching methodology | 14. Literacy |
| 15. Information technology | 16. Opinion evaluation |
| 17. Special education | 18. Science education |
| 19. Islamic education | 20. Miscellaneous |

Findings of the Study

Overall 1132 (Table 1) research theses were reviewed from the selected universities and found that IUB approved 528 theses for Master degree during 1988 to 2008, BZU approved 290 studies during 1988 to 2007. UOS approved 87 while GCUF approved 54 during 2003-2008 and PU conducted 173 researches from 1988 to 2008.

Table 1

Number of studies taken from the selected universities

No.	Universities	No. of Researches at Master Level
1	IUB	528 (1988-2008)
2.	BZU	290(1988-2007)
3.	PU	173(2005-2008)
4.	GCUF	54(2003-2008)
5.	UOS	87(2003-2008)
Total		1132

The IUB contributed overall 46.64% while GCU Faisalabad contributed only 4.77%. BZU and PU produced 25.61% and 15.28% of the total research studies respectively. The research area of teacher education and problems contributed greater portion (12.1%) than any other research area while information technology contributed less (only 0.88%) than any other research area. UOS contributed 13.79% to teacher education and problems, 12.64% to administration supervision and management of its total collected theses while areas of curriculum, guidance and counseling each secured only 1.15% share. GCUF devoted 16.66% to the area of educational psychology and 9.26% to the area of gender education of its total collected theses. The area of guidance and counseling limited to only 1.85%. PU conducted 13.87% studies in sociology and 10.98% studies were conducted in administration supervision and management while the areas of opinion evaluation and gender education each secured 1.16% of its total collected

theses. BZU carried out 14.83% studies to the area of achievement test and performance and the area of educational psychology covered 3.8% of its total Master Level theses while the area of guidance and counseling limited to only 0.69%. IUB devoted 13.82% of its total collected theses to the area of teacher education and problem and 10.03% to the area of comparative study while the area of teaching methodology got only 0.38% share.

University of Sargodha

Table 2

Distribution of the studies according to the research areas and methodology

Sr. No.	Research Area	Theses	Percentage	Research Methodology
1	Achievement test and performance	06	6.90	Descriptive Method
2	Comparative study	10	11.49	Historical and Descriptive Method
3	Curriculum	01	1.15	Descriptive method
4	Educational psychology	21	24.13	Descriptive method
5	Gender education	03	3.45	Descriptive method
6	Guidance and counseling	01	1.15	Descriptive method
7	Measurement, assessment and evaluation	03	3.45	Descriptive method
8	Miscellaneous	05	5.75	Descriptive method
9	Administration, supervision and management	11	12.64	Descriptive method
10	Sociology	05	5.75	Descriptive method
11	Teacher education and problems	12	13.79	Descriptive method
12	Teaching learning process	06	6.90	Descriptive method
13	Teaching methodology	03	3.45	Descriptive method
	Total	87	100%	

Table 2 reveals that UOS carried out 87 studies at Master Level in the discipline of education. 6.90% studies were conducted in the research area of achievement and performance while same numbers of studies were carried out in the area of administration, supervision and management. Comparative studies shared 11.49% while 1.15 % share was contributed by the area of curriculum and the same numbers of researches were contributed in the area of guidance and counseling at UOS. The area of educational psychology comprised of 24.31% share of total studies while the area of measurement, assessment and evaluation and teaching methodology each section contributed 3.45% share. Sociology and miscellaneous each contributed 5.75% of the total studies. Gender education made 3.45% part of total researches. Teacher education and problems consisted of 13.79% of total researches. The overall studies used descriptive method while the comparative studies consisted of 11.49% of overall researches applied descriptive and historical methods.

Government College University Faisalabad

Table 3

Distribution of theses according to the research areas

Sr. No.	Research Areas	Theses	Percentage	Research Methodology
1	Achievement test and performance	03	5.56	Descriptive Method
2	Comparative study	02	3.7	Historical and Descriptive Method
3	Curriculum	04	7.40	Descriptive method
4	Educational psychology	09	16.66	Descriptive method
5	Gender education	05	9.26	Descriptive method
6	Guidance and counseling	01	1.85	Descriptive method
7	Measurement assessment and evaluation	03	5.55	Descriptive method
8	Administration supervision and management	05	9.27	Descriptive method
9	Sociology	07	12.96	Descriptive method
10	Teacher education and problems	05	9.27	Descriptive method
11	Teaching learning process	06	11.12	Descriptive method
12	Educational problem	04	7.40	Descriptive method
	Total	54	100%	

Table 3 explores the results of GCUF and it reveals that GCUF conducted 54 studies in the field of education at Master Level during 2003 to 2008. It shows that each area such as achievement test and performance and measurement, assessment and evaluation consisted of 5.56% of the total researches. The results of the study show that the area of comparative study covered 3.7% of total researches while the area of curriculum and educational problems covered 7.4% each. Educational psychology contributed 16.66% share in total researches at Master Level in GCUF. Gender education as well as teacher education contributed 9.27% each while the area of teaching learning process covered 11.12% of the total researches. Sociology covered 12.96% and the area of administration, supervision and management covered 9.27%. On the whole, 94.4% of the total research studies used descriptive method of research while only 3.7% employed comparative studies. Only 1.85% of total research studies applied experimental method of research.

University of the Punjab (PU)

Table 4 shows the results of the studies carried out at PU and it reveals that PU conducted 173 studies in different disciplines of education at Master Level during 2005 to 2008. Furthermore, the results indicate that the area of achievement test and performance contributed 1.73% of the total researches that were taken from PU. It reveals that the

university devoted 6.94% studies in the area of comparative study in selected theses. The area of curriculum contributed 5.78%, area of educational psychology covered 11.56% of selected researches while gender education and opinion evaluation each contributed 1.16% of total research theses. Area of measurement assessment and evaluation as well as teaching learning process consisted of 8.67% each. The area of administration, supervision and management covered 10.98% and area of miscellaneous group consisted of 6.37% of total research studies. The areas of sociology covered 13.87% and teacher education and problem made up of 10.4% of total research theses.

Table 4

Distribution of theses according to the research areas

Sr. No.	Research Areas	Theses	Percentage	Research Methodology
1	Achievement test and performance	3	1.73	Descriptive Method
2	Comparative study	12	6.94	Historical and Descriptive Method
3	Curriculum	10	5.78	Descriptive method
4	Educational psychology	20	11.56	Descriptive method
5	Gender education	2	1.16	Descriptive method
6	Measurement assessment and evaluation	15	8.67	Descriptive method
7	Miscellaneous	11	6.36	Descriptive method
8	Administration supervision and management	19	10.98	Descriptive method
9	Sociology	24	13.87	Descriptive method
10	Teacher education and problems	18	10.40	Descriptive method
11	Teaching learning process	15	8.67	Descriptive method
12	Teaching methodology	4	2.31	Descriptive method
13	Opinion evaluation	2	1.16	Descriptive method
14	Science education	14	8.09	Descriptive method
15	Special education	4	2.32	Descriptive method
	Total	173	100%	

The area of special education and teaching methodology each covered 2.32% share while science education secured 8.09% weight from overall studies conducted by PU at Master Level. The majority of the studies used descriptive method while comparative studies comprised of only 6.94% of the overall studies.

Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan

Table 5 shows that BZU Multan conducted 290 researches in the discipline of education at Master level. It further reveals that the area of achievement test and performance covered 14.83% of total research theses. The area of comparative study covered 11.73%

and curriculum consisted of 11.04% of total collected theses from BZU. The area of educational psychology contributed 13.8% share and gender education as well as miscellaneous area covered 2.41% share each while guidance and counseling consisted of 0.69% of total researches. The area of Islamic education consisted of 1.72% and measurement, assessment and evaluation made up of 12.41% of total research studies. The area of administration supervision and management consisted of 3.44% while sociology contributed 1.38% of total research theses. The area of teacher education and problem covered 8.28% of total researches. The area of teaching methodology contributed 1.38% of total researches while opinion evaluation contributed 3.8%. BZU devoted 10.68% weight to science education in its total research theses for the degree of Master of Arts in Education. Like other universities, the research scholars of BZU applied descriptive method in majority of the studies while comparative studies consisted of 11.74% of overall researches.

Table 5

Distribution of theses according to the research areas

Sr. No	Research Areas	Theses	Percentage	Research Methodology
1	Achievement test and performance	43	14.83	Descriptive Method
2	Comparative study	34	11.73	Historical and Descriptive Method
3	Curriculum	32	11.04	Descriptive method
4	Educational psychology	40	13.8	Descriptive method
5	Gender education	07	2.41	Descriptive method
6	Guidance counseling	02	0.69	Descriptive method
7	Islamic education	05	1.72	Descriptive method
8	Measurement assessment and evaluation	36	12.41	Descriptive method
9	Miscellaneous	07	2.41	Descriptive method
10	Administration supervision and management	10	3.44	Descriptive method
11	Sociology	04	1.38	Descriptive method
12	Teacher education and problems	24	8.28	Descriptive method
13	Teaching methodology	04	1.38	Descriptive method
14	Opinion evaluation	11	3.8	Descriptive method
15	Science education	31	10.68	Descriptive method
	Total	290	100%	

The Islamia University of Bahawalpur

Table 6 shows the results of the research studies conducted in IUB during 1988 to 2008 and the results indicate that IUB conducted 528 researches in the discipline of education. The university contributed 3.4% of its total theses in the area of achievement test and

performance. Comparative study comprised of 10.03% of the total theses. The area of curriculum covered 5.11% and educational psychology contributed 7.38% of total theses of IUB. It shared 4.73% studies in the area of gender education while the area of guidance and counseling contributed 1.32% share in the total researches. The area of measurement, assessment and evaluation covered 9.84% of the total researches. 7.38% studies were conducted in the research area of administration supervision and management while 13.82% studies were carried out in the area of teacher education and problems. Teaching learning process covered 4.16% while IUB devoted only 4.73% weightage to abstract writing. Another area assumed by IUB information technology contributed 1.89% of the total theses. The area of Islamic education covered 5.12% and teaching methodology comprised of 0.38% of total theses of education department. Except for the comparative studies, all studies applied descriptive method while comparative studies used descriptive and historical method of research which consisted of 10.03% of overall researches.

Table 6
Distribution of theses according to the research areas

Sr. No.	Research Areas	Theses	Percentage	Research Methodology
1	Achievement test and performance	18	3.40	Descriptive Method
2	Comparative study	53	10.03	Historical and Descriptive
3	“Curriculum”	27	5.11	Descriptive Method
4	Educational psychology	39	7.38	Descriptive Method
5	Gender education	25	4.73	Descriptive Method
6	Guidance and counseling	7	1.32	Descriptive Method
7	Measurement assessment and evaluation	52	9.84	Descriptive Method
8	Administration supervision and management	39	7.38	Descriptive Method
9	Teacher education and problems	73	13.82	Descriptive Method
10	Teaching learning process	22	4.16	Descriptive Method
11	Abstract writing	25	4.73	Historical method
12	Sociology	28	5.31	Descriptive Method
13	Science education	21	3.98	Experimental and Descriptive
14	Special education	8	1.51	Descriptive Method
15	Literacy problem	14	2.67	Descriptive Method
16	Information technology	10	1.89	Descriptive Method
17	Islamic education	27	5.12	Historical method
18	Miscellaneous	38	7.19	Descriptive Method
19	Teaching methodology	02	0.38	Descriptive Method
	Total	528	100%	

Comparison of the selected universities

The research studies conducted in the selected universities are compared and elaborated as follows:

Achievement test and performance

Overall 73 theses out of 1132 studies of the selected universities focused on achievement test and performance and BZU Multan contributed 58.9% of total collected theses amongst the selected universities. On the other hand, PU and GCUF each contributed 4.1% share in the research studies.

Comparative study

Only 111 theses were conducted in the area of comparative studies at Master Level in which IUB shared 47.74% of total research studies while GCUF has only 1.8% share.

Curriculum

The area of curriculum was addressed in 74 theses by all selected universities in which BZU shared 43.24% as compared to UOS which contributed 1.35% share of the total research theses.

Educational psychology

BZU worked on 31% studies as compared to the least work (6.97%) done by GCUF out of 129 theses in the research area of educational psychology.

Gender education

Only 42 theses out of 1132 were carried out in gender education in which IUB shared 59.52% as compared to the least amount (4.67%) by PU.

Measurement assessment and evaluation

Overall 109 researchers of all selected universities studied were carried out in the area of measurement, assessment and evaluation during selected period in which IUB covered 47.7% as compared to 3.75% of each UOS and GCUF.

Guidance and counseling

The research scholars of IUB contributed 63.64% as compared to 1.85% of GCUF in the research area of guidance and counseling out of 11 theses of all selected universities in this area.

Administration supervisor and management

In the research area of administration, supervision and management, IUB contributed 46.42% and GCUF 5.95% out of 84 of total research theses of all the universities.

Sociology

The area of sociology contributed 68 research studies out of 1132 theses. IUB conducted 41.17% studies as compared to 5.88% of BZU in the research area of sociology.

Teacher education and problems

Teacher education and problems shared 136 theses in which IUB contributed 53.67% while GCUF shared only 6.61%.

Teaching methodology

Each of BZU and PU contributed 30.76% in the research area of teaching methodology out of 13 research theses of all universities while GCUF shared nothing in this area.

Abstract writing and literacy

The areas of abstract writing and literacy, all studies were carried out at IUB. Other universities had no contribution in this area.

Information technology

IUB contributed 100% in information technology with 10 theses. Whereas all other selected universities have done nothing in this research area.

Special education

IUB also contributed 66.66% work in special education as compared to 33.33% of PU out of 12 research theses while all other universities remained silent in this matter.

Science education

The area of science education was mostly covered by BZU (46.96%) out of 66 theses of total research studies in this area while UOS and GCUF contributed nothing.

Opinion evaluation

Opinion evaluation has secured only 13 theses out of 1132 and 84.61% studies were conducted by BZU while the remaining 15.39% were done by PU.

Islamic education

Only 32 research studies were conducted in the area of Islamic education amongst the selected universities in which IUB contributed 84.37% of total research work while UOS, GCUF and PU contributed nothing.

Miscellaneous

In the category of miscellaneous, there were 61 theses in which IUB shared 62.30% and GCUF shared nothing.

Table 7

Comparison among five universities of the province of Punjab

Research Areas	Total theses	UOS		GCF		IER		BZU		IUB	
		Theses	%age	Theses	%age	Theses	%age	Theses	%age	Theses	%age
Achievement test	73	6	8.2	3	4.1	3	4.1	43	58.9	18	24.68
Comparative study	111	10	9	2	1.8	12	10.8	34	30.63	53	47.74
Curriculum	74	1	1.35	4	5.40	10	13.51	32	43.24	27	36.48
Educational psychology	129	21	16.27	9	6.97	20	15.50	40	31	39	30.23
Gender education	42	3	7.14	5	11.90	2	4.76	7	16.67	25	59.52
Measurement assessment	109	3	2.75	3	2.75	15	13.76	36	33.02	52	47.7
Guidance and counseling	11	1	9.09	1	9.09	0	0	2	18.18	7	63.64
Miscellaneous	61	5	8.2	0	0	11	18.03	7	11.47	38	62.30
Administration supervision	84	11	13.09	5	5.95	19	22.61	10	11.90	39	46.42
Sociology	68	5	7.35	7	10.29	24	35.29	4	5.88	28	41.17
Teacher education & problem	136	12	8.82	9	6.61	18	13.23	24	17.64	73	53.67
“Teaching learning process”	49	6	12.24	6	12.24	15	30.61	0	0	22	44.89
Teaching methodology	13	3	23.07	0	0	4	30.76	4	30.76	2	15.38
Abstract writing	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	100
Information technology	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	100
Literacy	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	100
Special education	12	0	0	0	0	4	33.33	0	0	8	66.66
Science education	66	0	0	0	0	14	21.21	31	46.96	21	31.81
Opinion evaluation	13	0	0	0	0	2	15.38	11	84.61	0	0
Islamic education	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	15.62	27	84.37
Total	1132	87		54		173		290		528	

Table 7 shows the overall results of the studies carried out at the selected universities. It reveals that BZU Multan covered 58.90% share in studies conducted. While in comparative study, BZU Multan covered 30.63% of total theses of this area. In the area of curriculum, 36.48% share was contributed by the IUB in overall theses. The area of educational psychology secured 16.27% of its overall weight by UOS. IUB covered 59.52% of gender education of overall weight devoted by all universities. IUB covered 47.7% of overall share in the research area of measurement, assessment and evaluation. Guidance and counseling contributed 63.64% by IUB. Furthermore IUB

contributed 46.42% in the research area of administration and supervision. IUB shared 53.67% part in teacher education and problems while abstract writing is totally contributed by IUB while other universities ignored this area totally. Likewise, the areas of literacy and information technology and abstract writing were conducted only in IUB while these areas were totally ignored by other universities. The area of special education was addressed by PU and IUB only. PU, BZU and IUB contributed in the area of science education. They shared 21.21%, 46.96% and 31.81% respectively. BZU covered 15.62% while IUB contributed 84.38% share in the area of Islamic education.

Discussion

The researchers collected 1132 research thesis carried out for the degree of Master of Arts in Education from five selected universities; namely, UOS, GCUF, BZU, PU and IUB. Number of theses contributed by UOS was 87, 54 by GCUF, 173 by PU, 290 by BZU and 528 by IUB. The theses from completed by UOS were classified into 13 research areas of education. Educational psychology was most prominent research area in these theses. The areas of administration, supervision and management and teacher education and problems were ranked second. While the area of curriculum and guidance was not focused by the graduates of UOS during the selected period. The areas of assessment and evaluation and gender education were also given a little worth in the research work of UOS. GCUF conducted 54 studies at Master Level in the discipline of education which were divided into 12 categories. The research students of GCUF also showed more interest in the research area of educational psychology. The area of sociology was second priority area of students at GCUF. They also neglected the area of guidance and counseling. PU approved 173 theses of Mater Level in education discipline between 2005 and 2008 which were divided into 15 research areas. The results show that the research students of PU were more interested in the field of sociology then educational psychology and supervision, administration and management. The results of the study are consistent with the findings of Muniruddin (2005) who found similar results. In addition, the area of gender education was ignored by the research students of PU.

The results show that BZU conducted 290 research theses in the discipline of education at Master Level. These theses were categorized into 15 research areas in the discipline of education. The research scholars of BZU have the top priority to the area of achievement, test and performance and second priority was given to educational psychology. The areas of assessment, curriculum and comparative study were also given prominence in the research work at BZU at Master Level in education. The areas of science education and teacher education and problems also caught the attention of the postgraduates at BZU. However, a little attention was given to the areas of teaching methodology, sociology, and Islamic education while counseling and guidance was totally ignored. All the

studies carried out at BZU employed descriptive methods and questionnaire as a tool for data collection. The results of the study are similar with the finding of Krapp and Prenzel (2011) who concluded that most of research students take interest in adopting descriptive method and selecting questionnaire as too for data collection.

During 1988-2008, IUB conducted 528 research theses in the discipline of education at Master Level. The theses of IUB were classified into 19 categories including all the categories of other universities with the addition of four research areas; namely, abstract writing, literacy problems, information technology and special education in the research work at IUB. The first preference of the research scholars was toward teacher education and problems while comparative study ranked second and measurement, assessment and evaluation ranked third. The areas of teaching methodology and guidance and counseling were the most neglected and ignored at IUB. Although there was a little research carried out in the research area of special education; however, the area of educational problems of special students was included in the research studies conducted at IUB.

The other universities totally ignored the areas of special education, information technology, and abstract writing and literacy problems. The research students of IUB mostly applied descriptive method in their studies while in the areas of comparative studies and abstract writing they used historical method. Experimental method was also applied in a few studies in the area of science education. The research students of IUB mostly used questionnaire as a tool of data collection but in abstract writing they used documentary analysis as a tool for data collection. The overall research trends in all the selected universities of Punjab indicate that the area of teacher education and problems were greatly prioritized. The research areas such as educational psychology and comparative study ranked second and third respectively. On the other hand, guidance and counseling and information technology were the most ignored areas.

In the light of above findings and analysis it was concluded that the research students of UOS valued teacher education and problems and educational psychology in their research work and ignored the areas of guidance and counseling and curriculum. Like UOS, GCUF also preferred educational psychology and teacher education and problems while neglected the area of guidance and counseling. PU showed a great concern in the research area of sociology and less in gender education. The research scholars of BZU greatly focused on achievement test and performance ignoring the area of guidance and counseling. Furthermore, the research scholars of BZU were more interested in conducting research in curriculum, educational psychology and measurement assessment and evaluation as compared to the researchers of other universities. The favorite area of IUB researchers was teacher education and problems. They also showed a great concern in comparative study.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that the research scholars of IUB led the research areas of guidance and counseling and gender education. They were also more interested in administration, supervision and management than the research scholars of any other university. The research scholar of IUB also showed interest in literacy and abstract writing while they totally ignored the area of teaching methodology. The majority of the research scholars from all the universities worked in the area of teacher education and problems. The area of guidance and counseling was neglected by the research scholars of all universities while the areas of abstract writing and literacy were totally ignored by UOS, GCUF, BZU and PU. It is also concluded that most of the research studies applied descriptive method of research and questionnaire as tool for data collection in all the studies. The research scholars at UOS and GCUF conducted studies mostly in the area of educational psychology. On the other hand, the research scholars of PU focused on sociology that represents a heterogeneous type research. BZU mostly focused on achievement test and performance while the research studies conducted at IUB of different areas of teacher education and problem and teacher training. The findings of the study represent the versatility of different research trends at different universities that show the difference of supervisors' academic competencies, interests, social behaviors as well as differences of institutional environment for conducting research studies.

Recommendations

Keeping in view the results of study, the research scholars are suggested to conduct studies in the areas of guidance and counseling, curriculum, special education, vocational education and gender education. In addition, an encyclopedia of all research activities should be developed at university, provincial and national level which should include research activities conducted at different levels and its copies should be provided to all universities. Moreover, some research areas such as literacy, science education, information technology, teaching methodology, distance learning and non-formal education should be focused. Besides, contemporary burning issues like terrorism, unemployment, nature of crimes and criminals, and over population should also be addressed in research activities. Likewise, other methods of research like experiment method, case study and focus group interview, and observation should also be included in research activities. Similarly, other data collection tools like survey, interview, open observation and content analysis and combination of more than one tool should also be used in research studies. The recommendation should be necessitated in order to create research oriented environment with some effective, creative and revolutionary steps for future research activities.

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