

## **Students' Opinion regarding Higher Education in Developed Countries**

Irum Sajjad Dar<sup>\*</sup>, Muhammad Ahsan ul Haq<sup>\*</sup> & Hussnain Abbas<sup>\*\*</sup>

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### **Abstract**

Foreign study influences students learning and personal growth. The present study explores the reasons and motivation for students to go abroad. A sample of 397 students was selected from the University of the Punjab Lahore Pakistan. To find an association between different variables Chi-square test was used and for the comparison of two groups, Mann-Whitney U test was employed. It was found that 61.7% students were of the view to go abroad for higher studies. Significant association was found between the opinion of getting handsome salary and holding a foreign degree, also between parents' education and students' education. Majority of students wanted to go abroad to seek education from high ranked institutions'. Male and female respondent have a different opinion regarding preference for going abroad for higher studies and males were more interested than females for going abroad. The significant gender difference was also found about the opinion that HEC could achieve goals to maintain the quality of education institutions. Finally, it was concluded that quality education and better career opportunities were the reasons that motivate the majority of the students to go abroad for higher studies.

**Keywords:** Education, study abroad, study motivation, benefits, educational demand

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<sup>\*</sup>College of Statistical & Actuarial Sciences, University of the Punjab Lahore, Pakistan.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Department of Statistics, Govt Degree College Kharian, Gujrat.

## Introduction

Education plays a vital role in the development of stable and civilized society, individuals in grooming their personality which makes the person knowledgeable, competent and skillful. Man is always on a quest to gain knowledge through his sufferings, environment deficiencies or from social interactions. Education is the only source of polishing human's skills. This knowledge gave the human strength to let him move from the wild man; who lives in caves to the present modern man; who flourish his life with technology. So education is the most important aspect of our life, and it can be gained from anywhere, either to get from the native country or from abroad. Knowledge can achieve through various means, but after the man had become civilized, they developed various educational systems to spread knowledge with mental, moral and aesthetic development. It may include subject specific guidelines, entire educational activities which keep human mind up to date with general awareness and latest techniques and advanced knowledge.

Education has enlarged its prospect from home-grown schools to worldwide universities. Formation of the roots of global education become the tendency with developing countries. The number of students who are studying in the foreign countries is increasing internationally due to the unexpected easiness of traveling and economic growth in today's world of globalization. There are some developed countries, as well as some developing countries aggressively involve in the enrollment of international students. According to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2013) more than 4.5 million students enrolled in foreign universities for higher education. Australia, New Zealand, Austria, United Kingdom, and Luxembourg host the largest number of these students. From the Asian perspective, 53% students enrolled worldwide. In the scenario of growing competition among countries is one of the reasons to attract international students. So it is necessary to get the sound understanding of the vital factors which lead the students to study abroad. There are different reasons for students to go and study in developed countries. One might be that the students have the opportunity to study in a foreign country and enjoy the charm and culture of the new land. The important goal of the students who go abroad for higher studies is to get an executive job and handsome salary. Further, family expectations and job prospects are the significant factors influence students to go abroad for studies. In Pakistan, there is a trend that foreign degree holder is preferred in the job as compared to have a national degree. Furthermore, handsome salary packages are offered to a foreign degree holders.

Unfortunately, no Pakistani university is in top 50 universities in the world, according to the 2010 ranking of the Quality Standard World University, there are just two universities in Pakistan which got ranked among universities of the world. In which 11 universities of Pakistan ranked among 1000 universities of the world. Quaid-e-Azam University, University of Karachi, National University of Science and Technology and Institute of Space Technology are among them (Bukhari & Asim, 2013). According to the ranking of Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) in 2014 only three Pakistani universities make a place among 700 world universities and ten universities exist in top 300 Asian universities.

The purpose of the study was to explore students' opinion regarding education in foreign countries. The objectives of the study were;

1. To find out the intentions and ambitions of the students which urge the students to study abroad.
2. To find an association between different socio-demographic characteristics and opinion of students to go abroad for higher studies.
3. To explore any gender differences regarding study abroad.

### **Review of the Literature**

Knowledge has become the most important determinant of the wealth of nations. In the fast changing world, the higher education institutions teach and upgrade the knowledge of the students. Latest technology, more opportunities and resources are vital for higher education but unluckily they lack in developing countries (Bloom, Canning & Chan, 2006). Also, Sánchez, Fornerino and Zhang (2006) find out that there is a strong association between motivations and intentions of the student to study abroad in different developed countries. Similar results are also described by (Kim, 1998; Matthews, Hameister & Hosley, 1998). According to Hungin (2010) the main reasons for study abroad is an attraction to study in new and developed place. He concluded that the students belong to less developed cities and strong financial background has more motivation to study abroad.

In the study of Wiers-Jenssen (2003) students look substantially capable of adapting latest situations, and the majority is very satisfied with their sojourn. Studying abroad is rationally beneficial, and they place much importance on the personal, social and cultural rewards which they gain in the accumulation of professional skills. He took the sample of Norway students who are studying abroad and find out they were more satisfied with their instructive institutions and they put more effort in their studies. The increased level of satisfaction is because of their

strong desire to get education from developed country along with economic, social, academic and cultural factors.

The level of self-motivation and the contentment of the goals of the students are the two most important factors which encourage the students to study abroad. The other factors might be 'preservation' and 'Self-development factor' which reflects the aim of chasing higher education and to get enhanced career opportunities in the foreign countries (Chirkov et al. 2007).

Brain drain usually refers to high skilled people who migrate to other countries to study or to get a job. One of the reasons of the brain drain is that the students from developing countries who came in developed countries for study purpose wanted to stay even after completion of their education and acquire a profession in the developed countries instead of returning to their native countries (Baruch, Budhwar & Khatri, 2007).

In Greece, a study was carried out to investigate career opportunities and locality preferences among medical students. The majority of students (70.3%) were in favor to go abroad. Furthermore, the results revealed lower level education in their home country forced students to go abroad (Avgerinos et al. 2006). Kim (2007) investigates the perception of both undergraduate and master's level students to go abroad for studies. Highest motivation was found in Taiwanese students, and a preferable country was the US. The majority of the female students wanted to go abroad for studying as they consider they have limited resources, opportunities, and reward structure in their hometown.

## **Methodology**

The target population of this survey consists of all the students of the University of the Punjab. The data was obtained from the enrollment list of the year 2013-14 from administration block of the university. A sample of 397 was determined using T. Yamane's formula. In this study stratified sampling was utilized for the purpose of data collection. The twelve faculties were considered as a stratum. The sample was selected from each stratum through proportional allocation. After collecting the data, relationships between different attributes and variables have been tested; conclusions have been drawn about the association and the differences between attributes and variables through hypothesis testing. The Chi-Square distribution was used in an association that assumes the sample to be random; observations are independent and the expected frequencies for each category should be at least five in each cell. The differences between attributes and variables are

tested by Mann-Whitney U test that is a non-parametric test. The test has been utilized for checking the difference between subjects using two levels of an independent variable and scores that are measured on nominal and the ordinal level, and a separate group design comparison of more than two levels respectively.

## Results

The present study consists of 397 students (Male = 243 and Female = 154). The average age of students is 22.5 years.

The majority of the students (i.e. 66.5%) belongs to age category 20-22 years, whereas (69.8%) of the respondents are postgraduates. Only 37% students' fathers' education is graduation and almost 39% students' mothers are illiterate. The average family monthly income of the respondents is Rs 40,000 and student average monthly expenditures are RS 11,000. The information about demographic variables is presented in Table 1.

The majority of students (i.e. 61.7%) wanted to go abroad for higher studies. Out of 397 respondents, 35.5% students consider the quality of education as not up to standard in their native country, whereas (8.8%) of the respondents are very much ambitious to go abroad. Most of the students (i.e. 61.2%) agree with the statement that the foreign universities provide greater opportunities for the students to explore their talent or energies. 65.2% students considered that more resources are available in foreign institutions.

A considerable number of the respondents (i.e. 59.9%) consider western culture is attractive for the Pakistani students whereas 61% students think that the number of students going abroad has increased tremendously in last ten years. The students consider that in Pakistan the foreign degrees holders get handsome salaries. Whereas 44.8% students believe that HEC should enhance the number of scholarships to provide more opportunities to the student to visit abroad. The majority of the students (i.e., 48.4%) agrees that "Higher Education Commission (HEC)" can achieve a goal to maintain quality at the higher educational institutions in our country. To improve the quality of education HEC can perform significant role by enabling the students to acquire advanced studies. Results also indicate that the trend to go abroad for higher studies can be reduced by improving the quality of education and also the environment of study. Most of the students (i.e. 62.9%) strongly agree with the statement that government should establish the foreign type institution in Pakistan so they can get a good quality education in their home country. Further, chi-

square was used to check association between attributes and the results presented in the table-1:

**Table 1**

*Association between categorical variables*

Research Hypothesis	$\chi^2$	p-value
H <sub>1</sub> : There is association between opinion of students wanted to go abroad and quality education of the institution in which they wanted to seek admission.	12.938	0.005**
H <sub>1</sub> : There is association between opinion of students wanted to go abroad and the consideration that handsome salary is offered to foreign degree holders.	56.864	0.000**
H <sub>1</sub> : There is association between opinion of students wanted to go abroad and thinking that western culture attracts the foreign student.	19.894	0.003**
H <sub>1</sub> : There is association between students and their father's qualification.	10.213	0.037*
H <sub>1</sub> : There is association between students and their mother's qualification.	13.886	0.008**
H <sub>1</sub> : There is association between having foreign degree and getting handsome salary.	157.33	0.000**
H <sub>1</sub> : There is Association between wanted to study abroad and the opportunities provided by the foreign universities.	11.263	0.010*
H <sub>1</sub> : There is Association between educational quality of the institution and type of institutions (private/government).	3.901	0.272

\* p-value < 0.05; \*\* p-value < 0.01

The results of Chi-square test indicate that opinion of students wanted to go abroad for higher education is significantly associated with quality of education abroad, handsome salaries offered to the foreign degree holder and opportunities provided by foreign universities. Also, significant association was found between the increasing rate of students going abroad and attraction to the western culture. The opinion that they will return to Pakistan after completion of degree was associated with the view that attractive salary is given to the foreign degree holders. Respondents' qualification was found to be related to parents' education. No significant association was found between the willingness to go abroad and doing the job along with the study.

**Table 2**  
*Results of Mann-Whitney U test grouping variable gender*

Variables	Z	p-value
Satisfied with quality of institutions in which they are studying	-0.960	0.122
want to go abroad	-1.002	0.075
Material provided by foreign institutions is of high standard	-1.124	0.063
Western culture attracts student to go there as an international student	-3.340	0.000**
Foreign degree holder counts more when applying for job	-0.287	0.854
Main reason for going abroad is due to getting employment along with studies carries on	-3.181	0.003**
HEC has achieved goal to maintain quality at higher education institutions	-0.365	0.674
Government should improve work conditions according to the social status of professional	-2.964	0.045*

\* p-value < 0.05; \*\* p-value < 0.01

Results of Mann-Whitney U test indicates that both the male and female students have a similar opinion regarding the quality of institutions in which they are studying, views about studying abroad, higher standard resources provided by foreign institutions, more job opportunities for degree holder and that HEC's achievement in maintaining the quality of higher education institutions. More male students as compared to female students consider western culture as an attraction for the students. Both male and female have different opinions and expectation that government should improve working conditions and provide more opportunities.

## Conclusion

In the present study, we sought out to assess the view of students regarding the preference to study abroad. Findings of the study suggest that the majority of the respondents' belong to age group 20-22 years and majority were males. Most of the students wanted to go abroad for higher studies and they also considered that foreign institutes provide opportunities for the student to explore their talent and the material provided in an international institution for education is of a high standard. Most of the students considered that the quality of education in our country could be enhanced by providing a conducive working environment in educational institutes and by improving the quality of education so that the trend of students to go abroad can be reduced. The majority of students were of the view that HEC should increase the number of scholarships for studying in foreign countries and the government should play its role by establishing high-quality institutes in our country. Whereas, a small

number of students considered that HEC had achieved its goal to maintain quality at the higher educational institutions in our country. A significant association exists between the number of students wanted to go abroad and quality of an institution in which they wanted to seek admission, get handsome salary as a foreign degree holder. The study also indicates that students and parents' education is associated. Finding also suggests that male and female students have the same opinions about the quality of institutions in which they are studying, passion of going abroad for studies, high standard material provided in foreign institutions, foreign degree holder preferred when they apply for a job and HEC can play their role for better quality of education by monitoring the institutes regularly. The opinion of gender was found to be different from the thinking that western culture attracts Pakistani student and to earn with studies.

Finally, it is concluded that quality education, best campus facility and better career opportunities are the reasons that motivate the majority of the students to go abroad for higher studies. By above findings, it can be suggested that student's academic performance can be improved by providing facilities in educational institutions like open access to quality journals, commencement of different seminars and workshops and proper and regular training of the teacher.

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