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Exploring the Experiences and Views of Art and Humanities Faculty Members on Promotion Regulation

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Abstract

Purpose: The objective of the present study was to explore the views and experiences of Shiraz University's Humanities and Social Sciences faculty members who are an associate or full professors and have membership in Shiraz University Promotion Committees; it focused on four dimensions of challenges and weaknesses, strengths, consequences of implementing the regulation and the proposed implications.

Methodology: In this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 14 professors in Humanities and Social Sciences faculties. After transcribing the audio files of the interviews, the data were coded through three stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Finally, 114 open codes, 21 axial codes, and four demanding codes concerning the Promotion Regulation were discovered.

Findings: Findings showed that the challenges of Promotion Regulation include the victimization of the humanities, great emphasis on research and exclusion of other aspects, especially education, focus on quantity and lack of attention to quality, the taste of committees concerning the Promotion Regulation, and a uniform regulation for all fields.

Conclusion: Previous research on Promotion Regulation in Iran has been quantitative research, and most of them addressed the viewpoints of faculty members generally; However, the present study was a qualitative one and, more importantly, the Promotion Regulation was inspected in terms of humanities and social sciences experts' perspectives.

Keywords: *Promotion Regulation, Faculty Members, Art and Humanities, Experiences and Views, Ministry of Science, Research and Technology*

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Extended Abstract

Purpose: The objective of the present study was to explore the views and experiences of Shiraz University's Art and Humanities faculty members who are an associate or full professors and have membership in Shiraz University Promotion Committees; it focused on four dimensions of challenges and weaknesses, strengths, consequences of implementing the regulation and the proposed implications.

Methodology: In this qualitative study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 14 professors in Art and Humanities faculties. After transcribing the audio files of the interviews, the data were coded through three stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Finally, 114 open codes, 21 axial codes, and four demanding codes concerning the Promotion Regulation were discovered.

Findings: Findings showed that the challenges of Promotion Regulation include the victimization of the humanities, great emphasis on research and exclusion of other aspects, especially education, emphasis on quantity and lack of attention to quality, the taste of committees concerning the Promotion Regulation, and a uniform regulation for all fields. In addition, the strengths of the Promotion Regulation include its general desirability, comprehensiveness through the consideration of the four dimensions, close attention to the enactments along with the regulation, and the selective appointment of faculty members of the board of directors. Moreover, the consequences of the regulation include creating an undesirable competitive environment, marginalizing the humanities, double pressure on faculty members to meet research expectations, and pushing the faculty members to produce more articles. Despite the challenges of the Promotion Regulation, some strategies have been proposed to improve the regulation. The most important ones are paying balanced attention to the humanities and basic science and engineering, separating the humanities Promotion Regulation from other areas, increasing the number of faculty members in the board of directors, and formulating a unified yet flexible regulation.

Table 1. Challenges of Promotion Regulation Coding

Basic themes	Organizing themes	Comprehensive themes
Challenges and weaknesses	From humanities point of view	Low chances in the field of humanities for publishing international articles Lack of number of international publications The extent and philosophical nature of the language of the humanities The sacrifice of humanities in the regulations Second-degree view of the field of humanities in the regulations Neglecting the topics of the teacher-student relationship in the humanities
	From the research-educational aspect	High emphasis on research and neglect of other aspects, especially education The regulation emphasizes the quantity of research The dominance of technical-engineering view in the regulations The bias of regulations to ISI articles Existence of student evaluations in the educational aspect as a weakness
	From the faculty members' point of view	Young professors' concern about the current regulations for promotion Repeated changes in regulations Professors' Doubt and confusion of Prioritize between teaching and research Ignoring the training of knowledgeable and reference professors

		Uncertainty of professors to make the provisions of the regulations or the recognition of the Board members
	Contextual Challenges	The prevailing view of the Ministry of Science in the regulations of promotion and lack of attention to academic independence
		Expanding the structural challenges governing the scientific space on the promotion regulations
	Committees	Personalization acts of committees (especially specialized committee and board committee)
		Bias in the promotion of faculty members
		Existence of the relationship instead of regulation and lobbying
		The secrecy of the Board of committees' vote
		Being simulated of committees' member′s number
		Preference of custom over regulation over the clauses of regulation
		Membership of a small number of humanities' faculty members in the Board committee
		Lack of knowledge of the Board of the committee about the comprehensiveness of the humanities
		The unfamiliarity of decision-makers in the process of upgrading the comprehensiveness of the humanities
	Goals and prospects	Focus on university rankings as the first goal of universities
		Linking university rankings to regulations
		Non-compliance the implementation of the regulations with the universities' goals
	Contented-Structural	Existence of different procedures in different universities
		Unity of regulations for all fields
		Weakness in communicating between the community and the university
		Failure to provide a clear definition of some concepts (such as cultural work)
		Ignorance of interdisciplinary studies in the regulations
	To be obligatory	Mandatory clauses of educational, research, cultural and executive aspects
		Paying attention to the article as a veto clause of the research aspect of the promotion regulations
		Defending the dissertation as a binding (veto) clause of the educational part of the promotion regulations
Strengths	General	Being the regulations in line with the time requirements of the country
		Being Purposeful of the regulations
		Paying attention to various aspects (educational, research, cultural, and executive)
		Regulations as a suitable tool for policy-making and orientation to higher education
		Being desirable in general
		The relative attention of the regulation to the nature of the humanities
		Unification and determination of joint mission for all faculty members
	Committees	Alignment of committees in the regulations with each other
		Appointing members of the Board committee selectively instead of appointed
		The presence of the representative of the faculty as a lawyer defending in the board committee
consequences of the regulation	Inappropriate competition	Creating an unfavorable competitive environment among universities
		Ignorance of students' abilities and talents
		Ignoring of professors' abilities skills and talents of
	Sociocultural	Promoting scientific immorality among professors

		Promoting the hypocrisy and conservatism of professors
		Promoting scientific immorality at the community level
		Negative public attitude towards the scientific community
		Promoting scientific corruption among students
		Achieving false status by professors
		Ignoring the reputation and scientific personality of professors
		Forcing students to compile an article, grounding scientific misconduct
		Transfer the pressure of producing an article from professor to student
	From the humanities point of view	Marginalizing the field of humanities
		Ignorance of humanities theories in policymaking
		Regulations as a barrier to growth in the field of humanities
	From the faculty members point of view	Creating a platform and encouraging faculty members to increase the number of articles
		Production of superficial articles
		Confusion of faculty members due to repeated changes in regulations
		Double pressure on faculty members to fulfill research expectations
		Linking the Granting study opportunities with promotion
		Link conversion status with promotion
Suggested solutions	Requirements of the humanities	Balanced attention to humanities along with sciences and engineering
		Changing in guiding Ph.D. students in the humanities (similar to sciences and engineering)
		The necessity of having an interdisciplinary view to the field of humanities in the regulations
		Paying attention to the indigenous requirements of the country in the regulations of humanities
		Separation of humanities regulations from other fields
		Separation of expectations from the field of humanities compared to other sciences
		Paying attention to the promotional nature of humanities in the regulations
		Paying attention to small scientific changes in humanities compared to technical-engineering sciences
		Paying attention to books as the main product of the humanities
		More attention to translation in the field of humanities due to its complexity than the field of engineering
		Attention to being audience-centered in the humanities
		More attention to the credibility of journals in the promotion process
		Separation of sub-fields of humanities from each other
	Committees	Increasing the number of humanities faculty members in the board committee
		Evaluation of works by humanities experts
		Formation of a research committee in the field of humanities
		The necessity to specialize the Humanities Board committee
		Integration of review committees (specialized, elected, board committee)
		Invite international referees to promotion committees
	Educational-research	Preference for education over research due to the nature of humanities
		Redefining the concept of research in promotion regulations

		Changing the score weight of the clauses in the research aspect of the regulations for the promotion of humanities
		The necessity of having an executive procedure along with the regulations according to the national and international competitive environment
		Paying attention to professors' research trajectory (instead of paying attention to scattered activities and many articles)
		Paying attention to professors' counseling services
	Regulatory and managerial	The necessity of creating strong management and regulatory system in universities
		Transparency of promotion process
		Use of computer systems to facilitate and
		Transparency of the promotion process
	Contented	Converting the clauses of the regulation into two general and specific sections
		Pathology of existing regulations
		Revise the regulation (amend and strengthen)
		Orientation of regulations
		Consistency of regulations and avoidance of rapid changes in them
		Develop uniform and flexible regulations for all universities
		Pay attention to quality instead of mere quantity
		Modeling the existing promotion methods in seminaries
		Removing veto sections of the regulation
		Creating a special items clause in the regulations for exceptional cases
		Trial implementation of the promotion regulations for a specified period of time
		Avoid looking at the four aspects of the regulation in the same way
	Fields	Pay attention to the background and avoid comparing professors of different fields with each other.
		Determining the minimum score for different fields
	International cooperation	Highlighting international cooperation in the regulations
		Possibility of printing articles in international languages (such as Arabic and French) instead of ISI for specific fields

Conclusion: Previous researches on Promotion Regulation in Iran have been quantitative research, and most of them addressed the viewpoints of faculty members generally; However, the present study was a qualitative one and, more importantly, the Promotion Regulation was inspected in terms of humanities and social sciences experts' perspectives. According to the research findings, it can be concluded that from the viewpointof faculty members of the Art and humanities, the promotion regulations still have many challenges and negative consequences that should be considered by those involved and managers of higher education and universities. Perhaps the most important and effective solution proposed to solve most of these problems is to separate the promotion regulation of the humanities from basic science and engineering.

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