

Inquiry Report of the Grievance Committee for complaints against Prof. Muhammad Mohsin Butt

1. Background

The Executive Director of IBA Karachi constituted a Grievance Committee to investigate the following faculty members' complaints against Dr. Muhammad Mohsin Butt, Professor of Marketing Department – SBS.

- Dr. Hilal Anwar Butt, Professor, Department of Finance SBS & Editor IBA *Business Review*
- Dr. Mohsin Sadaqat, Assistant Professor, Department of Finance, SBS
- Dr. Sharjeel Hasnie, Assistant Professor, Department of Accounting and Law, SBS
- Dr. Nasir A. Afghan (Assistant Professor Department of Management SBS & Dr. Mohammad Asad Ilyas (Registrar, IBA)

The reconstituted Grievance Committee as per notification dated March 7, 2023, is:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Dr. Junaid Alam Memon, Professor – SSLA Department | Chairman |
| 2. Dr. Wali Ullah, Professor – Economics Department | Member |
| 3. Dr. Sahar Nadeem, Assistant Professor – SSLA Department | Member |
| 4. Ms. Sara Malkani, Advocate High Court | Member |
| 5. Mr. Moosa Ali, Assistant Manager HR | HR Representative |

The Specific TORs of the Committee were to:

1. Review all relevant documents/reports and responses, and any other documents to determine the facts related to the case.
2. Conduct follow-up interviews with the subject employee, or witnesses as needed to clarify evidence/information disclosed.
3. The Grievance Committee must act to safeguard the rights of the complainant/ accused/ witnesses and all parties connected with the complaint.
4. The proceedings may be recorded with the consent of each party concerned however, given the strict confidentiality requirements ensuring the security and non-disclosure of such recordings shall be the responsibility of the Grievance Committee.
5. Collect additional information regarding disciplinary actions, and the history of the subject employee (if any) from HR or any other relevant department.
6. To determine the timeline associated with the material events related to the case.
7. Finalize the proceedings and establish the proposed recommendations for action within the stipulated timelines.
8. The Grievance Committee must maintain a written record of the procedure it adopts and must issue a comprehensive report of its findings and recommendation with justification and evidence relied upon.

See Main Attachment 1: Pages 1 & 2 for the details.

2. The Complaints:

Except for a part of the complaint by Dr. Sharjeel Hasnie, all complaints directly originate from a LinkedIn Post by Prof. Muhammad Mohsin Butt around a month ago¹. The post seemingly impacted each of the complainants differently as can be deduced from the following excerpts of their complaints:

¹ Linked in posts give tentative timestamps. Therefore, one can roughly guess the actual date of the post. By the time this draft of this report was being finalized, the timestamp on the Linked in Post was 1 month. The LinkedIn post was accessed through following URL: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/muhammad-mohsin-butt-61697b1_management-research-pakistan-activity-7028986131178209281-LKT1/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android

According to **Prof. Hilal Anwar Butt's** complaint, Prof. Mohsin Butt has “severely traumatized, shocked, and mentally disturbed” him by posting “a factually incorrect and malicious post on social media in order to malign and defame IBA and discredit its journal by creating an unnecessary and uncalled for controversy.” Being the Editor of Business Review, Prof. Hilal Butt maintains that “it’s [was] my duty and responsibility to maintain and uphold the repute of our widely recognized journal. I simply highlighted the facts in response to the post with correct issue & serial numbers and the website link (<https://ir.iba.edu.pk/businessreview/vol10/iss2/>), to him and other faculty members in an official and collegial way. I had also advised him and other faculty members to consult the editorial office for any clarification before reaching out to social media and creating bad name and image for IBA. Since that day, he has made my life miserable and singled me out to vent out all his anger and frustration by hurling baseless allegations and contemptuous accusations.”

See Main Attachment 1: Pages 3 & 7 for the details

According to **Dr. Mohsin Sadaqat's** complaint, Prof. Mohsin Butt has damaged his reputation publicly by questioning his appointment at IBA and other aspects of his engagement at IBA on the LinkedIn.

See Main Attachment 1: Pages 8 & 11 for the details

According to **Dr. Sharjeel Hasnie's** email, Prof. Mohsin Butt unnecessarily criticized the hiring of a prospective candidate in the Department of Accounting and Law. He also suspects that “a disgruntled former employee of IBA may have used Prof. Mohsin Butt’s social media post to malign IBA.”

See Main Attachment 1t: Pages 12 & 14 for the details.

According to the joint complaint by **Dr. Nasir Afghan & Dr. Mohammad Asad Ilyas**, Prof. Mohsin Butt “has knowingly & willingly spread misleading and completely insulting information in the most derogatory manner about us on LinkedIn... He has used and linked our names in his LinkedIn post without our approval with something that we never had authority or control in publishing.”

See Main Attachment 1: Pages 14 & 19 for the details

While making these complaints, the complainants have implicitly or explicitly made the following allegations against Prof. Mohsin Butt.

Table 1: Summary of the Allegations of Prof. Mohsin Butt

Allegations	Complainant			
	HA	MS	SH	N&A
- Publicly damage the reputation of employees by pinpointing their names		✓		✓
- Publicly damaging the reputation of the institute and its establishments.	✓			✓
- Questioning colleagues’ integrity in public		✓		
- Non-confirmation of facts before posting factually incorrect information regarding co-workers, the journal, and the institute	✓	✓		✓
- Use of external platforms without first trying in-house arrangements–				✓
- Wipe out social media messages after the damage has already been done		✓		
- Accusing colleagues as if they are conniving and are parts and parcels of allegedly “corrupt” management at IBA.	✓	✓		
- Inappropriate language and an arrogant attitude	✓		✓	✓
- Threatening and intimidating and posing threats to colleagues	✓			
- Creating a sense of restlessness among IBA faculty and staff as any damage to IBA's repute is implicitly damage to their repute.	✓			
- Bullying and Violation of the Code of Conduct.	✓			
- Being misused by a former employee who was fired from institutional services on disciplinary grounds			✓	

3. The Inquiry Process:

Following the initial notification, the committee members started communicating through WhatsApp on February 24, 2023, and decided to ask HR to share all the written complaints. Receiving these complaints

as email attachments on February 27, 2023, the committee members thoroughly reviewed their content and supporting evidence provided by the complainants in the form of screenshots, social media webpage links, audio clips, etc. along with three policies namely:

1. IBA's Code of Business Conduct (IBA-CBC)
2. Grievance Handling & Managing Code of Conduct Violations (GH&MCCV)
3. Conditions of Service for IBA Employees (CSIE)

Based on the initial understanding of the matter in hand by reading the available materials, the member felt that the committee needs to have an HR representative to better align with the GH&MCCV. This was communicated to HR together with some other observations which led to the reconstitution of the committee vide notification dated March 7, 2023, whereby Mr. Moosa Ali, Assistant Manager HR became part of the committee. The committee discussed the following two practical approaches to this inquiry:

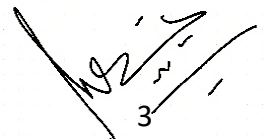
Option 1: Call complainants, obtain any additional evidence that they may have, and get their point of view in a discursive manner. Subsequently, share all complaints with Prof. Mohsin Butt and call him for a hearing to counter the allegations.

Option 2: Call complainants, obtain any additional evidence that they may have, and get their point of view in a discursive manner. Prepare a charge sheet and ask Prof. Mohsin Butt to defend.

The Committee unanimously agreed to take Option 1 as it could give a neutral and more objective stance where the committee would form its opinion only after hearing all parties. Resultantly, all complainants were invited with instructions to bring all their evidence which they mentioned in their complaints but were still not accessible to the committee. Following this, the committee asked Prof. Mohsin Butt to present himself before the committee, giving him sufficient time in between to prepare. With all hearings done, the committee discussed the issue and made its conclusions & recommendation. The draft report was reviewed, factually corrected edited and agreed upon either unanimously or with a dissent note.

4. Timeline:

<i>Event</i>	<i>Timestamp</i>	<i>Source of information</i>
- The controversial issue of IBA Business Review - Vol 10(2) "published"	Late 2015 to early 2016 – Approx.	The institutional memory of a committee member, and a confidential interview with a faculty member engaged in this issue.
- The controversial issue of IBA Business Review - Vol 10(2) "retracted" and "replaced" with another issue of the same number!	Early 2016 – Approx.	As above
- The controversial issue of IBA Business Review - Vol 10(2) came to Prof. Mohsin Butt's notice	At least since October 4, 2021	Internal WhatsApp Group of IBA's Business School provided by Dr. Mohsin Sadaqat (Pages 20-24)
- Dr. Sharjeel Hasnie lodges his first complaint against Prof. Mohsin Butt	27 September 2022	Complaint Email (Pages 12- 14)
- Dr. Sharjeel Hasnie lodges his second complaint against Prof. Mohsin Butt	13 February 2023	Complaint Email (Pages 12-14)
- Dr. Mohsin Sadaqat lodges his complaint against Prof. Mohsin Butt	13 February 2023 & February 16, 2023	Complaint Email (Pages 8-11)
- Dr. Nasir Afghan and Dr. Asad Iliyas lodge a complaint against Prof. Mohsin Butt	16 February 2023	Complaint Email (Pages 14-19)



- Initial Notification of the Committee	February 21, 2023	HR Notification of the same date (Page 01)
- Revised Notification of the Committee	March 7, 2023	HR Notification of the same date (Page 02)
- The committee hearings of all complainants	March 13, 2023	Emails Audio recording of the proceedings
- The committee hearing of Prof. M. Mohsin Butt	March 21, 2023	Emails Audio recording of the proceedings
- Committee Report submitted to HR/ED	March 06, 2023	The report along with all available evidence.

5. IBA's Existing Policy Framework

Key policies that regulate this type of complaint are IBA's Code of Business Conduct (CBC) (*Main Attachment 1: Pages 25-35*) and Grievance Handling & Managing Code of Conduct Violations (GH&MCV) (*Main Attachment 1: Pages 36-48*). The following clauses of these policies have a bearing on looking at these complaints:

IBA's Code of Business Conduct (CBC)

IBA CBC is generally silent on the use of social media but has several clauses that offer insights on dealing with the issue at hand. Excerpts from the following sections of CBC are reproduced below:

2. *Responsibility for the Image of IBA*

- To a large extent, the image of IBA is determined by our actions and by the way each and every one of us presents and conducts himself/herself. Inappropriate behavior on the part of even a single employee can cause the Institute considerable damage.
- Every employee should be concerned with the good reputation of the IBA in all aspects of performing his/her job.
- Every employee must focus on maintaining the good reputation of, and respect for, the Institute.

3. *Honesty and Integrity*

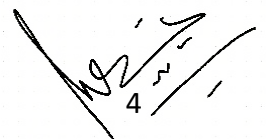
- We respect the personal dignity, privacy, and personal rights of every individual. We tolerate no discrimination and no harassment or offence. We are honest and ethical and stand by our responsibility. These principles shall apply to both internal cooperation and conduct towards external partners.

11. *Information Handling*

- No employee shall be permitted without the consent of his/her superior to make records, databases, recordings or reproductions unless this is done for IBA's business.

13. *Confidentiality*

- Confidentiality must be maintained with regard to internal matters, which have not been made known to the public.



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- The obligation to maintain confidentiality shall extend beyond the termination of the employment relationship.

To ensure that everyone who joins the IBA community understands and adheres to these expectations, the CBC is summarized into a “Declaration” that everyone signs when joining IBA. Like other employees of IBA, Prof. Mohsin Butt has also signed such a declaration (See *Main Attachment 1, Page No. 49*).

Grievance Handling & Managing Code of Conduct Violations (GH&MCV)

All four applications are admissible as Grievances and can be seen in the light of the nature of complaints suggested in Annexure 1 of ***GH&MCV***.

Category B

- h. Using vulgar or obscene language.
- i. Threatening, intimidating, obstructing, and/or harassing other persons; fighting and/or instigating a fight; using verbal, physical, or psychological abuse; or mistreating a supervisor, co-worker, student, citizen, supplier, vendor, or guest.

Category C

- f. Unauthorized disclosure or misuse of records or other business information.
- g. Utterance of publication of malicious statement concerning any employee, supervisor, or the institute, or disparaging statement to the public concerning the Institute’s business.
- n. Violation of any other policy/rules/regulations of IBA.

6. Proceedings of the Committee:

Critical appreciation of the alleged LinkedIn Post Content¹

The edited text of the post reads as follows:

“In a mind-blowing breakthrough research, two management guru's of Pakistan had published seven papers in a single issue of a Pakistani academic journal. Someone informed the CIA, and they sent a seal team to take all the hard and soft copies of that issue. However, the legend is that one copy of the issue survived and is with someone in Pakistan. I am offering a reward of half a million, for anyone who will bring this copy to me. please reshare this post, so that we can get our lost heritage.

#management #research #pakistan #corruption #ibakarachi”

Together with this text, the post has a supporting picture that has some very interesting features which require explicit mention:

- Though the associated picture cannot be readily related to IBA’s *Business Review* journal, it is very clear from the IBA’s logo that it is an IBA publication. Furthermore, from the volume and issue numbers, i.e., “Volume 10 Number 2” any researcher would immediately recognize that it’s the table of content of an academic journal. As the only journal that IBA publishes is *Business Review*, anyone would reach the conclusion that “a Pakistani academic journal” that Prof. Mohsin Butt is referring to in his post, is the *Business Review* and the TOC belongs to its *Volume 10 Number 2*. (See *Main Attachment 2, Particularly Page 3*)
- The picture features seven titles under the main heading of “CASE STUDY” all of which are co-authored by Nasir Afghan and M. Asad Ilyas in that order. This then makes it immediately obvious

that by “two management guru’s of Pakistan”, Prof. Mohsin Butt is referring to Dr. Nasir Afghan and Dr. M. Asad Ilyas.

- If one goes to the webpage of the same volume and number as the *Business Review*², the available material is different from the TOC shared in the LinkedIn post of Prof. Mohsin Butt. This leaves anyone with two possibilities, namely, either the picture shared by Prof. Mohsin Butt is fake or the content of the said volume and number of *Business Review* have been replaced with the new content.
- The picture registers 2015 as the publication year of the said issue of the *Business Review*.
- By 27 March 2023, the LinkedIn post of Mr. Mohsin Butt fetched 130 Reactions, 57 comments, and 13 reposts. Those engaged with the post included people from academia and notably a terminated former employee, and a few faculty members.

Main Attachment 1: Pages 50-66

Deliberations Prof. Mohsin Butt Sadaqat’s Complaint

Dr. Sadaqat’s engagement with Prof. Mohsin Butt through the alleged LinkedIn post was seemingly his own decision. It is important to note that Prof. Butt and Dr. Sadaqat have enjoyed about a year of friendship that started around August 2021 during their stay in the Visiting Faculty Residence of IBA. During this time both, faculty members were frequently discussing various aspects of academic life at IBA, and gradually developed difference of opinion related to that. The two faculty members are no more in any congenial relationship since the Fall 2022. This can be observed from the review of their conversation on the above-mentioned LinkedIn post as well as from the statements they made during the interrogations. Dr. Sadaqat’s entry in this LinkedIn post was through a reply that is reproduced below:

“With all due respect,

Not sure what is the purpose of sharing baseless information? As no one is aware of this. It is really disappointing to see these sort of posts from a senior professor who are supposed to be a role model for young faculty members and students.

A very humble suggestion:

It would be better to finance a deserving student instead of wasting money on such useless things and invest precious time in writing a marketing book / case studies that focus on pakistani context to be taught at local universities.”

This triggered an extended give & take between both faculty members who then started questioning each other’s achievements, appointments, workloads, integrity, ethical standings, etc. on LinkedIn and collectively caused further harm to the public image of IBA. After the initial attack, Dr. Sadaqat can be observed mostly in a defensive position, justifying his appointment, his official assignments, and his publications. At some point, Dr. Sadaqat decided to turn to IBA to lodge a formal complaint against Prof. Butt.

When probed on why he decided to engage with Prof. Mohsin Butt over his LinkedIn post despite their cease talk, Dr. Sadaqat maintained that two papers from his Ph.D. thesis are also published in the *Business Review*, and he is aware of the authenticity of the review process. So, feeling his responsibility to safeguard IBA’s repute, he arguably decided to join the online conversation. By this time, Prof. Hilal Butt, (the editor of *Business Review*) had already responded to Prof. Mohsin Butt by denying the authenticity of the post. Prof. Mohsin Sadaqat further felt encouraged by this as well as his insecurity

² Business Review Volume 10, Issue 2 (2015) July-December 2015
<https://ir.iba.edu.pk/businessreview/vol10/iss2/>

that any harm to the repute of IBA's *Business Review* could also undermine the scientific worth of his own publications in the journal.

The evidence further reveal that seemingly Dr. Sadaqat also knew much before this post that Prof. Mohsin Butt had the printed copy of the controversial issue of *Business Review*. It also seems very likely that both faculty members had already discussed this issue on single or multiple occasions but without any resolution. Dr. Sadaqat should have realized that he had weak grounds therefore the possibility of a successful resolution on LinkedIn was bleak. While Dr. Sadaqat himself agreed that his engagement furthered the damage to IBA's reputation by exposing several administrative issues which were earlier unknown to the public, Dr. Sadaqat still considers that his engagement with Prof. Mohsin Butt's post on LinkedIn was the right action.

When asked from Prof. Mohsin Butt, he maintained that Dr. Sadaqat provoked him despite that they were not talking to each other after enjoying a period in the congenial neighborhood at Visiting Faculty Residence. Prof. Mohsin Butt replied to Prof. Sadaqat but then realized that his response was a little too much, so he removed a post but was again provoked by Dr. Sadaqat saying that he (Prof. Mohsin Butt) was running from the discussion.

Deliberations on Prof. Hilal Anwar Butt's Complaint:

As mentioned earlier, Prof. Hilal Butt serves as editor of the *Business Review* and unlike Dr. Sadaqat, he had a direct stake in the journal's reputation. However, instead of engaging directly by replying to Prof. Mohsin Butt's main LinkedIn post, Prof. Hilal Butt replied to Yousaf Haroon's comment as appended below:

*"Dear Yousaf Haroon, please see the website there is nothing published anything as reported <https://ir.iba.edu.pk/businessreview/vol10/iss2/>
Secondly, no editor ever published any paper in business while he/she is an editor. Just for your information as it is for those who seek truth."*

Prof. Hilal Butt's response was twofold: On one hand, he implicitly denied the existence of the controversial edition of *Business Review* that Prof. Mohsin Butt was talking about, while on the other hand, he was responding to Mr. Mashooque Ali Bhatti's³ comment that editors were also publishing in the journal. Prof. Hilal Butt's reply is also endorsed by Dr. Irum Saba on LinkedIn, who is another senior faculty member of IBA Karachi. (See Attachment Page No. 50-66).

To further defend the image of *Business Review* in the eyes of IBA's faculty, Prof. Hilal Butt drafted an email with a similar stance about the issue along with a request to verify the facts and seek internal arrangements first before approaching outside forums including social media. Unlike his decision about engagement with Prof. Mohsin Butt's LinkedIn post, Prof. Hilal Butt however got the Chief Editor/Executive Director of IBA's approval of the email draft for its circulation in IBA's academic community through their official emails (See Attachment Page 77) and sent an email with a similar stance where he denied the existence of any such issue that Prof. Mohsin Butt was talking about (See Attachment Page No. 66-76).

Prof. Mohsin Butt, who seemingly did not react to Prof. Hilal Butt's LinkedIn reply, however, chose to reply to his official email. In doing so he realized that his email ID lacks group communication privileges. Resultantly, he kept in copy as many faculty members as he could and maintained that:

"As our most liberal and democratic ED has restricted my right to reply all to faculty group⁴, I have to cut and paste as many as I can. In simple words, Prof. Hilal Butt is lying because he

³ Ex-Director HR IBA

⁴ By default, no faculty member has privilege to initiate group communication. It is granted to departmental heads upon request.

has to return favors. I wrote a post to highlight that how dirty is our research culture and how third class is the intellect of people involved in these activities. I have a hard copy with me, in simple words it means the issue was published. If they have retracted it, still does not matter, as all retractions must be available on web. As far as empty threats of Prof. Hilal Butt, I really don't care. Retraction watch has received such empty threats many times a day."

This triggered Prof. Hilal Butt to lodge a formal complaint against Prof. Mohsin Butt. In his complaint besides highlighting the post and its impact on the IBA and its journal the *Business Review*, Prof. Hilal Butt has mentioned the trauma he is going through and the threatening and inappropriate voice notes that Prof. Mohsin Butt sent to his colleagues. A voice note that Prof. Hilal Butt shared as a piece of evidence was later on withdrawn by him along with this allegation and is thereby excluded from consideration.

It is very clear that Prof. Mohsin Butt was not satisfied with Prof. Hilal Butt's explanations according to which the *Business Review* issue that Prof Butt brought forward through his LinkedIn post never existed. When probed with Prof. Hilal Butt, he maintained that the "legal" issue of the said number is the one that he mentioned in his LinkedIn reply and an email sent to the academic community of IBA². However, in response to cross-questions, he ruled out the possibility that the one available to Prof. Mohsin Butt was fake. The committee noted that Prof. Hilal Butt was partially concealing the facts as his responses were inconsistent. He even initially denied that any such issue was on his notice and was constantly trying to avoid giving any definite statement or answer to the related queries.

The committee also inquired from HR, but the department also denied the availability of any record that could clarify the basis of the complaint but provided a partial record that was of little or no help. This consists of a letter that HR wrote to Dr. Tufail Ahmed Qureshi, Editor of the *Business Review* informing him that his job contract has been concluded, and 30th June 2016 will be his last working day. Dr. Qureshi responded to this letter on September 5, 2016, which mostly documents his concern about the future of *Business Review* journal and does not provide any clue if the incidence of 7 publications by same authors was the reason behind his exit (*See Main Attachment 1: Pages 79-81*).

As a last resort, the committee chair talked confidently with some senior faculty members who on the condition of anonymity confirmed that the journal issue shared by Prof. Mohsin Butt once existed but was taken back immediately after its release internally to the faculty member. Reason for retraction was due to the faculty's objection on the authorship and was replaced with the one that Prof. Hilal Butt is referring to. While one senior faculty member revealed that the then-editor of the *Business Review* Dr. Tufail Qureshi was fired due to this, another faculty member categorically denied any such action by the then-IBA Management.

Deliberations on the joint Complaint by Dr. Nasir Afghan and Dr. Asad Ilyas

Dr. Nasir Afghan and Dr. Asad Ilyas had been the direct target of Prof. Mohsin Butt's LinkedIn post. To complainants, Prof. Mohsin Butt has "*knowingly & willingly spread misleading and completely insulting information in the most derogatory manner about us on LinkedIn. He has used and linked our names in his LinkedIn post without our approval.*" Upon inquiry, both complainants confirmed that the *Business Review* issue that Prof. Mohsin Butt shared on LinkedIn once existed featuring all case studies contributed by them, without first seeking any explanation or permission from them. However, when the then management decided to retract the issue some seven years ago, the complainants decided to go with the decision despite their reservations. To them, this was not a case of any scientific misconduct on their part as this pertains to "*something that we never had authority or control over.*"

When inquired, Prof. Mohsin Butt revealed that he smells "something fishy" in this case and despite knowing about the original issue for a year or more, he could gather enough courage to share it on LinkedIn only recently. In response to a query on his intent when highlighting a 7-years old issue in 2023, he maintained it was just a whistleblowing act. As per his statement, by doing this, he wanted to expose the corruption of both faculty members and expose the situation at the *Business Review*. Prof.



Mohsin Butt further revealed that though he thought for a moment to conceal the author's identity in his LinkedIn post, he abandoned the idea considering that his post would be taken as a humor-cum-whistleblowing.

Prof. Mohsin Butt is also of the view that the matter does not fall under the purview of IBA's Code of Business Conduct (CBS) and generally disregard it (CBC) as a tool to control voices against corruption. Though at the time of joining IBA, he signed a declaration that he will follow IBA's CBC and shall avoid harming the repute of IBA and fellows and shall maintain the confidentiality of institute in the matters still not in public, he has generally failed to do that and without any regret.

Deliberations on Dr. Sharjeel Hasnie's Complaint

Dr. Hasnie first sent a complaint to the Executive Director of IBA on 27 September 2022. It was triggered by his feeling of toxicity in the SBS working environment that was allegedly created by Prof. Mohsin Butt via the SBS's internal WhatsApp groups. In this complaint, Dr. Hasnie specifically mentioned an episode of criticism in which Prof. Mohsin Butt was criticizing the recruitment of a potential non-Pakistani academician. In his second complaint dated 13 February 2023 in the same loop, Dr. Hasnie connects Prof. Mohsin Butt's LinkedIn post with the increasing toxicity of the working environment at IBA and calls for management action. In a question by Dr. Zaidi asking if he wants to lodge a formal complaint against Prof. Mohsin Butt, Dr. Hasnie agreed and turned these two emails into a formal complaint to be investigated by the committee.

In a question by the committee member that Dr. Hasnie may have been used against Prof. Mohsin Butt, Dr. Hasnie did not rule out such possibility but did not concern much about it if something good to come out of this. He also seems concerned that the LinkedIn post may have provided a platform for disgruntled former employees of IBA to defame the institute. Dr. Hasnie categorically stated that it had been his general concern about the IBA repute and functioning being negatively influenced by Prof. Mohsin Butt, but he does not have any personal grievance with him.

While the committee noted the concerns raised by Dr. Hasnie, the members had little differences of opinion on the importance of a voice note shared by Dr. Hasnie where Prof. Mohsin Butt can be heard complaining about the potential recruitment of a non-Pakistani academician. While Prof. Junaid and Prof. Wali did not see his concern that Pakistanis should get preference over non-Pakistanis as anything very serious, Dr. Sahar and Ms. Malkani were of the view that discriminating against someone based on nationality, race, gender caste and creed rather than their professional competence is a clear violation of IBA's CBC. All committee members however agreed that the professional competence should get precedence over all other categorizations as prestigious institutions around the world celebrate cultural diversity and generally consider it as good when imagining vibrant academic communities. They all shared the opinion that Prof. Mohsin Butt should have been prudent in his statements and should have avoided discriminatory remarks, comments, and statements in professional matters.

7. The Committee's Findings and Conclusions:

At the outset, it is very important to note that Prof. Mohsin Butt expressed his reservations on the impartiality of the Grievance Committee through multiple emails asking the questions that the committee did not feel competent to answer. Considering this as his right, he was directed by the committee to contact HR in case he had any concerns with the composition of the inquiry committee. Since the committee did not formally hear anything from HR (its notifying authority) on those reservations, the committee chair kept advising Prof. Mohsin Butt (in response to each of his emails) to either present himself before the committee or lodge a formal reservation on the committee composition to the IBA's HR department.


Though Prof. Mohsin Butt ultimately decided to present himself before the committee, he had been constantly engage in influencing the working of the committee by means including but not limited to writing emails to Chairman HEC Pakistan, officials of Sindh HEC and IBA faculty, and approaching

wider faculty community through email and WhatsApp voice messages and LinkedIn textual and video posts to muster broader community support and create pressure on the committee⁵. In one of his correspondence with the Chairman HEC Islamabad and others, he even remarked that he is “*receiving illogical and threatening emails from disciplinary committee head, Dr. Junaid Alam*”. Having heard both sides of arguments, and examining the available evidence, the committee has reached the following main conclusions:

- The controversial issue of *Business Review* that Prof. Muhammad Mohsin Butt shared on LinkedIn was once published but was taken back possibly due to multiple reasons, the major being the one that all seven case studies were authored by two faculty members namely Dr. Nasir Afghan and Dr. Asad Ilyas based on students work (*See Main Attachment 2, particularly Pages 3, 158-160*).
- Prof. Hilal Butt, in his capacity as the editor of *Business Review* rightly realized the need to safeguard the journal’s image. However, he took a faulty approach of outright denial of the existence of 10(2) issue of the *Business Review* that was replaced with the one now available on the journal website. He constantly engaged in concealing the facts but had largely been unsuccessful in this endeavor and as a result, has added damage to the IBA’s and *Business Review*’s repute instead of saving it. Unfortunately, though obtained at a later stage, his stance has the endorsement of the Executive Director IBA/Chief Editor *Business Review* (*See Main Attachment 1, Pages 77*).
- The committee is of the view that Dr. Sadaqat’s engagement was his own decision and the exchange between both faculty members was provocative which furthered the damage to IBA’s reputation initiated by Prof. Mohsin Butt’s post, giving outsiders a bad impression of the state of administrative affairs at IBA. Regardless of the sanity of Prof. Mohsin Butt’s LinkedIn post, Dr. Sadaqat should have avoided engaging on the social media on an issue for which he had no mandate and very limited information. While Prof. Mohsin Butt’s post needs to be condemned, Dr. Mohsin Sadaqat’s engagement and Prof. Hilal Anwar Butts ‘clarification’ should also be taken note of. Their unprepared and arguably unauthorized engagement on the LinkedIn has also contributed to the damage done by the original post and has made the situation even worse.
- Despite what has been noted in the preceding paragraphs, the committee is of the view that this does not make Prof. Mohsin Butt free from being prudent in his language and allegations when communicating with colleagues. His allegations of different faculty members conniving with management in his wrongdoings are based on his fictitious assumptions and partial information. His take on any issues that he has been raising in these complaints lacks objective analysis of the circumstance, context, and the realities of managing an entity as difficult as IBA.
- As it relates to Prof. Mohsin Butt LinkedIn post, he was aware that the issue pertains to 2015 and it was on his notice at least a year before his LinkedIn post. As per his statement, his only inquiry to better understand the matter comprised his posts and exchanges on an SBS WhatsApp group. As per his own statement there he only learned that nothing happened, and the inquiry report went under the carpet. He did not feel it necessary to approach the concerned officials at IBA, *Business Review*, or authors to discuss the issue and suggest any corrective measures. The reason for this as stated by Prof. Mohsin Butt during the inquiry is his dissatisfaction with IBA’s internal procedures that he

⁵ These are the posts made during Inquiry:

1. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/muhammad-mohsin-butt-61697b1_power-universities-publicpolicy-activity-7048611158290800640-7eOk?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
2. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/muhammad-mohsin-butt-61697b1_university-cv-shortlisting-activity-7048924333548658688-VNbj?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
3. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/muhammad-mohsin-butt-61697b1_university-ibakarachi-school-activity-7044898191724449792-xbjD?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
4. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/muhammad-mohsin-butt-61697b1_management-research-pakistan-activity-7042215005919821824-mS4F?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
5. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/muhammad-mohsin-butt-61697b1_witnesss-account-of-harassment-at-iba-activity-7048565450653196288-tfRF?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop
6. Also See Main Attachment 5: a folder that contains the voice and video messages by Prof. Mohsin Butt.



experienced in his housing and salary raise and power harassment issues with the administration (*Main Attachment 4*).

- Prof. Mohsin Butt's LinkedIn post and his statements during the inquiry suggest that he was highlighting only the partial view of the *Business Review* case that could simultaneously defame the institution and his colleagues but could do very little in terms of course correction. He fails to appreciate the fact that the publication was called back and by doing that, it already served the purpose, i.e., "to correct the scientific literature". Under the caption "The Purpose of Retraction", in the COPE Retraction Guideline that Prof. Mohsin Butt frequently refers to, it is stated that, "*The main purpose of retraction is to correct the literature and ensure its integrity rather than to punish the authors.*"
- Prof. Mohsin Butt seemingly also has meager information on the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) Guidelines specifically the COPE's Retraction Guidelines (*See Main Attachment 3, also available online*⁶). As per his statement on his LinkedIn post, internal email, and statements during the interrogation by this committee, Prof. Mohsin Butt maintains there must be academic fraud as COPE guidelines are not followed in their true spirit. Regarding the status of COPE guidelines, he is of the view that these guidelines are binding on all journals in Pakistan by virtue of HEC being one of the signatory members of the COPE. Seemingly, this information is not verifiable and looks more like Prof. Mohsin Butt's fictitious assumption than a reality. The total number of COPE members from Pakistan (as on April 1, 2023) is 44 which include both individual and institutions and this does not enlist HEC or the *Business Review* as the COPE members. The HEC's updated SOP for Journals Policy-2020 however has a single mention of the COPE Guidelines but not in a must-to-follow manner and as a thing of the future⁷.
- The committee noted that the language used by Prof. Mohsin Butt was sarcastic, derogatory, insulting, and charged with intent to harm the reputations of fellow faculty members, namely Dr. Nasir Afghan and Dr. Asad Ilyas, the journal and the institute, in that order. The intent of the post by no means is corrective and guiding. This is a clear violation of the IBA's CBC and needs to be dealt with seriously.
- Having said that, the committee also noted despite the CBC having clear clauses on the public engagement of IBA faculty and staff in matters related to IBA, it is generally unclear on social media and allied issues. The social media has recently emerged as the trickiest issue and should be dealt with explicit policy and global best practices.
- The allegations that Prof. Mohsin Butt may be used by a dispelled former employee, cannot be substantiated. The committee noted that internal matters once reach in the public domains such as LinkedIn are available to everyone for commentary and seemingly this is what that has happened. Though Prof. Mohsin Butt's LinkedIn post may have provided a platform to those having personal grudges against IBA, there is currently no evidence to establish that Prof. Butt did that under the influence of a dispelled former employee.
- The committee could not establish the allegation of threatening co-workers as the only convincing evidence that was available to Prof. Hilal was withdrawn by him concerning that this may create a problem for the person who shared it with him. The committee, therefore, did not consider this further.

⁶ COPE: Retraction Guidelines: <https://publicationethics.org/sites/default/files/retraction-guidelines-cope.pdf>

⁷ According to the Updated SOP for Journals Policy-2020 – Revised, the Collaboration with COPE (Committee on Publishing Ethics) and similar national or international organizations will be developed in order to promote editorial ethics and to infiltrate the global anti-predatory and anti-plagiarism standards in the national research journals. See:

https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/faculty/journals/Documents/Policies/Updated_SOP%20for%20Journals%20Policy-2020%20-%20Revised.pdf#search=JOURNALS%20AND%20PUBLICATIONS%20POLICY

8. Recommendations:


- Prof. Mohsin Butt may be advised to write an unconditional apology in a letter and on his LinkedIn to Dr. Nasir Afghan and Dr. Asad Ilyas for damaging their reputation publicly. This correspondence should be made part of his personal file along other relevant faculty and staff.
- There is no need to write an explicit apology to Prof. Hilal Anwar Butt or Dr. Mohsin Sadaqat as the decision to engage with the post on LinkedIn was their own. However, Dr. Mohsin Butt may be also issued a warning for violating the code of IBA's Business Conduct, particularly with reference to the following clauses: IBA's CBC, Section 2, Section 3, Section 11 & Section 13 and against the charges specified in IBA's GH&MCV policy, particularly Annexure 1 Complaint Categories B(h) and B(i) & the Complaint Category C(f) & C(g). The warning may be made part of personal files.
- The management may consider issuing such a warning letter also to Dr. Mohsin Sadaqat who seemingly engaged with Prof. Mohsin Butt possibly due to his grudges and insecurities in relation to his publications in the *Business Review*. In doing so, Dr. Mohsin Sadaqat also contributed to an overall bad impression of the institute.
- The IBA's top management may consider drafting a Social Media Engagement Policy that regulates the staff and faculty members' social media engagement in matters related to IBA. Instead of setting its staff and faculty free to engage with anyone on social media against or on behalf of the institute on their own, IBA urgently needs to develop protocols along with repercussions in case of their violations that need to be strictly followed in such matters.
- The committee feels that though COPE guidelines may not be binding on the *Business Review*, had those been consulted in determining the strategy to counter Prof. Mohsin Butt's LinkedIn post, the image of the *Business Review*, the associated faculty members, and the institute could have been better safeguarded or even enhanced. The journal administration may be tasked to review its existing policies in the light of guidelines by the COPE and other reputed international entities and best practices to avoid mistakes in handling the future issues arising from them such as the one in hand.

9. **Attachment (Access Require Permission)** Main Attachment 1 - 5 can be accessed through the following URL: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Bzj05aWJPF72DZ36Y1MPaMIwizKwG0Y-?usp=share_link

10. **Confidentiality:** This report should be treated as confidential. Unauthorized sharing is prohibited. It CANNOT be shared privately or publicly in full or part, physically, electronically though any medium including but not limited to mail, email, WhatsApp message, social media post and alike.

11. Signatures

Dr. Wali Ullah
Professor
Economics Department
(Member)



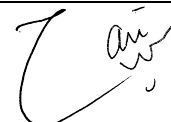
Dr. Sahar Nadeem Hamid
Assistant Professor
SSLA Department
(Member)



Ms. Sara Malkani
Advocate High Court
(Member)

Note: Miss Malkani was willing to endorse by April 14, 2023 but the majority of the committee deemed that too late.

Mr. Moosa Ali
Assistant Manager HR
(HR Representative)



Dr. Junaid Alam Memon
Professor
SSLA Department
(Chairman)