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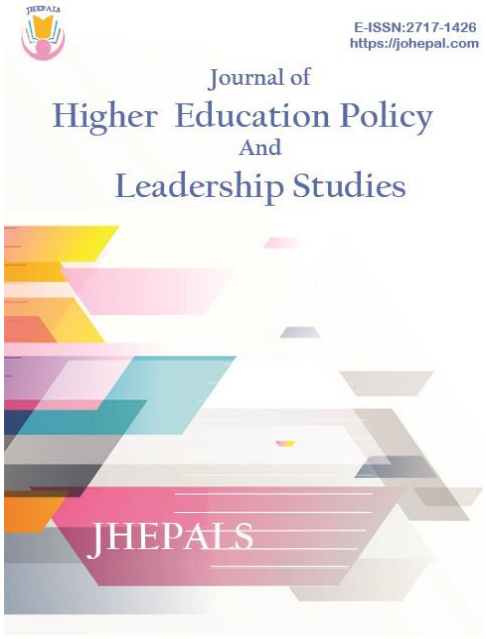

The Effects of Power Abuse on Educational Processes in Private Universities in Nangarhar, Afghanistan

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The Effects of Power Abuse on Educational Processes in Private Universities in Nangarhar, Afghanistan

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Highlights

- Abuse of power harms the actions and effects of organizations. In the same vein, the damage will be greater if the abuse occurs in educational institutions. In developing countries like Afghanistan, the possibility of abuse of power in private universities is high.
- This study presents cases of power abuse in private higher education institutions in Nangarhar, Afghanistan. In this regard, the case study design fits the scope and purpose of the research. The researchers conducted interviews with students, administrative staff, and lecturers of private universities in eastern Afghanistan.
- As a result, the study found that there are two types of power abuse in private universities in Nangarhar: abuse of power by lecturers and abuse of power by senior management staff. The study also found that the abuse of power in private universities has many negative effects on the education process, such as the graduation of bogus students, low-quality teaching, and reduced research activities.

Keywords: Power Abuse; University Senior Management Staff; Educational Processes; Private Universities; Nangarhar – Afghanistan; Lecturers

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Introduction

Power abuse is a common phenomenon in many organizations or institutions where individuals misuse their influential positions for personal gain. Power is defined as the capacity to influence others to do something or to achieve a certain outcome. According to (Hoenig & Heisey, 2001; Jackson, 2015; Naiyf Qaiwer, 2020) when individuals in power misuse this capacity for their interests, they violate the trust of those they lead or serve and cause harm to both individuals and the organization as a whole. Power abuse can take many forms, including bullying, harassment, discrimination, and nepotism (Hall, 2011).

In the 1960s, Afghanistan was a rich country with high-quality higher education. In the late 1960s and 1970s, the number of educated people in this country increased significantly (Kaunert & Sahar, 2021). The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan halted the country's development. Numerous educated people were either slaughtered or forced to leave the country after schools and institutions were destroyed (Malejacq & Mukhopadhyay, 2016). After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, the civil war started in Afghanistan. Later, during the first rule of the Taliban, girls were banned from going to schools and universities (Kaunert & Sahar, 2021).

According to the website of the Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan, there are (39) public and (140) private universities and institutes of higher education in the country that offer education at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels (Ministries of Higher Education, 2020).

Nangarhar is located in the east of Afghanistan, which is one of the largest provinces of the country in terms of population. There are one government and six private universities and institutes of higher education operating in this province (Ministries of Higher Education, 2020).

The purpose of this study is: 1) To reveal the effects of abuse of power by the university leadership and lecturers on the education process in Nangarhar private universities. 2) to provide counter strategies to reduce and prevent the abuse of power in private universities so that the learning process in these universities can continue smoothly without any hindrance.

Research Methodology

For this study researchers used a qualitative research method with a case study design. As we know the case study method is the study of the specificity and complexity of a given case. According to (Bitektine, 2008), the case study method involves in-depth exploration and analysis of a single individual or group of individuals, an event, or a phenomenon (creswell, 2014). In this study, abuse of power in private universities in Nangarhar province of Afghanistan is taken as a case. The study conducted interviews with 24 students and lecturers at six private universities in Nangarhar (Spinghar, Al-Taqwa, Ariana, Al Falah, Khorasan, & Roshan). The details of respondents are presented in the table 1 below. For this study the researchers used thematic analysis method through NVivo software for analyzing the interview data.

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Table 1.
Total conducted interviews

Total conducted interviews: 24					
Response from Universities					
Spinghar University	Al-Taqwa University	Ariana University	Al-Falah University	Khorasan University	Rokhan University
2 Students	2 Studen	2 Students	2 Studen	2 Studen	2 Students
2 Lecturers	2 Lecturers	2 Lecturers	2 Lecturer	2 Lecture	2 Lecturer
Total Interviewed Students: 12			Total Interviewed Lecturers: 12		

Research Findings

Researchers have categorized the findings of the interviews about power abuse in private universities in Nangarhar into two general themes see table 2. Our analysis summarizes that there are two types of abuse of power usage in private universities in Nangarhar. (1) Abuse of Power by Top-level management (2) Abuse of power by lecturers of private universities.

Abuse of Power by Top-Level Management

The first theme, "Abuse of power by Top-level management," in Nangarhar's private universities is highlighted by a number of unsettling actions. This includes pressuring staff members to participate in illicit activities, doling out rewards and penalties arbitrarily and without regard for justice, and prioritizing personal connections over qualifications throughout the hiring process. Additionally, there is evidence of pointless meddling in the examination and instructional processes, which may jeopardize academic standards. The allegations that top-level management accepted bribes and gave degrees and good ratings in exchange for cash are perhaps the most concerning, as this gravely compromises the credibility of an educational institution. These behaviors damage the organization's reputation, destroy trust, and foster a hostile work environment. It is crucial to address these challenges if you want to promote a just, moral, and effective working or learning environment.

Abuse of power by lecturers of private universities in Nangarhar

Our research on "Effects of Abuse of Power in Educational Processes in Private Universities in Nangarhar, Afghanistan" with students and university employees highlighted several sub-themes. There are two key subthemes to this theme: in which professors give better grades based on personal relationships, particularly with female students, and make decisions influenced by those relationships, and "Harassment," which includes instances of verbal abuse, unfair rankings, and favoritism. These findings raise questions about academic integrity, educational quality, and the general welfare of students and staff since they highlight how ubiquitous power abuse is at these institutions of higher learning. To offer a learning and working environment in Nangarhar's private institutions, these issues must be resolved.

These findings collectively imply that power abuse is an issue in Nangarhar's private universities, with individuals describing high-level management, unfairness, and overwork. It's crucial to keep in mind that these data originate from a small sample size and might not apply to all of the private universities in the region.

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Table 2.
Power abuse in Nangarhar's private Universities

Abuse of power by Top-level management	Forcing employees	Forcing employees to act in their favor, even if it is illegal.
		Giving rewards and punishments without justice.
		Maintaining personal relationships while recruiting.
	Unnecessary interference in examinations and teaching process.	Judgments based on personal relationships
		Giving degrees and high scores for money
Abuse of power by university lecturers	Abuse of position	Giving higher marks for relationships with female students
		Judgments based on personal relationships
	Harassment	Verbal abuse
		Unfair grading
		Favoritism

There are various reports in the media about the existence of corruption and abuse of power in private universities in Afghanistan (Roof, 2014). University students point out the major problems of high fees, lack of facilities for practical education, inappropriate behavior of university institutions, inappropriate teaching environment, and availability of lecturers with bachelor's degrees (Zarifi, 2017). However, in some private universities, there are problems of corruption and abuse of power, as well as the weakness of the teaching process (Orfan, 2022).

The effects of abuse of power harm the administration and destroy the monitoring system. As a result of our interviews, we found that abuse of power affects the education process in private universities, the details of which are presented in the following table:

Table 3.
The impact of power abuse on educational process:

Power Abuse Type	Impact on Educational Processes
Verbal abuse	Disruptive classroom environment
Unfair grading	Decreased student motivation
Favoritism	Erosion of meritocracy
Harassment	Increased student attrition

Conclusion

As a conclusion of this research, we found that abuse of power is one of the reasons that prevent development and affect administrative work. Especially if this abuse of power is in educational institutions, the impact is more extensive because educational institutions guarantee the future of countries. Nangarhar is located in the east of Afghanistan, which is one of the largest provinces of the country in terms of population, the center of which is the city of Jalalabad. There are one government and six private universities and institutes of higher education operating in this province. our analysis summarizes that there are two types of abuse of power usage in private universities in Nangarhar. (1) Abuse of Power by Top-level management (2) Abuse of power by lecturers of private universities. Based on interviews with lecturers and students of private universities in Nangarhar, the effects of abuse of power include the organization losing its value in the relevant field, the organization becoming

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addicted to corruption, and the organization eventually dying, and abuse of power directly harming productivity.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Human Participants

The study strictly adhered to ethical considerations. Every step in the data collection process was shared with and taken permission from the study respondents such as willingness to participate in the study and recording the interview.

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