

## Investigating the Diversified Experiences, Opportunities and Challenges of the Foreign Qualified Faculty after joining back in Public Sector Universities

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### Abstract



*In recent times, the globe has provided countless options for human-created solutions to problems. Developing countries, including Pakistan, have begun to draw on shared national experiences to chart a course forward, notably in the field of education. A broad figure of lecturers of Pakistani educational institution go abroad to improve their knowledge, following in the footsteps of many other emerging countries and get expertise in a multi-cultural context in order to effectively transform their present practices. Many lecturers in Pakistan have obtained degrees from other countries, and this study will look into their experiences and the issues they face when they return home. Semi-structured interviews with foreign qualified academics were conducted to learn about their experiences while abroad and the opportunities/challenges they experienced upon their return. The major findings of the data analysis revealed that faculty experiences in foreign universities were joyful and beneficial in terms of professional growth and general exposure. During their studies, faculty members enjoyed studying through a range of academic activities such as interactive workshops, seminars, and learning programs. The findings, however, suggested that the foreign qualified professors met difficult hurdles upon their return to Pakistan. When people returned to work in their local surroundings, they faced several obstacles such as reverse culture shock and others. It was also seen they accepted challenges to develop their careers by utilizing their overseas experiences to influence positive change and progress in their practices for the benefit of their students. Several recommendations were made in light of the current investigation.*

**Keywords:** Foreign Lecturers, Opportunities, Challenges, Reverse Culture Shock

### Introduction

Faced with the rigorous challenges of higher education worldwide, teachers in public and private higher education institutions have an urgent need to travel to other developed countries and learn. Ask their experience to understand where they have been or where they are the way to achieve excellence. As the world have grown closer, a corpus of common knowledge has been available to everybody in the globe who wishes to benefit from it. As a result, the contemporary world has provided several options to solve educational challenges. Due to the tremendous growth in the use of technology, it is very easy for a country to isolate itself though it does not find a common solution to the difficulties in education. Due to diverse circumstances, all countries have much to learn from each other in different areas of education, such as policies, curricula and teaching techniques. Sharing experiences from diverse cultures allows for new perspectives on educational topics and recognizes additional options. Indeed, people are realizing that education system can increasingly benefit from increased exposure while working on a research and development platform.

Hayden (2017) suggested that many university lecturers are drawn to possibility for abroad study. Studying abroad provides the possibility to see various education systems and to study the methods and solutions used by other nations to face new problems and solve educational concerns. Experience in diverse settings can be very rewarding for who study abroad, and when they return, these instructors can innovate their ways and move the education system forward in constructive and successful ways. However, Joslin (2002) believes that study abroad may only be helpful if two requirements are satisfied. To begin, faculty/staff travelling overseas must be mentally prepared for cultural shock, since they will participate in several activities that are unfamiliar to them. They also require knowledge of the host country's educational systems. These preliminary activities will assist instructors in adjusting to a new culture while overseas. Second, universities in Pakistan must provide possibilities for overseas-trained professionals to return to work and allow them to contribute. Various

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studies, however, have revealed that a considerable proportion of instructors suffer difficulties during and after their study abroad. This study also shows that some teachers have difficulty adapting to foreign cultures while studying abroad, while others have difficulty adapting to educational institutions upon their return (Heckscher, 2011; Archer, 2013).

Because of ease access to all types of amenities, most professors who travel overseas regard their stay in other countries to be particularly fun and rewarding. Many people who lived abroad wished to stay in the nation permanently, but visa limits forced them to return. Education circumstances in other countries might be more appealing at times Coulter and Abney (2009). Many faculty members' experiences show that international exposure improves quality of faculty. Foreign professors tend to add innovation to current procedures, and have a broader understanding of problem solutions. However, when they return, the local working environment provides less opportunity for them to contribute their expertise and experience.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study aims to investigate the potential and obstacles for foreign qualified professors in Pakistan's public sector universities. Essentially, the purpose of this research is to investigate the opportunities and obstacles that overseas certified researchers and instructors face upon their return to their native country. The study looks on two aspects of foreign-trained professors. First, it considers the chances that faculty members have in Pakistan as a result of their overseas exposure. Second, this study tries to identify the problems that foreign-qualified professors encounter when they return to their native country. As a result, the study's primary goal is to investigate the possibilities and obstacles that Foreign Qualified Faculty face upon their return to public sector institutions.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study has the following objectives because of its qualitative design and nature

- (1) To explore the experiences of foreign qualified instructors when studying abroad.
- (2) To seek out the opportunities for returning foreign-qualified faculty personnel.
- (3) To explore the difficulties of foreign qualified faculty experiences after returning

### **Research Questions of the Study**

The study has the following research questions

- (1) What are the experiences of foreign qualified faculty from abroad
- (2) What are the Opportunities for returning foreign-qualified faculty?
- (3) How the foreign qualified faculty experience difficulties when returning to Pakistan.

### **Significance of the Study**

Given the growing number of faculty members studying abroad and the apparent lack of research on the subject, this study can help fill the gap. It is believed that the data will help identify the potential and challenges associated with this new education trend. This research can also point potential prospective students in the right direction if they want to study abroad in hopes of improving their future efforts. As a graduate student at an institution abroad, I recognize the need for research to help students understand the pros and cons of international education so they have a clearer picture of what's come to happen.

### **Review of the Related Literature**

Internationalization of higher education occurs when professors, students, programs, institutions, suppliers, and course materials become transnational. Higher education given by public, commercial, for-profit, and non-profit institutions is included in cross-border education (UNESCO, 2006). Conceptually, education from foreign countries encompasses a wide range of delivery methods, from face-to-face training to distance learning. In general, Pakistan has been welcoming to higher education globalization. As a result, numerous students and staff members have gone overseas to pursue their education. This tendency has accelerated over time. Around 35086 scholars studied in other countries in 2012, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan, China, and Canada. (UNESCO, 2012). As we look at the background of foreign scholarships, HEC foreign scholarship system, 4986 students have been financed for Mphil, PhD, and post-doctoral research through various programs. After finishing their schooling, 2375 of them returned to Pakistan successfully.

The concept of studying abroad has evolved significantly over the past century (Hoffa, 2007; Hoffa & DePaul, 2010). Since 2005, the idea of studying abroad in another country has grown in popularity in Pakistan. Students used to travel to universities to study, but today the notion has been

broadened to enable migration to anywhere in the world. Foreign-trained teachers also benefit from earning a degree and returning with new abilities. Students participate not only in learning but also in research efforts (Lewin, 2009; Savicki, 2008).

According to international studies research, persons who study abroad develop intellectually, emotionally, and know how to behave in various settings. Similarly, Brüggemann et al. (2010) shown foreign qualifications have a significant influence on students since they have access to a variety of chances that are quite useful to them. Gylfason (2000) found that governments in sending nations frequently want to encourage foreign qualifications in order to produce economic advantages, so "boosting economic efficiency and growth over the long haul and controlling inflation, which is also beneficial for growth" (p.176). These innovations increase flexibility while decreasing stiffness This study also demonstrates the presence of Pakistani local professionals have been found to be inflexible, and they are resistant to admitting foreign-qualified faculty members.

Students who study abroad have an excellent opportunity to improve their communication, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities. (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009). Lane and Bird (2012) mentioned that students for globalization and tourism in order to give much-needed foreign experience in democratic societies. Studying abroad might give personal development possibilities that are not available in the student's native country. Franklin (2010). According to the findings of this study, education abroad allows people to develop emotionally, intellectually, economically and morally. As a result, this research looks into the many possibilities and obstacles that foreign qualified faculty face when they return home.

Nevertheless, Di Pietro (2013) believes that there are a number of career options for qualified foreign scholars, with significant employment implications. Previous research encouraged students to study abroad. The survey also revealed that foreign-qualified teachers are more likely to get a job in a short time. Nilsson (2015) Students agree with that reading overseas gives them extra profession prospects, even as college and workforce experience, they have got won new reports and possibilities that could beautify their destiny employment. It is much more likely that overseas education will assist students advantage the cap potential to engage with humans from one of a kind nations and cultures. Bracht et al. (2006). As a result, persons who are more sensitive to differences will be able to readily adjust with experts from varied settings for professional gains.

Foreign-trained teachers face a number of obstacles when they return home, and a number of research have found typical sorts of issues (Gregg & Stoner, Schmidt, 2008). Furthermore, the accessible resources may differ, resulting in a sense of reverse culture shock. Storti, Rossetti, and Salvini (2001) noted that due to reverse culture shock, returning instructors, who consider themselves a minority, are subject to physical and mental stress. As a result, many returning instructors wish to return to their homeland Kostovicova (2003). As a result, there is a need to investigate comparable concerns faced by returning teaching employees in Pakistan as a result of reverse culture shock.

Sancak (2009) discovered that 44% of foreign qualified professors suffered adaptation challenges, 22% had severe adaptation problems, and 32% had no concerns with adjustment. Li & Gasser (2005) found the re-adjustment time for returning professors might be highly unpleasant. Retrained workers must return to their culture and embrace it. It is therefore necessary to provide returning scholars with the necessary support for their reintegration in their host countries Yusliza and Ramayah (2011) Several studies highlight the academic differences the two countries have (Stilianos, 2013; Mutlu, Alacahan & Erdil, 2010). Goodman and Berdan (2013) emphasized that studying abroad should not be considered apart from educational chances in one's native nation. As a result, cultural adjustment plays a critical part in a foreign student's successful completion of a degree. (Nasir, 2011). Therefore there is need to explore foreign qualified faculty can have a good impact on gradually shift in the education system.

### **Research Methodology**

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the potential and problems of foreign qualified faculty. The qualitative interview were chosen appropriate because of the nature of the study (Franklin, 2012). After examining the themes from the appropriate study, the interview was created. Three main areas were selected for investigation: Firstly, the perceptions of the possibility of traveling and studying abroad; second, their views on international education; and third, the opportunities and challenges they face after returning home. Each interview lasted approximately 30

minutes and was scheduled at an agreed time and place. For this study, 20 faculty members from different institutions and departments in the public sector were interviewed.

The interview questions were designed to elicit information about faculty adjustment difficulties in Pakistan. Several academics reviewed an early copy of the interview questions and made minor changes based on expert feedback. The population of study includes all the foreign faculty members working in the public sector universities. Overall, more than 30 foreign faculty were approached. According to the feasibility of qualitative interview and keeping time constraints, the 20 faculty members were made contact and interviewed. All the faculty members were accessed through mutual agreement of time and place. Before the main data collection began, two interviews were conducted as a pilot. The wording and sentences were carefully chosen to cause no difficulties or risks to the participants. All interviews were videotaped with consent from the participants; nevertheless, complete anonymity was maintained, and interviews were identifiable by codes (F1, F2...F20).

### **Findings from Interview Data**

The information was analyzed in the following manner. The recordings were transcribed, and the transcripts were scrutinized for themes. Themes were categorized before being merged to describe the primary results. The transcripts showed the following three main subjects as *Opportunities for faculty, challenges after returning to work in Pakistan, and the perceived gaps*. Each of these sub-themes is discussed one by one in the following sections:

#### **Opportunities in Abroad**

All participants were questioned about their possibilities while overseas. Almost all faculty members were motivated and left with fond recollections of their time in a foreign nation. They took advantage of several chances while overseas, as described by F3: *My time in the United Kingdom was fantastic. I suppose I've had several opportunities to learn from people, culture, the environment, and instructors. Opportunity was a community initiative in which I had previously participated for three years. I worked with students, non-profit groups, and professors.*

Most instructors enjoyed abroad. They actively take part in quite a few instructional activities, have interaction with different global students, and beautify their capabilities and confidence. Almost all instructors speak approximately their productiveness in a global context.

#### **Opportunities in Pakistan when returning Faculty**

The lecturers were asked about the opportunities available to them after returning to Pakistan. The views of the participants varied widely. For example, trainer F3 said: *After enrolling in this university, I was mature enough to grasp today's Pakistani university environment and culture if you have a lot of work experience.* However, a few faculty members stated that they had had such great possibilities since returning to their institution in Pakistan. Typically, F10 grumbled about a lack of amenities. *There was no facility available to me at first. There was no designated seating area, no internet connection. I couldn't find any opportunities to advance professionally.* This was common in that they were dissatisfied with their work environment. Despite their international experience, they were not granted any more possibilities upon their return. While they might seek for advancement, the abilities they had obtained abroad were neither recognized nor applied. There was a noticeable amount of dissatisfaction.

#### **The faculty has been given a job.**

Study participants were asked about their careers after completing a study program with international exposure. According to F5, the majority of faculty members are quite satisfied with the situation when they return to work with a promotion after completing their PhD. in another country.

*Associate Professor, then Full Professor, is the next step.*

Similarly, F10 stated, *I got the job four months after I arrived here.*

Hence, some were promoted to higher ranks. All of this is due to their international exposure, they say. On the other hand, some people don't get promoted and are not satisfied with their current status. Some people are concerned about the work allocation process.

#### **Challenges of job creation in Pakistan**

Foreign teachers were asked about the difficulties they faced when returning to Pakistan. They say they face a number of challenges in Pakistan. All members expressed their dissatisfaction with the researcher. Feeling typical voiceover F10:

*There were several difficulties. The boss's attitude, and seniors, the absence of learning environment amenities, the problem with internet connection, the lack of office space and resources.*

This is due to two major issues: a scarcity of resources and the hierarchical character of academic environments. The respondents were unhappy since their abilities and expertise were not acknowledged due to these challenges in the present school system with little assistance. Senior management sometimes reserved chances for themselves, preventing younger returning employees from taking on additional responsibilities and putting their foreign training to use.

#### **Adjustment with Society is Difficult**

The respondents were questioned about the challenges they faced after returning to work. Many people expressed their dissatisfaction with the re-adjustment process. As a result, interviewee F8 stated:

*The fundamental issue is people's behavior. People in Pakistan dislike creating a learning atmosphere. The locals want to control the entire organization just for their own profit.*

This is a harsh remark, but it reflects the thoughts of the participants. Returning academicians discovered that the Pakistani personnel was reluctant or unable to grasp the foreign qualified workforce. At times, it appears to represent territorial behavior, with entrenched senior staff refusing to relinquish control, feeling uncomfortable in their own standing, and protecting their own position vehemently.

#### **Language as a Difficulty**

Faculty members were asked about linguistic challenges they experienced while studying overseas. This has two components: being able to manage the language while abroad and then returning to the original tongue. As F1 mentioned, studying in Chinese had distinct obstacles. *In terms of terminology, I was in big difficulty. The supervisors did not have a solid command of the English language. The lecturers delivered the course in Chinese, which was quite unpleasant.*

Many of the participants stated that they had difficulty comprehending other people's languages. Some employed translation software, however this frequently resulted in a pause in communication between teachers and students. Some supervisors in other nations appear to be too sensitive. However, as time passed, they acquired the other language and were more comfortable.

#### **Professional improvement**

Participants were questioned about their professional grooming once they returned. Overall, they considered that after returning to their native country, they did not advance professionally. For example, as F1 stated:

*Over here, there is no personal, social, intellectual, or moral grooming. There is no study culture. It appears that those kids do not come to read and study, and that the teachers do not come to educate. I believe I am losing my intellectual capacity.*

Instructors' views on grooming showed that they encountered grooming problems in Pakistan after returning to the United States. There is a small tradition of studying and discussing educational issues together. As a result, the majority of foreign teaching staff feel that they have lost their professional preparation upon arrival.

#### **After-return resource issues**

That university had a plenty of resources. Physical resources include a rich library with 24-hour access. This is an excellent chance for any scholar pursuing a higher education degree. The interviewees were asked about Pakistan's and the relevant foreign country's resources. After returning to their home nation, almost all encountered a tremendous struggle due to a lack of resources. F3, for example, stated:

*In minutes, you can scan, print, and email anything. You should have no problems with your power supply, your computer, or accessing the Internet.*

The participants found that other countries had sufficient academic resources and had adequate resources and facilities during their studies. There is no shortage of books, magazines, libraries, laboratories, and Internet or electricity access. Some get laptops for home use. Parts of the institution remain available for study 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### **Inadequate Research Culture**

When foreign qualified professors were asked about the variations in research culture, they pointed out several contrasts between the two nations. They addressed several elements that distinguish Pakistan from other countries. F1 stated the following about research culture:

*The research culture is deficient. The study culture was quite strong and aligned overseas. There is no research facility in this location. It is a significant disadvantage for a researcher. Here, there is no research culture.*

Overall, they expressed dissatisfaction with Pakistani institutions' research cultures. There are additional amenities available in other countries. Teachers are so preoccupied with teaching and other formal duties that they rarely have time for study. Furthermore, the time demands of heavy documentation have made research harder to execute.

### **Academic structure**

Although participants' perspectives varied greatly, the majority recognized problems in Pakistan's academic framework. F3 said:

*They have a professional objective, follow-ups, mentors, and a structure in place. People here do not adhere to the rules. Foreign universities offer courses to help students improve their ability to discourse, discuss, and argue.*

There are defined processes in wealthy countries. There is a propensity in Pakistan to establish bureaucratic norms, but the systems do not stimulate or enable research. *Scenario in other countries tends to motivate and help students with their studies by providing them with adequate support so that they can develop and progress to complete better quality work. F1 said;*

*Here people compete for titles, but in China, people work for their own pleasure. They are eager to learn and dedicated to their work.*

People in other nations were, indeed, highly punctual. As a result, participants judged immigrants to be extremely dedicated to their jobs and professions.

### **Discussions**

Despite certain problems due to language and culture, the participants' experiences studying abroad were mostly positive. They had received a lot of abilities, exposure, and a solid feel of circumstances, and that they could make significant contributions at their Pakistani colleges. They had gained new talents and abilities, and their time abroad had been tremendously useful in every aspect. The image of learning new talents has already been discussed. (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009). As a result, a foreign qualification is beneficial to the sending country's educational health (Göksan, Uzundurukan, and Keskin, 2009). According to the opinions of others, the foreign study experience appears to foster a willingness to tolerate change among the academics Kitsantas and Meyers (2001).

Working at an academic level in a foreign language is bound to provide challenges. This might have an impact on social relations as well as academic performance. (Sawir and Marginson, 2012). When studying abroad, there will always be cultural pressures. (Szkudlarek, 2010). However, it appears that the respondents handled all of the problems they experienced overseas well. Mastery of international languages, intellectual progress, personal and professional development, intercultural knowledge, and self-awareness have all been cited as common aims of learning abroad. Sutton and Rubin (2004) while the respondents' overseas experiences were generally positive, the most issues tended to arise when they returned to their academic jobs in Pakistan. This is known as reverse cultural shock and has been demonstrated in multiple studies. Studying abroad frequently improves work possibilities in Pakistan (consistent with Di Pietro, 2013) However, complications upon return may cause dissatisfaction. The foreign certified faculty is full of enthusiasm and drive to contribute after their return. However, an unsupportive workplace may cause returning professors to be extremely frustrated. The hierarchical systems at Pakistani institutions appeared to stifle academic independence while also impeding development opportunities.

Study resulted that foreign education brought extra emphasis on agreed goals, and gaining knowledge of stories are cautiously blended to gain the ones goals. Following their development as focused individuals after studying abroad, respondents seem to express great frustration with a system that seems more bureaucratic. Similar results have been reported in other studies (Morshidi, 2008; Yusliza, 2011). Returning teachers lack practical opportunities to discuss their new ideas and experiences with students. The curriculum could be significantly improved if qualified foreign

scholars were allowed to assist (Goodman and Berdan, 2013). Overall, the interviewers had a strong impression that much of their academic and educational richness had been eradicated in Pakistan.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The foreign qualified professors returned with beneficial experiences, according to the study's conclusions. They had obtained a wealth of information and skills while studying abroad. They were visibly unhappy, though, because they were unable to utilize what they had learned to aid pupils in Pakistan. In some ways, they had never truly returned to Pakistan. Resources, particularly research facilities, were insufficient, but they were dissatisfied with the 'school system' in their home countries, which they believe is more concerned with following prescribed processes than with truly enhancing scholarship and research. The investigation revealed the following key findings:

- On a broader level, present university systems in Pakistan appear to be impeding beneficial reform and progress. Allowing a 'education system' to stymie adaptation and progress would not help future students and will standstill higher education development in Pakistan.
- Pakistan's research culture is underdeveloped. Critical thinking and inventiveness were highly valued in other nations, frequently leading to fruitful employment mainly lacking in Pakistan.
- There was more autonomy in foreign experiences, which provides students a feeling of academic independence and better standards.
- Individual effort, individual thought, and the production of new ideas were given far more attention elsewhere.
- Overseas, academic integrity was considerably greater, with the goal of developing scholarship with pupils. In Pakistan, students squander a lot of time and energy on seemingly insignificant chores.

The study recommends that the returning lecturers need the opportunity to put their skills to good use. It may be advantageous for them to make a formal presentation to workers in their respective departments.

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