



## A GENRE-BASED ANALYSIS OF FACULTY RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENTS IN SELECTED PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES OF PAKISTAN

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### Abstract

This study is the first systematic genre analysis of job advertisements in Pakistani universities. It is based on Bhatia's (1993) seven-step analytical framework and is applied to a corpus of five advertisements taken from five public-sector HEC-regulated universities, including Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad (QAU), University of Engineering and Technology Lahore (UET), Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan (BZU), University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), and Government College University Faisalabad (GCUF). The study employs a qualitative research design to examine the rhetorical move structure and communicative purposes of these institutionally produced recruitment texts. The analysis identified eleven different rhetorical moves, of which nine were obligatory across the five corpus texts. Our findings show that the genre simultaneously functions as an informational, regulatory, procedural, promotional, and ideological communicative device, with individual moves encoding institutional authority, disciplining prospective applicants via eligibility discourse, and reproducing asymmetrical power relations between recruiting institutions and academic labor markets. The study contributes to the scholarship of genre analysis in Pakistani professional contexts and provides practical implications for university administrators, prospective applicants, policymakers at HEC, and practitioners of English for Professional Purposes (EPP).

**Keywords:** *Bhatia's Seven-Step Model, Communicative Purpose, Discourse, Genre Analysis, HEC, Pakistani University Job Advertisements, Professional Genres, Rhetorical Move Structure.*

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## 1. Introduction

Genre analysis has become one of the major paradigms in applied linguistics, offering systematic tools to understand how language is used in specific professional and institutional contexts (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990). Its use in a wide variety of communicative events, from academic research articles and legal documents to business correspondence and media discourse, can be traced back to its formal development in the 1980s and 1990s (Singh et al., 2012; Gul et al., 2025). Genre analysis is not only about the linguistic surface of a text, but also about the social, cultural and institutional forces that shape a text. This enables genre analysis to provide a holistic understanding of how meaning is constructed within discourse communities (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990). Of the models available, Bhatia's (1993) seven-step model has been particularly influential because of its comprehensive and flexible methodology that connects text-internal linguistic features and text-external professional realities. Its application has been documented in diverse institutional genres like work procedures in the petroleum industry, school memos (Takal et al., 2021) and newspaper editorials on environmental concerns (Gul et al., 2025). Therefore, its wide analytical utility. Job advertisements are a well-known genre of professional discourse functioning as informative, promotional and regulatory texts in institutional contexts (Bhatia, 1993). They are communicative events that carry the values, hierarchies and regulatory constraints of the organizations that produce them, and they specify particular discourse communities of prospective applicants. While a considerable amount of scholarship in genre analysis has been applied to professional texts, university faculty recruitment advertisements in Pakistan – which are subject to the specific regulatory authority of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) – have not been the subject of much systematic genre-analytic attention. These advertisements are not simply transactional documents but are complex texts, shaped by government policy, bureaucratic convention, socio-cultural expectations and the institutional power structures specific to the Pakistani higher education landscape. This study fills this gap by applying Bhatia's (1993) seven-step model to faculty job advertisements issued by Government College University Faisalabad (GCUF), University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan (BZU), University of Engineering and Technology Lahore (UET) and Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad (QAU). It takes into account the situational context, institutional constraints, linguistic features and the rhetorical move structure embedded in these advertisements and shows how the genre serves simultaneously the purposes of institutional recruitment, regulatory compliance and the projection of institutional authority. The findings contribute to genre analysis literature in Pakistani professional contexts, and offer insights relevant for scholars of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), institutional discourse and professional communication. This study adopts Bhatia's (1993)

seven-step model as the analytical framework and conducts a qualitative analysis of the corpus of five job advertisements.

### **1.1. Research Questions**

1. What is the rhetorical move structure of Pakistani university job advertisements?
2. What communicative purposes do each rhetorical move serve in Pakistani university job advertisements, and how do these moves collectively function to announce vacancies, establish regulatory authority, specify eligibility conditions, direct applicant behavior, and project institutional identity?

### **1.2. Research Objectives**

1. To identify and map the rhetorical move structure of Pakistani university job advertisements by documenting the sequence and obligatoriness.
2. To determine the communicative purposes served by each rhetorical move and to explain how the sequential integration of these moves accomplishes the genre's composite institutional functions.

### **1.3. Research Gap**

Job advertisements in Pakistani universities have not been studied at all as a separate professional genre, despite the fact that genre analysis has been the concern of a growing body of scholarship. While neighboring genres such as job application letters (Haroon, 2020) or wedding invitation cards (Afzal et al., 2022; Khan & Iqbal, 2020; Manan & Mansoor, 2018) have been analyzed, the job advertisement originating from the recruiter has been ignored. While analysis of move structure has been used in engineering procedures (Singh et al., 2012) and institutional memos (Takal et al., 2021) and pioneered by Swales (1990) and further developed by Bhatia (1993, 2002), research has not been undertaken to investigate the rhetorical move structure of Pakistani university job advertisements. The existing literature, therefore, is one-sided, privileging cultural and social genres and leaving the professional recruitment genres of Pakistan's growing higher education sector uncharted. The current research aims to fill this gap by applying Bhatia's (1993) seven-step model to a corpus of Pakistani university job advertisements with a specific focus on move structure and identification of communicative purpose. While neighboring genres such as job application letters (Haroon, 2020) or wedding invitation cards (Afzal et al., 2022; Khan & Iqbal, 2020; Manan & Mansoor, 2018) have been analyzed, the job advertisement originating from the recruiter has been ignored. While analysis of move structure has been used in engineering procedures (Singh et al., 2012) and institutional memos (Takal et al., 2021) and pioneered by Swales (1990) and further developed by Bhatia (1993, 2002), research has not been undertaken to investigate the rhetorical move structure of Pakistani university job advertisements. The existing literature, therefore, is one-sided, privileging cultural and social genres and leaving the professional recruitment genres of Pakistan's growing higher education sector uncharted.

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#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The present study is important for theory, methodology, practice and institutions. Theoretically, it contributes to the existing scholarship on genre analysis by applying Bhatia's (1993) seven-step framework to analyse Pakistani university job advertisements for the first time, thus showing their rhetorical move structure and extending Bhatia's (2013) critical genre analysis approach by showing the method by which institutional recruitment texts perform regulatory, promotional and ideological functions simultaneously. The study validates and expands Bhatia's model beyond the cultural and applicant-generated genres that have prevailed in Pakistani genre research (Haroon, 2020; Afzal et al., 2022; Manan & Mansoor, 2018) and offers a replicable analytical template for future researchers. In practice, the findings are of direct relevance to university administrators working on recruitment texts, prospective academic applicants navigating the genre, HEC policymakers concerned with communicating regulatory requirements, and EPP practitioners designing curricula for professional communication. In short, the study fills a substantive gap in the literature and generates knowledge of direct utility to the key stakeholders of Pakistan's rapidly expanding higher education sector.

#### **2. Literature Review**

Genre analysis, as a formal field, questions how language is systematically organized to achieve communicative purposes within particular discourse communities. Swales (1990) defined genre as a class of communicative events sharing a set of communicative purposes, thus shifting the analytical focus from surface features of texts to the social and rhetorical functions that texts perform. In an extension of this, Bhatia (1993) proposed a comprehensive seven-step analytical model of professional genres incorporating situational context, institutional constraints and linguistic analysis to provide a 'thick description' of genre. This was extended to a multi-perspective model at the textual, socio-cognitive and sociological levels (Bhatia, 2002). Bhatia (2013) took this further through critical genre analysis, placing genre as a site of ideological contestation where institutional texts encode asymmetric relations of authority and legitimacy. (Yasmeen et al., 2021) verified that this framework remains applicable in contemporary institutional contexts.

Bhatia's (1993) model has been empirically tested and found to be productive in a variety of professional genres. Singh et al. (2012) applied all seven steps to the work procedures of the Malaysian petroleum industry to show how institutional authority shapes genre structure. The model was applied to an institutional school memo by Takal et al. (2021) to show how the modal verbs, voice and nominalization expose underlying power

relations. Shahid and Mahmood (2019) have extended the framework for pragmatic analysis of professional texts in Pakistani institutional settings, showing how genre conventions interact with politeness and face-work norms. Haroon (2020) studied the job application letters of Pakistani graduates in the employment sector and found that credential display and deference to hierarchy were rhetorical moves of locally situated genre strategies. While Haroon's (2020) study addresses the applicant-produced side of the employment cycle, the recruiter-produced job advertisement is left unexplored – an asymmetry that the present study directly addresses.

Job advertisements lie at a discursive intersection that is analytically productive between informational and promotional discourse. In his analysis of advertorials, Bhatia (2005) showed that hybrid texts use editorial conventions to persuade under the guise of informational credibility. The mechanism applies to university job ads that have both regulatory and promotional functions. Aziz et al. (2020) have demonstrated how promotional texts use a coordinated range of linguistic, visual and typographic resources to create institutional authority in their multi-modal genre analysis of milk formula advertisements in a Pakistani parenting magazine. Pakistani genre scholarship has also used culturally specific genres as methodological precedents. For instance, Afzal et al. (2022) mapped rhetorical moves in Pakistani wedding invitations using Bhatia's framework; Khan and Iqbal (2020) identified sociolinguistic patterns encoding social hierarchies within the same genre; and Manan and Mansoor (2018) demonstrated that Pakistani genre conventions are shaped by intersecting pressures of religious observance, social hierarchy, and community belonging—pressures similar to those of HEC regulatory authority in the present context. Taken together, these studies confirm Bhatia's framework transferability across institutional and cultural genres in Pakistani discourse communities, but also highlight the conspicuous dearth of analytical attention to the professional recruitment genres of Pakistan's higher education sector, a lacuna that the current study seeks to address. This is a qualitative study and future studies might continue it with corpus methods.

## **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1.1. Analytical Framework: Bhatia's Seven-Step Model**

The seven-step model of Bhatia (1993) provides a systematic and comprehensive procedure for the analysis of professional and institutional genres. Each step is applied to the corpus as follows.

#### **2.1.1.1. Step 1: Placing the Genre-Text in Situational Context**

QAU has announced two (02) Permanent Posts of Assistant Professor (BPS-19) in Gender/Women Studies. It demands a PhD from a recognised institution by HEC. No experience is required. Shortlisted candidates are required to give a demo lecture. Applicants send five hard copies of their dossier along with a Rs. 2,000/- Pay Order

through HBL. The institution has the right to select or not to select any candidate without assigning any reason.

UET advertisement limits eligibility to Punjab domicile nationals only, across four campuses, advertising three post categories including Assistant Professor (BPS-19, Contract), Teaching Fellow (Rs. 75,000 per month, M.Phil with CGPA 3.0/4.0 required) and Teaching Assistant (Rs. 50,000 per month). Engineering applicants must have PEC registration. Applications will be submitted online with a Rs. 2,000/- pay order through HBL.

BZU advertisement has covered different disciplines for nineteen permanent Assistant Professor (BPS-19) posts. An online application is mandatory at [jobs.bzu.edu.pk](http://jobs.bzu.edu.pk) along with a non-refundable Bank Draft of Rs. 4,000/-. The PVMC, PEC and Pharmacy Council require discipline-specific registration, respectively.

The UAF advertisement includes the posts of Professor (BPS-21), Associate Professor (BPS-20) and Assistant Professor (BPS-19) in forty departments and three Constituent Colleges with a reservation of quota of 3%, 5% and 15% for disabled persons, minorities and women, respectively. Hard copies required in quadruplicate for senior ranks.

The GCUF advertisement is the widest in rank range, from Demonstrator (BPS-16) to Professor (BPS-21) in forty disciplines and three sub-campuses, with application fees in tiers ranging from Rs. 1,000/- to Rs. 3,000/- and a USB dossier for senior posts. All recommendations are subject to the final and conclusive authority and review of the Selection Board.

#### **2.1.1.2. Step 2: Surveying Existing Literature**

The literature review examined the foundations of genre theory, applications of Bhatia's model across professional genres, hybrid and advertorial genres, culturally specific Pakistani genres and employment-related discourse. The literature review validated Pakistani university job advertisements as an unexamined genre and set the analytical premise of the present study.

#### **2.1.1.3. Step 3: Refining the Situational and Contextual Analysis**

The situational analysis is further refined by specialist knowledge of the regulatory context of higher education in Pakistan. HEC has set discipline-wise qualification criteria, i.e., PhD for regular faculty ranks, LLB/LLM routes for Law and alternate criteria for Arts and Design experience requirements from nil for Assistant Professors to fifteen years for Professors and minimum publication benchmarks in HEC-recognized journals. Such regulatory mandates have a direct impact on the linguistic content and structural organization of all five corpus advertisements. This can be seen in the almost identical eligibility matrices replicated across UAF and GCUF texts and the clear mention of "HEC Faculty Criteria" in the UET advertisement instructions.

#### **2.1.1.4. Step 4: Corpus Selection**

The corpus includes five ads, collected from official university recruitment websites between 2025 and early 2026. The ads represent different academic ranks, campus structures and disciplinary profiles within the public-sector university system regulated by HEC. The corpus size is considered appropriate for qualitative genre analysis, as the focus is on interpretive depth rather than statistical breadth, in line with previous studies such as Takal et al. (2021) and Singh et al. (2012).

#### **2.1.1.5. Step 5: Studying the institutional context**

All five ads are an index of HEC's authority as a prescribing regulatory body; however, they are also an encoding of institution-specific bureaucratic conventions. QAU: Application should be submitted to the Director, Centre of Excellence in Gender Studies, within 30 days of this publication on the following conditions: NOC from employer, a contributory pension scheme, and the institution has the right to reject any application without assigning any reason thereof. Stipend-Based Remuneration. Registration with PEC is mandatory for Engineering disciplines only. Only Punjab Domicile holders are eligible to apply for UET. UAF Professor and Assistant Professor online submission of application and delivery of a hard copy to the Director-HR in quadruplicate/triplicate, respectively, and payment to a specific NBP account. GCUF requires a Demand Draft submission, a USB dossier for senior posts and says that the Selection Board has the final say and there is no right of appeal. BZU is very strict for the PhD degree and only accepts a PhD degree from an HEC-recognised institution. These institutional variations mediate the macro-level HEC regulatory authority through micro-level institutional conventions, obtaining generic consistency side by side with institutional individuation throughout the corpus.

#### **2.1.1.6. Step 6: Levels of Linguistic Analysis**

The main analysis is conducted at different levels. At the lexico-grammatical level, the study considers modal verbs (must, shall, will, may), passive constructions, nominalisation and formulaic eligibility discourse in all five texts, e.g., "the applicant must have", "applications shall reach", "the university reserves the right", "only shortlisted candidates will be called." Each advertisement is broken down into its constituent moves at the move structure level: Institutional Identification, Vacancy Announcement, Eligibility Specification, Application Procedure, General Conditions, Quota Declaration, and Institutional Disclaimer, and the order, obligatory status and communicative function of each move are tabulated and compared across the corpus. Cross-textual analysis reveals shared HEC-driven conventions as well as institutional variation in move elaboration, structural emphasis and linguistic realisation. At the socio-cognitive level, the analysis explores how genre conventions encode the shared knowledge, assumptions and power

relations of the Pakistani higher education discourse community, including the regulatory authority of HEC and university administrations over prospective academic employees.

#### **2.1.1.7. Step 7: Specialist Information for Pedagogical Purposes**

The last step translates genre knowledge into practically useful insights for genre users and stakeholders, which is discussed in the Significance of the Study (Section 5) and Conclusion of this article and has implications for university HR administrators, prospective academic applicants, HEC policymakers, and EPP practitioners in the Pakistani higher education context.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The study is qualitative in nature and is based on genre analysis. The main analytical tool is Bhatia's (1993) seven-step model. The corpus consists of five permanent job advertisements of Pakistani public-sector universities retrieved from the official recruitment portals of Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), University of Engineering and Technology Lahore (UET), Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan (BZU), University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), and Government College University Faisalabad (GCUF) under the HEC regulatory criteria at Lecturer (BPS-18) to Professor (BPS-21) levels. The corpus was selected based on institutional authenticity, regulatory homogeneity under HEC and representativeness of current recruitment practice in Pakistani higher education. The qualitative design allows for close, interpretive reading of the texts in the corpus, paying attention to the interaction of linguistic features, rhetorical organization, and the institutional and cultural context of text production, as is standard in genre analysis practice (Swales, 1990; Singh et al., 2012; Takal et al., 2021).

#### **3.1. Analysis method and validity**

The analytical procedure consisted of three sequential phases: a holistic reading of each advertisement to achieve a comprehensive understanding of its communicative design and institutional context, move-level segmentation based on shifts in communicative purpose as demonstrated through change in content focus, lexico-grammatical patterning and discourse organization, and cross-textual comparison to establish patterns of recurrence, variation and obligatoriness across the five-advertisement corpus. Linguistic evidence was combined with expert contextual knowledge to set boundaries for moves, as outlined in Steps 3 and 5. The interpretive validity is ensured by the transparency of the analytical procedure, move-purpose assignments based on verified regulatory knowledge, and the use of publicly accessible institutional source materials, in line with established qualitative genre analysis standards (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990).

#### **3.2. Criteria for corpus selection**

The corpus was selected based on four criteria: firstly, the advertisements had to be issued by the public-sector Pakistani universities; secondly, they had to be related to faculty or academic teaching positions; thirdly, they had to be available through official

university recruitment sources; and fourthly, they had to be within the collection period from September 2025 to February 2026. The corpus, consisting of five advertisements, is limited, but this is justified by the qualitative nature of Bhatia's genre analysis, where analytical depth and institutional representativeness are preferred over statistical generalization.

#### 4. Findings

By applying Bhatia's (1993) seven-step genre analysis framework to analyse the five corpus advertisements, a total of eleven different rhetorical moves were identified, especially the move-structure identification at Step 6. These moves were identified by changes in communicative purpose, content focus, and lexico-grammatical patterning across the five texts.

**Table 1:** Rhetorical Move Structure of Pakistani University Job Advertisements

| Move                                 | Definition / Communicative Purpose                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Obligatoriness   | Example from Corpus                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Move 1: Institutional Identification | Establishes the identity, name, and authority of the recruiting institution, orienting the reader to the organizational source of the advertisement and projecting institutional prestige.                                           | 5/5 (Obligatory) | "BAHAUDDIN ZAKARIYA UNIVERSITY, MULTAN / University on line: <a href="http://www.bzu.edu.pk">www.bzu.edu.pk</a> / SITUATION VACANT" (BZU); "UNIVERSITY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY, LAHORE / POSITIONS VACANT" (UET)                      |
| Move 2: Vacancy Announcement         | Formally announces the availability of one or more academic positions, specifying the nature, number, and basis of the post(s) being offered. Initiates the recruitment communicative event.                                         | 5/5 (Obligatory) | "Applications are invited from the Pakistani Nationals for the following faculty positions" (BZU); "Applications are invited from Punjab Domiciled Pakistanis for the following posts" (UET)                                                |
| Move 3: Post Specification           | Provides a structured, often tabular, listing of the specific posts available, including post title, BPS grade, department/discipline, campus/location, number of posts, and nature of appointment (permanent, temporary, contract). | 5/5 (Obligatory) | "Assistant Professor (BPS-19) / Gender Studies / 01-Permanent" (BZU); "Professor (BPS-21) / Associate Professor (BPS-20) / Assistant Professor (BPS-19) across 40+ departments" (UAF); "Demonstrator (BPS-16) to Professor (BPS-21)" (GCUF) |

|                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Move 4:<br>Eligibility<br>Specification                | Articulates the mandatory qualification and experience requirements for each post, as prescribed by HEC Faculty Criteria, thereby establishing the conditions of access to the advertised positions and disciplining prospective applicants.            | 5/5 (Obligatory)                         | <i>"Ph.D. degree in relevant field from HEC recognized University/Institution. No experience required." (BZU, QAU); "At least an eighteen years Master's (or M.Phil) degree in the relevant discipline having earned a CGPA of at least 3.0 out of 4.0" (UET)</i>                                                    |
| Move 5:<br>Professional<br>Registration<br>Requirement | Specifies that applicants in regulated disciplines (Engineering, Pharmacy, Veterinary Sciences) must hold valid registration with the relevant professional regulatory council (PEC, Pharmacy Council of Pakistan, PVMC) as a condition of eligibility. | 4/5 (Frequent;<br>Not applicable<br>QAU) | <i>"Applicants for the posts of Faculty of Engineering must be registered with PEC" (BZU); "Registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in case of Engineering discipline is mandatory" (UET); "PEC and Pharmacy Council registrations required" (GCUF)</i>                                                 |
| Move 6:<br>Application<br>Procedure                    | Directs prospective applicants through the process of submitting their application, specifying whether submission is online or offline, what documents must be included, how many copies are required, and to whom the application must be addressed.   | 5/5 (Obligatory)                         | <i>"Candidates must apply online through BZU website: jobs.bzu.edu.pk followed by submission of hard copies" (BZU); "hard copies in quadruplicate for Professor/Associate Professor and triplicate for Assistant Professor" (UAF); "five complete sets plus USB in PDF for Professor/Associate Professor" (GCUF)</i> |
| Move 7:<br>Application<br>Fee<br>Specification         | Specifies the non-refundable processing fee, the payment modality (Bank Draft, Pay Order, online transfer, Challan), the banking institution and account details, and any rank-based or category-based fee variations.                                  | 5/5 (Obligatory)                         | <i>"Pay Order/Bank Draft of Rs. 2,000/- via HBL QAU Branch" (QAU); "Bank Draft Rs. 4,000/- via HBL A/C No. 12717900643601 or UBL A/C No. 085700300018" (BZU); "Demand Draft: Rs. 3,000/- (Professor/Associate Professor), Rs. 2,500/- (Assistant Professor), Rs.</i>                                                 |

|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                           | 2,000/- (Lecturer), Rs. 1,000/- (Demonstrator)" (GCUF)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Move 8: General Conditions        | Lists a set of institutional rules and procedural requirements governing the application process, including NOC requirements for serving employees, deadlines for submission, treatment of incomplete or late applications, and conditions related to foreign degree equivalence. | 5/5 (Obligatory)                          | <i>"Candidates already in service of a Government/Semi-Government Department must apply through proper channel within due date" (BZU); "Applications that are incomplete (in any way) or received after due date shall not be entertained by any means" (QAU); "Candidates not married to a foreign national" (UAF)</i>                                                                                                                     |
| Move 9: Quota Declaration         | Announces institutionally and/or legally mandated quota reservations for specific social categories — disabled persons, minorities, and women — in accordance with federal and provincial government directives, thereby fulfilling a legal compliance function.                  | 3/5 (Optional; present in UAF, GCUF, BZU) | <i>"3% quota will be reserved for disabled persons" (BZU); "3% Disabled, 5% Minorities, 15% Women / 3% disabled persons, 5% minorities, and 15% women quota" (UAF)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Move 10: Institutional Disclaimer | Asserts the institution's sovereign right to modify, withdraw, withhold, or cancel any advertised post without assigning any reason, and to reject applications without accountability, thereby protecting the institution from legal or procedural challenge.                    | 5/5 (Obligatory)                          | <i>"The Centre reserves the rights to increase/decrease the number of positions, not to fill any position/withhold the appointment against any advertised position or to accept/reject any application without assigning any reason" (QAU); "The University reserves the right not to fill/withdraw any advertised post without assigning any reason" (BZU); "The Selection Board has final authority and no candidate has the right to</i> |

|                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                  | <i>challenge its recommendations" (GCUF)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Move 11: Shortlisting and Interview Notification | Informs prospective applicants that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for the next stage of the selection process (interview, demo lecture, or seminar) and that no TA/DA will be provided for attendance, thereby managing applicant expectations and limiting institutional obligation. | 5/5 (Obligatory) | <i>"Only shortlisted candidates will be called for demo lecture/seminar and interview. No T.A./D.A. will be admissible for test/interview." (QAU); "Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview and No TA/DA will be paid" (BZU)</i> |

**Figure 1: Prototypical Move Structure of Pakistani University Faculty Recruitment Advertisements**

Institutional Identification → Vacancy Announcement → Post Specification → Eligibility Specification → Professional Registration Requirement → Application Procedure → Application Fee Specification → General Conditions → Quota Declaration → Institutional Disclaimer → Shortlisting and Interview Notification.

Moves 1,2,3,4,6,7,8,10,11 appear in all five advertisements (100%). Move 5 appears in four (80%) and Move 9 appears in three (60%). As presented in Table 1, nine of the eleven identified moves: Institutional Identification, Vacancy Announcement, Post Specification, Eligibility Specification, Application Procedure, Application Fee Specification, General Conditions, Institutional Disclaimer, and Shortlisting and Interview Notification, are obligatory, appearing in each of the five corpus advertisements. Move 5 is common; Move 9 is optional. This high degree of structural consistency of texts across institutions confirms that Pakistani university job advertisements constitute a stable and recognisable genre with a predictable rhetorical structure, governed by the common regulatory framework of the HEC and the conventions of public-sector institutional communication in Pakistan. Not all advertisements include Move 5 (Professional Registration Requirement), but it is a common move. Only the QAU advertisement does not include this move, as it is advertising posts in Gender/Women Studies, a discipline not regulated by a professional council. 9. Move 9 (Quota Declaration) is optional, being found in three of five ads and illustrating variation in institutional interpretation of government quota directives. Moves 10 and 11 are compulsory, though there is some slight inter-institutional variation in the order of the two (some texts put the TA/DA restriction before the general disclaimer).

The communicative functions of each of the eleven moves identified together constitute the overall communicative design of the genre that is simultaneously regulatory, informational, promotional, and ideological. Analysis shows that the genre of Pakistani university job advertisement does not have a single, monolithic communicative purpose, but rather distributes a range of discrete, and at times competing, rhetorical functions across its constitutive moves.

Move 1 (Institutional Identification) serves the dual purpose of identifying the source and legitimacy of the recruitment communication and projecting the institutional prestige of the recruiting university. The prominence of the institutional name – always set in the largest and most visually dominant type in all five advertisements – is an indicator of the genre's investment in institutional identity building as a communicative priority alongside functional vacancy communication.

The main initiating function of the genre is realized by Move 2 (Vacancy Announcement), which formally opens the recruitment event and constitutes the invitation to apply. The lexico-grammatical level shows a high degree of genre conventionalization, with the formulaic linguistic realization "Applications are invited from ..." present in all five corpus texts. Where variation occurs, such as UET's limitation of the invitation to "Punjab-domiciled Pakistanis" and UAF's stipulation that applicants must not be "married to a foreign national," it encodes institutional eligibility conditions and legal compliance requirements that reduce the communicative address invitation.

Move 3 (Post Specification) has both an informational function in giving the structural inventory of available positions and a promotional function in projecting the scale and disciplinary breadth of the advertising institution. All five advertisements for this move are in a tabular format that performs a genre-specific ideological function: it employs the visual authority of administrative documentation to present the institution's requirements as objective, fixed, non-negotiable facts, rather than institutional choices or preferences.

Move 4 (Eligibility Specification) is the most ideologically loaded move in the genre. Its main communicative purpose is regulatory compliance the reproduction of specified HEC qualification and experience thresholds – and at the same time, it performs a disciplinary function, creating the "ideal applicant" as a subject defined by specific credentialing pathways recognized by the Pakistani state. The frequent use of the deontic modal construction "must have" in this move across the corpus is indicative of the institution's authority to determine who can legitimately enter the academic labor market, with the HEC regulatory framework as the ultimate arbiter of professional worthiness.

Move 5 (Professional Registration Requirement) extends the disciplinary function of Move 4 by incorporating the regulatory power of professional councils (PEC, Pharmacy Council of Pakistan, PVMC) next to HEC, and exemplifies the genre as a site where

various institutional authorities merge to create and impose the terms of access to academic employment in regulated disciplines.

Move 6 (Application Procedure) is directive and communicative in purpose, instructing potential applicants to adhere to the bureaucratic requirements of submission and thus constructing the applicant as a subject who must navigate and comply with institutional administrative systems. The variation in submission requirements across the corpus, from one hard copy (BZU) to five sets plus a USB (GCUF for senior posts), reflects differences in institutional administrative culture and reveals how bureaucratic complexity itself functions as a form of institutional authority.

The purpose of Move 7 (Application Fee Specification) is two-fold: (a) to provide institutional revenue; and (b) to set up a financial obstacle to application that implicitly disciplines the applicant pool. The corpus shows a variation in fees from Rs. 2,000 (QAU, UET) to Rs. 4,000 (BZU) and Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 3,000, depending on rank (GCUF), indicating that different universities assign different values to different ranks and positions, and higher fees for senior positions communicate institutional hierarchies in terms of money.

Moves 8 and 9 (General Conditions and Quota Declaration) are performing a legal compliance function in concert, ensuring the advertisement conforms to the procedural and equity requirements of public-sector governance in Pakistan. Move 8 also has an applicant-management function, anticipating procedural contingencies late applications, incomplete dossiers, foreign degrees that might otherwise cause administrative burden for the institution.

Move 10 (Institutional Disclaimer) is the most overtly ideological move of the genre. The communicative function of this is to announce complete institutional sovereignty over the recruitment process, to establish the institution's authority as final, unreviewable, and unlimited. The formulaic construction "reserves the right to... without assigning any reason" reproduced with minor variations in all five corpus texts is a genre convention that encodes a fundamental asymmetry of power between the recruiting institution and the prospective applicant, and naturalizes this asymmetry as a normal feature of professional recruitment discourse in Pakistani Education.

Move 11 (Shortlisting and Interview Notification) closes the genre by managing applicant expectations and reducing institutional obligation. All five texts systematically refuse TA/DA and limit notification only to the shortlisted candidates. This fulfils the communicative function to make sure that the unsuccessful applicants or non-shortlisted candidates do not raise claims over institutional resources and responsibilities.

#### **4.1. Sample Move-Boundary Analysis: Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU)**

To illustrate the move-identification procedure, the BZU advertisement is presented below with move boundaries explicitly marked. BZU was selected for sample

analysis because it is the most structurally representative corpus text, containing all eleven identified moves in an unambiguous sequence, and its full text is available for detailed citation.

**Table 2:** Move-Boundary Analysis of BZU Advertisement (Admin-I/05-2025, dated 01. Nov.2025)

| Move                                           | Textual Realization (from corpus)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Move 1 — Institutional Identification          | <i>"BAHAUDDIN ZAKARIYA UNIVERSITY, MULTAN / University online: www.bzu.edu.pk"</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Move 2 — Vacancy Announcement                  | <i>"SITUATION VACANT / No. Admin-I/05-2025 / Date: 01.11.2025 / Applications are invited from the Pakistani Nationals for the following faculty positions"</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Move 3 — Post Specification                    | <i>Tabular listing of 19 subject areas under ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (BPS-19), each with department name, number of posts (e.g., "01-Permanent", "02-Permanent"), covering Gender Studies, Geography, Political Science, Education, Applied Psychology, Sports Science, Business Administration, Commerce, Management Science, Textile Engineering, English, Saraiki, Pharmaceuticals, Microbiology, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics, Agricultural Engineering, Veterinary Sciences.</i> |
| Move 4 — Eligibility Specification             | <i>"Ph.D. degree in relevant field from HEC recognized University/Institution. No experience required."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Move 5 — Professional Registration Requirement | <i>"Applicants for the posts of Faculty of Veterinary Sciences must be registered with PVMC as RVMP/RAHG... Faculty of Engineering must be registered with PEC... Faculty of Pharmacy must be registered with Pharmacy Council of Pakistan."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Move 6 — Application Procedure                 | <i>"Candidates must apply online through BZU website: jobs.bzu.edu.pk followed by submission of hard copies of duly signed online application form (01-set) along with attested copies of degrees, result cards, transcripts and certificates. Applications other than online will not be entertained."</i>                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Move 7 — Application Fee Specification         | <i>"Applications must be accompanied with Generated Bank Draft (Non-refundable) amounting to Rs. 4000/-... deposited in the University Branch, Main Campus, HBL A/C # 12717900643601 OR UBL A/C # 085700300018."</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Move 8 — General Conditions                    | <i>Conditions governing NOC for serving employees, experience certificate from HR department of employer, deadline (November 24, 2025), foreign degree equivalence requirements (HEC/IBCC attestation), non-entertainment of late or incomplete applications, separate forms required for each post.</i>                                                                                                                                                                              |

|                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Move 9 — Quota Declaration                        | <i>"3% quota will be reserved for disabled persons. If the candidate is disabled he/she will have to submit a certificate from the Provincial Council for rehabilitation of Disabled Persons of Social Welfare Department."</i> |
| Move 10 — Institutional Disclaimer                | <i>"The University reserves the right not to fill/withdraw any advertised post/withhold the appointment against any post without assigning any reason."</i>                                                                     |
| Move 11 — Shortlisting and Interview Notification | <i>"Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview and No TA/DA will be paid."</i>                                                                                                                                    |

The BZU advertisement exemplifies the genre's characteristic structural logic: it opens with institutional identification, moves through an informational core of vacancy and eligibility specification, proceeds through a procedural middle section of application instructions, and closes with a cluster of institutional authority moves (Disclaimer, Shortlisting Notification) that collectively assert the institution's sovereign control over the recruitment event. This architecture is consistent across all five corpus advertisements, though with institution-specific variations in the elaboration of individual moves, as the cross-textual comparison below demonstrates.

#### 4.2. Cross-Textual Comparison of Move Realization Across the Five Corpus Advertisements

While the eleven-move structure identified above is shared across the corpus, the five advertisements differ substantially in how individual moves are realized, elaborated, and sequenced. Table 3 presents a systematic cross-textual comparison of move realization across QAU, UET, BZU, UAF, and GCUF.

**Table 3:** Cross-Textual Comparison of Move Realization

| Move                         | QAU                              | UET                              | BZU                    | UAF                                   | GCUF                               |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Move 1: Institutional ID     | ✓ QAU Centre of Excellence       | ✓ UET "100 Years of Excellence." | ✓ BZU Registrar issued | ✓ UAF Director-HR                     | ✓ GCUF Recruitment Cell            |
| Move 2: Vacancy Announcement | ✓ Pakistani Nationals            | ✓ Punjab Domicile only           | ✓ Pakistani Nationals  | ✓ Not married to a foreign national   | ✓ Pakistani Nationals              |
| Move 3: Post Specification   | 1 rank, 2 posts, 1 dept          | 3 categories, 4 campuses         | 1 rank (AP), 19 depts  | 3 ranks + non-teaching, 40+ depts     | 5 ranks, 40+ depts, 3 sub-campuses |
| Move 4: Eligibility          | PhD, no experience, HEC criteria | CGPA thresholds,                 | PhD, no experience     | HEC criteria with discipline variants | HEC criteria with                  |

|                                   |                                     | stipend-based                   | e, HEC criteria                  |                                                     | discipline variants                |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Move 5: Professional Registration | Absent                              | PEC for Engineering             | PEC, PVMC, Pharmacy Council      | PEC, Pharmacy Council                               | PEC, Pharmacy Council              |
| Move 6: Application Procedure     | 5 hard copies, prescribed Performa  | Online portal + pay order (HBL) | Online (mandatory) + 1 hard copy | Online + 3 or 4 hard copies by rank                 | 3 or 5 sets + USB for senior ranks |
| Move 7: Fee                       | Rs. 2,000 (HBL, QAU Branch)         | Rs. 2,000 (HBL, UET Treasurer)  | Rs. 4,000 (HBL/UBL)              | Rank-based (NBP dedicated account)                  | Rs. 1,000-3,000 (Demand Draft)     |
| Move 8: General Conditions        | NOC, 30-day deadline, overseas fee  | HEC criteria, domicile, PEC     | Foreign degree equivalence       | NOC, NBP payment, marital condition                 | NOC, USB dossier, Data Sci note    |
| Move 9: Quota Declaration         | Absent                              | Absent                          | 3% Disabled                      | 3%/5%/15% (Disabled/Min./Women)                     | 3%/5% (Disabled/Min.)              |
| Move 10: Disclaimer               | Right to increase/decrease/withhold | Right to fill/not fill posts    | Right to withdraw post           | Repeat-applicant rule + right to post to sub-campus | Selection Board final authority    |
| Move 11: Shortlisting/No TA-DA    | Demo lecture + interview, No TA/DA  | No TA/DA, No specified          | Interview only, No TA/DA         | No TA/DA, shortlisting by test/academics            | Interview only, No TA/DA           |

Table 3 shows a cross-textual comparison that reveals several patterns of analytical significance. First, there is the highest inter-institutional variation in Move 3 (Post Specification): The advertisement of QAU is covering only one rank and two posts, as it is coming from a specialized Centre. GCUF and UAF are covering five and four ranks, respectively, in dozens of disciplines and multiple campuses, as these are big multi-faculty universities with a complex administrative setup. Second, Move 7 (Application Fee) varies in amount and payment modality across the corpus, with QAU and UET employing HBL Pay Orders, BZU providing dual HBL/UBL options, UAF requiring a National Bank of Pakistan account with an IBAN, and GCUF necessitating institution-specific Demand Drafts with rank-tiered amounts. What these variations suggest is differences in institutional banking arrangements and administrative systems, rather than differences in communicative purpose. Third, Move 9 (Quota Declaration) is conspicuously missing from QAU and UET, suggesting that smaller or more specialized recruitment exercises might consider quota compliance as an implied rather than explicitly stated institutional

obligation. Fourth, Move 10 (Institutional Disclaimer) is present in all five texts, but differs considerably in terms of rhetorical elaboration: QAU's is the most comprehensive, listing six specific rights the institution reserves; GCUF's is the only one that frames the Selection Board's authority as final and non-challengeable; and UAF's includes the unique proviso that candidates appearing before the Selection Board twice without success may not re-apply for the same post, a proviso not found in any other corpus text.

#### **4.3. Inter-rater reliability**

In order to ensure the reliability of the move-identification procedure, a second rater with expertise in applied linguistics independently coded the BZU advertisement using the move definitions developed through the analysis without access to the primary analyst's coding. The two raters agreed on ten of the eleven identified moves and the initial agreement rate was 90.9%. The only point of disagreement was the boundary between Move 5 (Professional Registration Requirement) and Move 8 (General Conditions). The second rater clustered the professional registration conditions within the general conditions, while the primary analyst considered them a separate move because they invoked a separate institutional authority, namely professional regulatory councils such as PEC, the Pharmacy Council of Pakistan, and PVMC, rather than the university or HEC. After a structured discussion, consensus was achieved and the final agreement was 100%. This inter-rater reliability figure is within the range of what is considered to be sufficient analytical reliability in qualitative genre analysis (Nwogu, 1997; Kanoksilapatham, 2005), thus confirming the robustness of the analytical procedure.

#### **5. Results and Discussion**

The rhetorical analysis of five advertisements for university jobs in Pakistan, using Bhatia's (1993) seven-step genre analysis model, identified eleven rhetorical moves, providing the first systematic description of the rhetorical architecture of this genre in the genre analysis literature. All five corpus texts exhibit seven mandatory moves, namely, Institutional Identification, Vacancy Announcement, Post Specification, Eligibility Specification, Application Procedure, Application Fee Specification, General Conditions, Institutional Disclaimer, and Shortlisting and Interview Notification, which shows that the genre is structurally stable and highly conventionalized. Such stability is a function of the dual regulatory and communicative constraints under which the genre operates: as an institutional text regulated by HEC, it has to contain prescribed types of information; as a communicative event addressed to prospective applicants, it has to present that information in a navigable and actionable form. This finding contributes to the move-structure tradition of analysis initiated by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) by extending it to an unexplored domain of institutional genres, confirming the cross-contextual applicability of the framework.

The analysis also shows that the genre performs a complex set of overlapping communicative functions: informational, regulatory, procedural, promotional, and ideological, unevenly spread across its constituent moves. Moves 4 and 5 focus on the regulatory and disciplinary functions, where HEC Faculty Criteria and professional council registration requirements are the conditions of access to academic employment and build the “ideal applicant” through deontic modal constructions such as “must have,” “is required,” and “shall be.” The promotional function is most apparent in Move 1, where institutional names, mottos and prestige-signaling epithets — such as UET's '100 Years of Academic Excellence' — transform an administrative notice into an exercise in institutional identity-building, in keeping with Bhatia's (2002, 2005) theorization of genre hybridization. The ideological function is most explicit in Move 10 (Institutional Disclaimer), where the formulaic construction 'reserves the right to... without assigning any reason', reproduced across all five corpus texts, naturalizes an asymmetric power relationship between the recruiting institution and the prospective applicant as a genre convention of Pakistani public-sector recruitment discourse. This finding directly aligns with Bhatia's (2013) framework of critical genre analysis, which views genre conventions as sites of institutional power exercised and reproduced.

The cross-textual comparison suggests that institutional identity is not just encoded through Move 1, but rather it is disseminated throughout the entire move structure by means of institution-specific choices in terms of procedural complexity, fee structure, quota declaration and disclaimer formulation. In comparison, the tiered Demand Draft fees, five-set submission requirement and USB dossier condition for senior posts at GCUF create a distinct bureaucratic institutional identity, whereas QAU's compact, single-rank advertisement with its overseas application provision and demo lecture requirement present a more academically specialized and internationally orientated institutional persona. UAF's unusual rule that prevents unsuccessful repeat applicants from reapplying for the same post—a feature not found in any of the other corpus texts—represents a particularly assertive approach to applicant management by the institution. These variations confirm Bhatia's (2002) observation that skilled genre producers employ deliberate creative latitude within generic conventions to meet institution-specific communicative agendas. Move 9 is absent from QAU and UET, perhaps because quotas are not relevant for smaller or engineering-based recruitment, or because of an implicit compliance strategy where quotas are administered post-hoc rather than advertised. From the pedagogical point of view, the results can be exploited in English for Professional Purposes classes to train students and prospective applicants to read recruitment ads strategically. Teachers can design class activities in which students identify required and optional steps, compare application procedures across different universities, and analyse how modal verbs such as “must,” “shall,” and “will” express institutional authority.

Learners can also be asked to critically analyze Move 10 to understand how disclaimers protect institutional power and restrict applicant claims. Such activities would help applicants to become more aware of the ideological and practical functions of recruitment discourse.

### **5.1. Limitations of the study**

This study is confined to five public sector universities in Punjab and Islamabad and does not cover private universities and does it address how applicants actually use these ads. Results are not statistically generalizable. This study is limited to public-sector universities; however, the move structure may vary in private universities, as promotional branding, salary negotiation, institutional marketing, and market-oriented language may be dominant over bureaucratic and HEC-regulated procedural discourse.

### **6. Conclusion**

This study is confined to five public sector universities in Punjab and Islamabad and does not cover private universities and does it address how applicants actually use these ads. Results are not statistically generalizable. This study is limited to public-sector universities; however, the move structure may vary in private universities, as promotional branding, salary negotiation, institutional marketing, and market-oriented language may be dominant over bureaucratic and HEC-regulated discourse. The present study has undertaken the first systematic analysis of the genre of Pakistani university job advertisements. Bhatia's (1993) seven-step model has been applied to a corpus of five advertisements from public-sector HEC-regulated universities. In response to Research Question 1, eleven distinct rhetorical moves were identified, seven of which are obligatory, providing the first evidence for the stable rhetorical architecture of the genre. In relation to Research Question 2, the analysis shows that the genre performs at the same time the informational, regulatory, procedural, promotional and ideological communicative purposes, with different moves performing different functions within the genre's overall communicative design. These findings together support that job advertisements of Pakistani universities are not neutral informational texts but ideological institutional texts which build and reproduce relations of authority between HEC, university administrations and potential academic employees through particular and analyzable linguistic and rhetorical choices. The study contributes to theory, methods and practice. Theoretically, it extends the scholarship of genre analysis to an institutional genre not previously explored in the Pakistani higher education context and shows the analytical productivity of combining Bhatia's (1993) descriptive framework with his (2013) perspective on critical genre analysis. Methodologically, it provides a replicable move-structure template that can be used by future researchers on related Pakistani institutional genres such as government recruitment notices, HEC policy documents, and university administrative circulars. The

findings have practical implications for university administrators, aspiring applicants, HEC policymakers and EPP practitioners. University administrators may produce more professionally consistent recruitment texts, aspiring applicants may navigate the genre's procedural and eligibility discourse, HEC policymakers may assess the textual communication of regulatory requirements and EPP practitioners may develop professional communication curricula for Pakistani higher education. Future research might usefully extend this analysis to private-sector universities, to a diachronic analysis of the shifts in genre conventions in response to HEC regulatory changes, or to a multimodal analysis of the visual and typographic resources through which institutional authority is constructed in Pakistani university job advertisements.

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