

IMPACT AND OUTCOME COMMUNICATION OF ACADEMIC CONFERENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR - NEED, METHODS, AND TOOLS

Shafali Sharma

Amity Business School, Amity University Uttar Pradesh

Prof. (Dr.) Sanjeev Bansal

Dean - Faculty of Management Studies

Director - Amity Business School

Amity University Uttar Pradesh

ABSTRACT

Extra and co-curricular activities are an integral part of the academic institutions and one of the most important amongst them are conferences. They ignite the intellectual thinking and discussion on contemporary and prospective issues. However, very little is done to analyse the impact of a conference or similar activity on the participants or the outcome of the same. The main objective of this paper is to study and investigate the need and impact of conferences/workshops/seminars on a variety of participants/stakeholders which may include research scholars/students, faculty members and funding agencies, etc. This paper investigates the need for outcome assessment and analyses relationship between conferences and their outcome/impact by researching on the existing methodologies available for such assessment, an empirical study by questionnaires surveys and focused interviews. Many of the organizing institutions prepare post conference reports, these colossal reports which are meant to project the outcome of the conferences take a tedious time to develop, summarised, and examined by the stakeholders, reducing their productivity in their respective areas. Hence, this study tries to prove that there is a situational urge for a method/system/framework that can immediately give us the effectiveness of the conference (or similar academic events) with respect to its predefined objectives in measurable terms. The results of the data collected through empirical study revealed that there is a significant requirement for developing a method/system/framework that can bring out the immediate usefulness of the conference for all stakeholders. The study provides a new dimension to the theoretical frameworks in mapping the outcomes of the conference by reducing them into easily decodable figures and graphs.

Keywords: Co-curricular activities, Outcome mapping, conference assessment, qualitative research, assessment tools

INTRODUCTION

In the Union Budget 2020, the Government of India allotted Rs. 99,312 crores for the education sector which was an increase by approx. 5% for Financial Year 2021 as compared to the previous allocation of Rs. 94,800 crores for FY 20. Out of this Rs. 39,466 crores were allotted to Higher Education Sector and the remaining Rs. 59,845 to the school education and literacy (Union Budget, 2020). The higher education institutions are encouraged to maintain the quality of education which, apart from classroom education, also includes extra and co-curricular activities. The institutions have been given the prerogative to organize such extra and co-curricular activities which are also part of assessment and evaluation by accreditation

agencies in India such as NAAC, NIRF etc. A substantial budget is spent by the education institutions, whether government or private, for organizing any state/national/international level conferences/seminars/workshops and other academic-related activities. The conferences are an important mechanism to initiate discussion on contemporary and contentious issues amongst scientists, research scholars and other participants. Some studies have found that involvement in curricular and co-curricular events at the university/institution level is exceptionally important for students/ research scholars (Stuart, M., Lido, C., et al, 2011), faculty members, and the industry as directly or indirectly it will have a strong impact on them in terms of inculcating qualities such as

research orientation, leadership, teamwork, etc. Deliberations during such events aspire the participants to get involved in more research-oriented studies and ultimately apply them in their practice in a variety of areas of study and profession. To adopt a variety of perspectives and multidisciplinary approaches, it is pertinent for every university/ institution to conduct academic conferences in different disciplines, which aims at culminating the contemporaries in that area.

However, one significant aspect of conferences which is not given much and desired importance is post conference outcome analyses. Many institutions/organizers prepare conference proceedings, however, the impact of these proceedings and discussions during the conference are rarely analysed. The assessment of outcome and impact is equally time taking and required set of skills including follow-up with the participants and stakeholders. As mentioned above, the benefits of the conference, it is equally important to see and analyze the realization of these benefits, otherwise the purpose of such events is not fulfilled and they merely become non-effective academic activities.

The conference outcome assessment has theoretical as well as practical importance. From theoretical perspective, the learning from deliberations and interaction during the conference may directly affect the academic learning of students and faculties and research of scholars. It gives them another perspective of their area of studies which is different from classroom education that is generally restricted to the given syllabus. From the practical viewpoint, the outcome assessment can ensure the credibility of the event and its organizers. The concrete evidence of the impact of conference can also support the expenditure of the event which has the objective of right use of such finances by the funding agencies or sponsors. Therefore, not just the conference is important, but also its impact, outcome and assessment thereof.

In this paper, the authors have analysed the need for outcome assessment based on the sample survey. Once, it is discovered that there is substantial need for outcome assessment, the authors have focused on the correct possible methods for such assessment

and there is also need for right tools which are objective in nature and can be implemented universally without any constraints.

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

It is imperative to identify the objectives of research of the paper. Objectives are important to give direction to the research and define its scope which ultimately helps to reach its conclusion with the help of various resources and data of research.

1. To find various factors influencing the outcome of conferences.
2. To find, the need for qualitative and quantitative assessment for maximum useful outcomes.
3. To find and assess, the impact of conferences on personal or professional development and to promote networking and idea-sharing amongst all stakeholders.
4. To find whether universities/institutions have a defined system/method/framework for assessing the outcomes of conferences both short term and long term impact.
5. To assess, if such a system/method/framework can bring out measurable outcomes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The paper revolves around the following research questions. Based on the doctrinal and non-doctrinal research, these questions are responded in the conclusion in the end.

RQ1: Whether there is need of conference outcome assessment?

RQ2: What is the impact of conference outcome on stakeholders?

RQ3: What are the tools used for Conference outcome assessment?

RQ4: Whether there is a need for any tool for qualitative and quantitative assessment?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The authors have based their research on variety of sources which include literature-based research and empirical study through survey and interview. Basis on the research, it has been found that the subject matter of this research paper is less studied and covered in the existing literature. It is observed that most of the literature cover the importance of

conferences and like activities. Researchers have used a mixed method analysis of the needs and motivations of the delegates of academic, scientific and professional conferences where it shows that while the need and expectations of the delegates seem to be met on a superficial level, delegates are divided as to the long-term worth and benefits of conferences, particularly when they consider how their activities and contributions are viewed and appreciated by others (Nicholas Rowe, 2018). In certain areas of study such as science and health, the researchers have evaluated the usefulness and impact of conference objectives. They developed a conference evaluation framework based on theoretical models and empirical findings. Such framework provides conference evaluators and organizers a simple resource to improve their own existing assessments tools, though with certain limitations (Justin Neves et. al., 2012). However, this paper focuses on the need for the method of outcome assessment which is universal and comprehensive and can be used cross all areas of studies, as the existing methods are adequate and universal in their application. The paper also further focuses on setting practical goals to achieve, based on the outcome in a foreseeable timeframe.

An analysis of the literature shows that several organizing institutes do not prepare a proper, formal, and comprehensive outcome report. This is prepared just to do a formality to submit to the funding agency and the funding agencies are not bothered to deep dive into it. Some of the institutions who prepare reports are following traditional method for writing and submitting the reports to the funding agencies. These colossal reports which are meant to project the outcome of the conferences take a tremendous time to develop, summarise and examine the conference agenda, the paper presented, the achievement of objective and final impact, and takeaway points by the stakeholders.

On the other hand, the author also conducted focused survey through questionnaires for academic faculty, students and funding agencies (both public and private) to find and locate the proper system for examining the outcomes of the conference. Hence, the majority of respondents mentioned that there is no such system in existence in the funding

agencies which can measure the outcomes/results of the conferences. They also highlighted the fact that few agencies have predefined formats for the organisers to summarize and submit the reports. Officials of the funding agencies also highlighted the fact that a measurable system/method/framework should be available in the funding agencies which can help the qualitative/quantitative assessments of the conferences to justify the allocations of the grants to the organizers.

The author also assessed the parameters and criteria of accreditation and ranking agencies wherein it was found that importance on conducting the conferences is given such as a number of conferences, etc., however, there are no criteria to assess the outcome of the conferences and their impact on participants or organizing institutions. The analysis of the assessment system of NAAC for the purpose of accreditation of higher education institutions in India has been done previously (Aithal, P. S., et. al, 2016). It highlights the key indicators or criteria for assessment and the authors have analyzed NAAC Accreditation Criteria using the analyzing framework for business models, operational concepts and functional systems called ABCD technique. The paper is useful to understand the process of assess for accreditation by NAAC and using ABCD technique, however, it does not specifically cover impact of any co-curricular activity in HEIs. It also clears that NAAC Accreditation System does not specifically covers extra and co-curricular activities in its assessment.

As in the NAAC manual, 'criteria no. 6.3 - Faculty Empowerment Strategies' has a question as below which requires the institution to states about the financial support to the teachers:

"Average percentage of teachers provided with financial support to attend conferences/workshops and towards membership fee of professional bodies during the last five years."

Further 'Criteria 6.5 i.e. Internal Quality Assurance System' asks Institutions to adopt the Quality assurance measures for conferences, seminars, workshops conducted.

From the above criteria given in the NAAC manual, it appears that assessment primarily considers the number of conferences and financial assistance provided, rather than the quality of the event and the outcome (Dubey Archana, Ratnaparkhi, 2015).

Further, it was also studied through an online survey whether physical conference is more beneficial to participants as compared to virtual event. The survey was distributed to delegates of the 3rd and 4th International Marine Conservation Congresses (IMCCs), with respondents' ($n = 100$) feedback including that the congresses provided useful new information that will aid: (1) their research (58%); (2) in-the-field conservation (29%); (3) conservation communication (46%); and (4) conservation and management policy-making (45%). They also reported gaining new techniques (56%), skills (64%), and novel ideas (70%) to further their research/careers. Nearly all (91%) gained new contacts that improved their research, in-the-field conservation, science communication, and/or conservation policymaking. Two thirds (64%) gained ideas, contacts, and/or lessons that could lead to publications. Over a third (39%) gained new ideas, contacts, and/or lessons that led to grant proposals, and 36% gained contacts that led to funding. A conference is not just an avenue for a scientist to present their research to the wider community, but it can be an important venue for brainstorming, networking, and making vital connections that can lead to new initiatives, papers and funding, in a way that virtual, online meetings cannot. (Oester S, et al, 2017).

It appears from the available literature that the effects of extracurricular activity on students' experiences, outcomes, and future job prospects have been studied in available literature (Stuart, M., et al, 2011). It has used a survey conducted for diverse undergraduate students, along with alumni and potential employer interviews. The paper also focusses on diverse group of students based on socio-economic status and analyses their level of engagement in extra-curricular activities. The research reflects those extracurricular activities are key to developing self-identity, social networks, and career prospects/pathways. It finds that employers stressed the value of such activities for 'distinguishing' candidates, providing evidence of cultural fit, leadership,

commitment, and 'selling' original activities. However, the paper fails to specifically focus or give special emphasis on importance of conferences, their outcome, and its assessment.

WHAT IS A CONFERENCE?

In order to understand the need for outcome assessment of a co-curricular academic activity like conference, the first step is to understand what is a conference and how it differs from other variants like workshops, seminar or symposium.

An Academic Conference, in some areas of study it can be called as 'congress', is a one-day or multi-day congregation where professionals/ participants share their ideas and present their research work to attendees and panel. Conference is a large gathering of interested stakeholders/participants, wherein they meet for consultation, exchange of ideas, discussions with a formal agenda. (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 9th Edition)

On the other hand, a 'seminar' is a relatively small gathering wherein one or two speakers deliver a formal presentation on pre-decided topic. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a seminar as 'a group of advanced students studying under a professor with each doing original research and all exchanging results through reports and discussions. The 'Symposium' is a meeting, a kind of smaller version of a conference, where subject experts have discussions about a particular subject. A symposium is usually used to describe a small conference on a single subject. For example, a series of lectures in a single day might be called a symposium. The last kind of similar activity is 'workshop'. A workshop is a meeting at which a group of people engage in intensive discussion and practical activity on a particular subject or project. A workshop generally requires learning of participants by active involvement, rather than just listening.

Conferences are an important way through which researchers/scientists remain connected to others in their areas of research and learn about additional opportunities in their fields. The format of the conference may vary as per the agenda and requirement. There is no strict set of rules which are followed globally or nationally to organize a conference. However, the objective of a conference is to invigorate

the discussion and exchange of ideas amongst the participants.

Modes and Medium of conducting Conference

Conferences can be conducted in two forms i.e. Physical and Virtual modes. Traditional conferences are conducted in physical form, wherein the participants gather at the venue, and the event is organized as per plan and agenda. On the other hand, the virtual events are organized to avoid the travel requirement of participants. They are conducted via various audio-video mediums. During the COVID-19 pandemic situation and lockdown around the world, the focus has shifted to virtual events through various video conferencing modes rather than traditional mode of conferences. There has been a sudden increase in virtual conferences. Initially, participants had a tough time adjusting to the new model and the technology. But eventually, since it has become new normal, people have started realizing the advantages and benefits of virtual conferences. There can also be the mixed-mode of the conference specially in international conferences wherein the presenters, who are not able to travel, are allowed to deliver their presentation via online medium while the actual event is organized in physical mode. Studies show that the physical model of the conference is more beneficial as compared to the virtual mode (Janisch T, Hilty L, 2017). The former allows the participants to interact with each other and share their ideas more fruitfully.

The importance of predefined objectives in the conference

The academic conferences aligned with the long-term objectives and immediate execution plans play a pivotal role in building a strong sustainable approach towards the outcome and value addition in the respective field of study and research. Moreover, the objectives, scope, coverage, and possible takeaways are predefined for every conference understating the stakeholder's viewpoint, therefore, it is imperative to monitor the pre - during - post-event activities of the conference.

ROLE OF INDIAN ACCREDITATION AND RANKING BODIES

To understand the need and usefulness of assessment of academic conferences, it is imperative to look into the parameters and

key indicators of various accreditations and ranking agencies in India. This will help us to understand the existing system of such assessments.

Agencies like UGC, NBA, NIRF, NAAC etc. have a robust policy for evaluating and monitoring the Quality Assurance of HEIs in the country (Aithal, P. S. & Shailashree, V. & Kumar, P. M, 2016). The regulatory and statutory bodies like NAAC give emphasis "to make quality the defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion, and sustenance initiative" (Mizikaci, F., 2006). Hence it is prudent to have a quality assessment of all academic activities of the institutions/universities.

Quality assurance is an unceasing process to facilitate quality promotion in the different endeavours of academic activities. Accreditation and Ranking institutions support seminars/workshops/conferences focusing on quality sustenance and quality enhancement by providing financial assistance to the institutions. By which they can provide facilities to all stakeholders to share their knowledge, experiences, and research in quality-related aspects or provide intervention for improving the quality of education. Accreditation Bodies have laid down special emphasis on conducting various extra and co-curricular activities to encourage and boost the academicians, scientists, research scholars, students, and industry to share their innovative ideas on the one platform.

Thus, with the above background, it is clear that with a large gamut of 993 universities and 40,000 colleges 10011 standalone institutions (AISHE 2018-19) which are offering education in multi-disciplinary areas, there is a strong need to assess the impact and outcomes of these conferences from their initiation phase to the execution and the post-event, so that it can reap benefits to all stakeholders.

ROLE OF FUNDING AGENCY

In India, there are various public/private agencies and institutions that support education institutions by providing financial assistance to organize conferences/ seminars/ workshops. However, before granting funds, the funding agency takes into consideration the objectives and possible outcomes of the

conference, if it matches with the objectives of the Agency and relation to the field of study, then the agency/institution can provide financial assistance or resources. Most of these agencies/institutions have allocated budget for every financial year for funding such activities. Post-event, the conference report is submitted to the funding agency by the organizers which include the detailing of the conferences. These huge reports which are meant to project the results of the conferences take a tiresome time to summarise, examine and develop by the stakeholders, reducing their productivity in their respective areas.

For example, the Promotion of University Research and Scientific Excellence (PURSE) is a proactive measure of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India to build the research capacity of performing Indian Universities. The support under PURSE varies from acquiring research equipment, research man-power cost, augmentation of computational facilities, establishing research infrastructure, acquiring research consumables, a fund for travel, organizing workshops and conferences, contingencies and maintenance of the facilities. The total investment of Rs 1220 crore was planned for performing Universities identified under PURSE, so far, an amount of Rs 900 Cr has been made available to the performing Universities in this scheme (as on 2020). Regular reviews of the PURSE Projects at various Universities have been performed by Programme Management Board on PURSE.

Some of the state and national funding agencies are ICSSR, INSA, AICTE, CSIR, DST, DBT, AYUSH, TIFAC, ICMR, GUJCOST, etc. The authors have studied and assessed two years' annual data of ICSSR - Indian Council of Social Science Research and three years' annual data of INSA - Indian National Science Academy. According to Annual reports

available at the official website of ICSSR, one of the objectives of the Council is 'to sponsor Social Science research programs and projects and administer grants to institutions and individuals for research in social sciences' (icssr.org/annual-report, 2020). It is reflected from the Report that maximum grant has been released for organizing the Conferences for the varied thematic areas. Below table 1.1. shows the funds allocated for two years to different institutions at Uttar Pradesh and Delhi:

Table (1.1): Funds Allocation for the Year 2016-17 and 2017-18

Year	Number of Grants	Amount in Rupees
2017-18	303	5,34,55,000 (Five crores thirty-four lakhs fifty-five thousand only)
2016-17	356	6,66,17,000 (Six crores sixty-six lakhs seventeen thousand only)
	Grand Total	12,00,72,000 (Twelve Crores Seventy-Two Thousands only)

*Withdrawal funds are not excluded.

*Data is approximate

Similarly, Indian National Science Academy (INSA) also provides grants to organize the International/National Conferences, Symposia, Seminars, Winter/Summer Schools in India (Insaindia.res.in, 2020). Below table 1.2 shows the funds allocated by INSA at the national level to organize the academic activities, for the consecutive three years (2016-19), at different scientific institutions at the Pan India level.

Hence the total financial assistance provided by the two funding agencies i.e. ICSSR for YEARS 2016-17 and 2017-18 and INSA for years 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 to the Social Science and Scientific Institutions is Rs 12,73,82,000/- (Twelve Crores Seventy Three

Table (1.2): Funds Allocation from YEAR 2016-19

Row Labels	2016- 2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Grand Total
Conference	12,90,000	8,80,000	28,50,000	50,20,000 (Fifty lakhs twenty thousand)
Congress	30,000	30,000	1,00,000	1,60,000 (One lakh sixty thousand)
Meeting	30,000	-	1,00,000	1,30,000 (one lakh thirty thousand)
Others	2,10,000	80,000	2,00,000	4,90,000 (Four lakhs ninety thousand)
Seminar	2,10,000	50,000	50,000	3,10,000 (Three lakhs ten thousand)
Symposium	1,20,000	1,50,000	4,00,000	6,70,000 (Six lakhs seventy thousand)
Training			50,000	50,000 (fifty thousand)
Workshop	1,80,000		3,00,000	4,80,000 (Four lakhs eighty thousand)
Grand Total	20,70,000	11,90,000	40,50,000	73,10,000 (Seventy Lakhs Ten Thousand)



Figure 3: Responses received from focused interview from the officials of funding agency shown in word cloud.

Figures 1, 2 and 3 indicates the standard words related to the factors affecting the outcomes of the conferences. These words are in the middle, surrounded by the other preferential words associated with the outcome of the conferences suggested by respondents such as participants, stakeholders, presentation, networking, research papers, feedback system, knowledge, learning, collaboration, recommendation, platform, seminar, ideas, etc.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.959 ^a	4	.202

- a. 5 cells (50.0%) have an expected count of less than 5.
- b. The minimum expected count is .32.

For the given objective we found out with the help of Table 2.1, that out of 76 faculty around 1.3% have responded strongly disagree in the answer, which is 0.4% of the total number of respondents, and in the same way, around 57% of faculties have responded strongly agree in the answer, which is around 17.9% of the total respondents. From the same table, we found out that out of 164 research scholars/students around 2% have responded disagree in the answer, which is 1.2 % of a total number of respondents, and in the same way we get the figure of around 50% of research scholars/students have responded strongly agree in the answer, which is around 34.2 % of the total. When we compared these with respect to the Chi-Square test the value of Chi-Square is .202 with a significance level of 5.959 which accepts the null hypothesis that no significant effect of respondents position on the objective.

RO2: To find, the need for qualitative and quantitative assessment for maximum useful outcomes.
Crosstabulation (Table 2.1)

		Conferences should be assessed in a Qualitative/Quantitative manner for extracting the maximum Outcomes.					Total	
		SDA	D A	Neutral	Agree	S A		
Respondent Type	Faculty	Count	1	0	2	30	43	76
		% within Respondent Type	1.3%	0.0%	2.6%	39.5%	56.6%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.4%	0.0%	0.8%	12.5%	17.9%	31.7%
	Scholars	Count	0	3	12	67	82	164
		% within Respondent Type	0.0%	1.8%	7.3%	40.9%	50.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	1.2%	5.0%	27.9%	34.2%	68.3%
Total		Count	1	3	14	97	125	240
		% within Respondent Type	0.4%	1.2%	5.8%	40.4%	52.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.4%	1.2%	5.8%	40.4%	52.1%	100.0%

RO3: If the conferences have an impact on the personal or professional development and to promote networking and idea-sharing amongst faculty/research scholars/students and other participants.

scholars/students around 0.6% have responded strongly disagree in the answer, which is 0.4 % of the total number of respondents, and in the same way we get the figure of around 42% of research

Crosstab (Table 3.1)

			obj1						Total
			2.00	3.00	3.50	4.00	4.50	5.00	
Respondent Type	Faculty	Count	1	1	0	10	29	42	83
		% within Respondent Type	1.2%	1.2%	0.0%	12.0%	34.9%	50.6%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	4.0%	11.7%	17.0%	33.6%
	Scholars	Count	1	2	11	45	37	68	164
		% within Respondent Type	0.6%	1.2%	6.7%	27.4%	22.6%	41.5%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.4%	0.8%	4.5%	18.2%	15.0%	27.5%	66.4%
Total		Count	2	3	11	55	66	110	247
		% within Respondent Type	0.8%	1.2%	4.5%	22.3%	26.7%	44.5%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.8%	1.2%	4.5%	22.3%	26.7%	44.5%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests (Table 3.2)

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.865 ^a	5	.007

For the given objective we found out with the help of Table 3.1, that out of 83 faculty around 1.2% have responded strongly disagree in the answer, which is 0.4% of the total number of respondents and in the same way more than 50% of faculties have responded strongly agree in the answer, which is around 41.5% of the total respondents. From the same table, we found out that out of 164 research

scholars/students have responded strongly agree in the answer, which is around 27.5 % of the total.

When we compared these with respect to the Chi-Square test the value of Chi-Square is .007 with a significance level of 15.865 which accepts the null hypothesis that there is a significant effect of respondents position on the objective.

RO4: If uuniversities/institutions have a defined system/method/framework for assessing the outcomes of conferences both short term and long-term impact.

Crosstab (Table 4.1)

			Does your previous / current Organization have a defined Framework / System for assessing the Outcomes of Conferences (long term impact)?		Total
			no	yes	
Respondent Type	Faculty	Count	36	47	83
		% within Respondent Type	43.4%	56.6%	100.0%
		% of Total	15.0%	19.6%	34.6%
	Scholars	Count	82	75	157
		% within Respondent Type	52.2%	47.8%	100.0%
		% of Total	34.2%	31.2%	65.4%
Total		Count	118	122	240
		% within Respondent Type	49.2%	50.8%	100.0%
		% of Total	49.2%	50.8%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests (Table 4.2)

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.704 ^a	1	.192		

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 40.81.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

For the given objective we found out with the help of Table 4.1, that out of 83 faculty around 43% have responded no in the answer, which is 15% of the total number of respondents and in the same way we get the figure of 56% of faculties have responded yes in the answer, which is around 20% of the total.

From the same table, we found out that out of 157 research scholars/students around 52% have responded no in the answer, which is 34 % of the total number of respondents, and in the same way, we get the figure of around 48 % of research scholars have responded yes in the answer, which is around 31 % of the total. When we compared these with respect to the

Chi-Square test the value of Chi-Square is 1.704 with a significance level of .192 which accept the null hypothesis that no significant effect of respondents position on the objective.

For the given objective we found out with the help of Table 5.1, that out of 83 faculty around 87% have responded no in the answer, which is 30% of the total number of respondents and in the same way we get the figure of 13% of faculties have responded yes in the answer, which is around 5% of the total.

From the same table, we found out that out of 156 research scholars/students around 86% have responded no in the answer, which is 56 % of the total number of respondents, and in the same way, we get the figure of around 14 % of research scholars have responded yes in the answer, which is around 9 % of the total respondents.

When we compared these with respect to the Chi-Square test the value of Chi-Square is 0.856 with a significance level of .033 which accepts the null hypothesis that no significant effect of respondents position on the objective.

RO5: If such a system/method/framework can bring out measurable outcomes.

Crosstab (Table 5.1)

			If such Framework / System is able to bring out MEASURABLE Outcomes?		Total
			no	yes	
Respondent Type	Faculty	Count	72	11	83
		% within Respondent Type	86.7%	13.3%	100.0%
		% of Total	30.1%	4.6%	34.7%
	Scholars	Count	134	22	156
		% within Respondent Type	85.9%	14.1%	100.0%
		% of Total	56.1%	9.2%	65.3%
Total	Count	206	33	239	
	% within Respondent Type	86.2%	13.8%	100.0%	
	% of Total	86.2%	13.8%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests (Table 5.2)

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.033 ^a	1	.856		

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.46.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

CONCLUSION

Having analysed the received data from respondents, it is that majority of the respondents agreed that there should be quantitative / qualitative assessment of conference outcome. Though, substantial number of respondents said that the system for assessment is existing in their respective university/ institution, however, majority said that it is not effective and the existing system of outcome is not able to bring out the measurable outcome of the conferences. This provides answers to the following research questions included in the starting of this paper:

RQ1: Whether there is need of conference outcome assessment?

RQ2: What is the impact of conference outcome on stakeholders?

RQ3: What are the tools used for Conference outcome assessment?

RQ4: Whether there is a need for any tool for qualitative and quantitative assessment?

With the traditional approach, the main focus of all the stakeholders is on the number of conferences and to some extent the quality of the event. However, sincere focus on the outcome and its execution by analysing the impact on all stakeholders is lacking. According to the analysis of the data, it has been found that the conferences have an impact on personal and professional development and it also helps in promoting networking and idea-sharing amongst faculty/research scholars/students.

A highly efficient framework for measurable outcomes in academic institutions will contribute to maintaining the overall quality through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion, and sustenance initiatives aligned with the learning outcomes of the students, academic excellence, and collaborations with the academia and industry. Statistical analysis of conference under given parameters will lead to enhancement of quality of activities involved. As there is no tool available at present that can assist in monitoring the effectiveness of conferences with varied nature with quantifying futuristic perspectives. The author proposes that educational authorities need to pay attention to the specific outcomes

that are directly reaped from organizing these events.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wants to acknowledge the guidance and help provided by Dr. Mritunjay Pal Singh, Assistant Professor, Amity Institute of Applied Sciences for the data analysis in SPSS.

REFERENCES

- Aithal, P. S. and Shailashree, V. and Kumar, P. M., "Analysis of NAAC Accreditation System Using ABCD Framework", International Journal of Management, IT and Engineering, Volume 6, Issue 1, January 2016, pp. 30-44. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2779110>
- All India survey of higher education, 2019, available at <http://aishe.nic.in/aishe/home>
- Dubey Archana and Ratnaparkhi, "Criterion of NAAC Research, Consultancy and Extension :A Case Study of School of Education, DAVV, Indore", Learning Community, 6(1) (April 29, 2015) : 29 - 40 III
- ICSSR Annual Report, <https://icssr.org/annual-report>. (2020). ICSSR. [online] Available at: <https://icssr.org/annual-report> [Accessed 17 Feb. 2020].
- Insaindia.res.in. (2020). INSA. [online] Available at: <http://insaindia.res.in/seminar.php> [Accessed 18 Feb. 2020].
- Janisch, Tscherina, Hilty, Lorenz (2017). *Changing university culture towards reduced air travel – Background Report for the 2017 Virtual Conference on University Air Miles Reduction*. Zurich, Switzerland: ETH Sustainability.
- Justin Neves, John N Lavis and M Kent Ranson, "A Scoping Review about Conference Objectives and Evaluative Practices: How do we get more out of them?", Health Res Policy Syst. 2012; 10:26.
- Kaurav, R. P. S., Suresh, K. G., Narula, S., & Baber, R. "New Education Policy: Qualitative (Contents) Analysis and Twitter Mining (Sentiment Analysis)", Journal of Content, Community & Communication, Dec 2020.

- Mizikaci, F. (2006), "A systems approach to program evaluation model for quality in higher education", *Quality Assurance in Education*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 37-53. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09684880610643601>
- Nicholas Rowe, "When You Get What You Want, But Not What You Need" The Motivations, Affordances and Shortcomings of Attending Academic/Scientific Conferences", *International Journal of Research in Education and Science*, Volume 4, Issue 2, Summer 2018
- Oester S, Cigliano JA, Hind-Ozan EJ and Parsons ECM (2017), "Why Conferences Matter—An Illustration from the International Marine Conservation Congress", *Front. Mar. Sci.* 4:257. doi: 10.3389/fmars.2017.00257
- Riaan van de Venter, "Is there a difference between a congress, conference, symposium, seminar, journal club and workshop in terms of continuing professional development activities?", *the South African Radiographer*, volume 57, number 1, May 2019.
- Stuart, M., Lido, C., Morgan, J., Solomon, L., & May, S. (2011). "The impact of engagement with extracurricular activities on the student experience and graduate outcomes for widening participation populations", *Active Learning in Higher Education*", Volume: 12 issue: 3, page(s): 203-215; available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787411415081>
- Union Budget 2020, at https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/expenditure_budget.php, last accessed on 15.01.2020
