

Problems Faced by International Students in Private Higher Education Institutions: An Exploratory Study

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The enrollment of international students in higher education institutes (HEI) in Pakistan is increasing nowadays. The purpose of this study was to explore the academic experiences of international students in the natural setting of HEI. Human behaviors are subjective in nature; so this study used interpretative research paradigm to gain insight into the individual education experience in HEI. This study used a qualitative approach to understand the meanings of the student's experiences in their own words. This study adopted convenient sampling to select international students in HEI and used semi-structured interview guide to explore their experiences related to academics, psychological issues, and society. This study used N-Vivo 11 Plus and derived two main themes; first academic challenge and second are psychological issues. The academic challenge consisted of three sub-themes like; academic progress, parent-teacher meetings, and the role of teacher. Similarly, psychological issues constituted on confusion, homesickness, and depression. The results revealed that 75 times students repeated that they were facing many academic obstructions in Pakistan and 56 times they discussed their psychological issues. Moreover, students repeatedly documented that their academic progress had been deteriorated and their grades had been worsened. Moreover, teacher behavior is biased towards international students because of a lack of communication between teachers and parents. Furthermore, international students feel homesickness, depression, and confusion in the absence of their family.

Key Words: academic issues, psychological issues, foreign students, higher education institutes

Foreign students at International universities have always been a source of academic and economic contributions towards their host and sending institutions, for which foreign learners have gained considerable importance in higher education (Knight, 2015; Varghese, 2008). Internationalization of higher education is gaining interest due to various needs of the international communities. Increasing number of universities accepting a higher number of international students each year in universities shows the importance of internationalization education (Altbach, 2004; Mesidor & Sly, 2016).

In Pakistan, Higher education commission (HEC) motivates Pakistani nationals, living abroad, or foreigner students to take admission in higher education institutes of Pakistan. For this HEC has reserved seats for MBBS, BDS, BE/BSC pharm-D on self-finance scheme, for foreign nationals or dual nationality holder Pakistani origin students. Almost 1225 applications have been processed in HEC from foreign national or Pakistani origin foreign students in the field of MBBS, BDS, Pharm D and CS & IT field from the Gulf and around areas. The institution needs a lot of efforts to retain this international applicant (Zakaria, Janjua, & Fida, 2016). Especially in the field of education, students who come from other countries, institutions help them to adjust in host country quickly and plan to reduce their social, behavioural and academic issues (Harvey & Newton, 2004).

From the late 1990s, improved quality of HEI attracts the international students (Shahijan, Rezaei, & Amin, 2016), so the trend

and interest of international students toward Pakistan have increased. The main agenda of HEI is to improve the education quality and provide a friendly social environment to international students, so that they can easily adjust in that particular scenario (Shahijan et al., 2016).

Students need to follow the norms and taboos according to that culture and meet all the expectations of that society. It is very crucial for them to get adjusted in that particular culture and maintain their performance in cross-cultural transition. Therefore, it is need of the hour to address the issues that students are facing at host country while staying for their studies (Oatey & Xiong, 2006; Volet & Ang, 1998)

A lot of studies has been conducted in different countries about the difficulties faced by foreign students while living in the host country, for example, Wu, Garza, and Guzman (2015) explained that foreign students in United State were facing different problems such as language barriers, social issues, and cultural barriers. Whereas Wenhua and Zhe (2013) found that many international students were facing psychological issues, academic issues, sociocultural issues, general living issues, and English language proficiency. Therefore literature emphasized that the main problems are English language proficiency and accommodation type. Above all mentioned issues were discussed in the context of different countries, but the study is still missing in the context of Pakistan. The Pakistani origin international students who are coming to Pakistan for studies are not facing language barriers than what type of difficulties they are facing, is still a point of debate.

This study has been conducted to bridge this gap and explored the problems that international students are facing in Pakistan. Moreover, this study can help to policymakers to improve their decisions for foreign students that they may get more attracted towards getting an education from Pakistan. International students will also contribute values to the internal culture of Pakistan in different ways. Another

study is conducted in America to find problems faced by international students who are studying, living in a different culture and combat the problems of the language barrier and social issues. Barker, Child, Gallois, Jones, and Callan (1991), conducted a research in University of Queensland and explored that international students are facing language barriers during their stay. This is also explored that if institutions will improve their quality of services for foreign students then it will be very beneficial for the institutions and higher education in long run (Biggs, 2011; Niven, 1987). Not only the problems have been identified at different forums but also different solutions are being suggested by the researcher.

Robertson, Line, Jones, and Thomas (2000) conducted a research and investigated the versatility of learning scenario specifically for Australian Universities. Common stressors have been identified for specifically Asian students who are living and getting an education from the United States at different levels (Lin & Yi, 1997). Studies also presented the solution and strategies for the well-being of the students who are coming for education purpose from different corners of the world (Tseng & Newton, 2002).

Most studies are being conducted in the United States and Australia because the overall trend among the student is increasing to complete their master and a postgraduate degree from these countries (Olivas & Li, 2006). Furthermore, Jenkins and Galloway (2009) investigated that difficulties are not only limited to language, adjusting, or academic issues but they are also facing different complications like understanding of culture, communication with faculty and class fellows. As a result, students may suffer isolation, culture shock, financial loss, and lack of proper accommodation for spending their daily life.

As Pakistan is getting fame for higher education in computers, business administration and medical for Gulf and Middle East students, so in the context of Problems faced by foreign students in private higher education institutions of Pakistan is still less researched area. The aim of the study is to provide a guideline to higher education institutions to remove all issues faced by foreign

students, so that they can easily adjust in their relevant fields and they can productively participate in culture and environment.

Method

Research Design

The purpose of this research was to explore the problems faced by international students who are studying in HEI of Lahore, Pakistan. This study used a qualitative approach which is inductive in nature to explore the experiences of the individual international students in their own word. According to Creswell (1998), when the topic needs to be explored and little is known about the phenomenon then the qualitative nature of inquiry is more appropriate. Therefore, to have an in-depth understanding of the problems faced by international students, this study has selected only those students as participants who have spent at least one year in HEI as a student. This study has chosen international students of HEI Lahore because Lahore is a hub of educational activities and 34 out of 57 (total HEI in Punjab) universities are located in Lahore.

Sample

The selected sample is a careful choice consisting of those students whose study period was more than one year. Seven participants were identified as international students who are studying undergraduate and graduate programs in higher education institutes of Lahore. In qualitative research, this sample size is adequate to derive meaningful information (Marshall, 1996). Moreover, convenient sampling was utilized to collect information. Most of the students were from the Middle East and Gulf Areas, for example, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Greece, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain. The detailed demographic profile of the respondent is given in table 1.

Table 1

Demographics of the Participants

Pseudonyms	Length of residence in years	Gender	Major	Age	Country
Farhan	1 Year	Male	Aviation	21 year	Saudi Arabia
Yasir	8 months	Male	B.S	20 Year	Kuwait
Rimsha	7 months	Female	B.S	19 years	Greece
Ali	1.5 year	Male	Mass Com	20 years	Dubai
Abdur Rehman	5 months	Male	Commerce	20 years	Abu Dhabi
Usman	1 year	Male	Computer Science	21 years	Bahrain
Warda	2 months	Female	Medical	20 years	Saudi Arabia

B.S stands for business studies

Instrument

Interview Guide

Interview guide consisted of 12 questions, other than demographic questions, which were used to rank the participant's opinion about their problems while studying in Pakistan, living apart from their families and friends. The interview questions were adapted from the literature (Kousar, Rehman, & Rehman, 2014; Rehman, 2015) and have been used as per the requirement of the study. This study asked 25 questions from each respondent, six questions were related to the demographic profile of the respondent for example name, age gender and country of the respondent etc. Similarly, 8 questions were related

to academic performance like what are your grades during of the students and schedule for parent-teacher meeting etc. 4 questions were asked for behaviour like the behaviour of the teacher, classmates, and relatives toward him etc. Furthermore, 4 questions were asked health of the respondent like how you approach hospital in case of emergency etc. and 3 questions were related to the role of society e.g. what kind of problems you are facing in this society in the absence of your parents.

Procedure

The interview guide was used as a survey method for data collection. Before conducting the interviews, consent was taken from

the interviewee to fulfill ethical consideration. It is a prime duty of a researcher to ensure ethical consideration because ethical consideration is regarded as a vital part of the research process (Becker, Bryman, & Ferguson, 2012). This study signed a consent letter from the participant after providing them with proper guideline regarding different elements of the research. Respondent showed his or her willingness to participate in the research process by returning a signed consent letter. All participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any time and ensured that their data will be destroyed after their withdrawal. Contact number of the researcher were given to all participants so they feel encouraged and contact researcher anytime to discuss their concerns relating to the study. Moreover, this study used pseudo names for the participants to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

There were 34 universities in Lahore and this study used convenient sampling technique to approach the students from different higher education institutes. Face to face semi-structured interview was conducted for this study. Interviews were audio-recorded which were later transcribed. To ensure the validity of interview data, the transcriptions were sent to the participants for checking (member checking) and to guarantee that transcriptions reflect the true interpretation of the participants

Data Analysis

This study used the inductive approach as guided by available literature to analyze the data. Individual interviews were conducted and transcribed accordingly. The analysis is conducted through N-Vivo 11 Plus for coding and thematic analysis. The main themes were behavioural, social and health issues that are originated from a discussion with the participants. The emerging and predefined themes were formulated using N-Vivo 11 Plus. Qualitative research is different from quantitative research where data can be collected formally and informally information can be extracted (Wong, 2008). Earlier it was very difficult and laborious and involved a lot of paper and notecards (Wong, 2008). By using computer software N-Vivo 11 Plus to identify and code the data has made this process more efficient even though the main synthesis, interpretation and coding will be carried by the research (Wong, 2008).

Moreover N-Vivo 11 Plus applied by using coding paradigm which is the inductive approach. Along with this measuring tools in N-Vivo helps the researcher to draw theory from data, and it is not necessary to follow the grounded theory guidelines while using this software (Welsh, 2002). The demographic profile of the respondent is given in table 1.

This study used thematic analysis to analyze the transcribed data because, in qualitative research, it is a popular technique to identifying, analyzing and reporting the patterns that exist in qualitative data (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Although qualitative researchers have some conflict over the process of doing the thematic analysis still it is being considered a flexible tool of analysis that provides rich and detailed insights of complex data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Moreover, it is not necessary for the thematic analysis to adopt a theory; a researcher can utilize this technique in a range of theoretical framework.

Usually, thematic analysis follows six important steps to analyze the transcribed data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). In the first step of the thematic analysis, reading and re-reading of transcripts were done to become familiar with the data. This process enables the researcher to generate initial coding for the interview data in accordance with the interview guide. Interview guide also helps the researcher in

designing the initial coding framework because it has been designed on the basis of the research question, relevant literature and personal experience of the researcher (King, 2004). Moreover, this coding framework helps to manage data into meaningful sections. Coding framework helps to identify the interesting and significant patterns that existed in the data. These patterns are named as preliminary themes. Then researcher reviewed the themes again and again to avoid nonsense themes, overlapping themes and to capture maximum information into themes and sub-themes. Finally, two main themes like Educational Obstruction, Personal psychological Issues were defined. Educational obstruction has three subthemes like, Academic progress, Role of Teacher and Parent Teacher meeting while Personal psychological Issues has three subthemes like, Confusion, Homesickness, and Depression. Moreover, N-Vivo software facilitated in the process of recording, organizing and developing the themes and sub-themes.

Results

Themes and Sub Themes Extracted from Transcripts

Interviews were audio recorded and were later transcribed. Moreover, this study found that international students are facing different challenges in Lahore, Pakistan. Study extracted two main themes along with three sub-themes related to academic difficulties and psychological issues. The frequency of the main themes is given in table 1 while frequencies of sub-themes are reported in table 2 and 3.

Table 2

Main Themes and their Relative Strength

Themes	Frequency	Examples
Academic obstructions	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of problems related to education My parents are not satisfied with my academics Communication problems in academics
Psychological Personal Issues	56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am not comfortable with my roommates I have no social life I feel changes in my behaviour

Table 2 Indicates that 75 times students repeat that they are facing many academic obstructions in Pakistan. They are feeling a problem in achieving the academic goal for which purpose they are living apart from their parents. However, 56 times they discuss their psychological issues like home sickness, behavioural change, relative's behaviour and roommates' coordination problems.

Table 3

Main Theme and Sub Theme and their Relevant Strength

Main Theme: Educational Obstruction			
Pseudo Names	Academic progress	Role of Teacher	Parent-teacher meeting
Farhan	3	0	1
Yasir	2	1	0
Rimsha	0	0	0
Ali	1	3	1

Abdur Rehman	2	2	0
Usman	0	1	2
Warda	1	0	1
Total	9	7	5
Main Theme: Psychological Issues			
Pseudo Names	Confusion	Homesickness	Depression
Farhan	1	1	0
Yasir	3	1	0
Rimsha	2	0	1
Ali	1	2	1
Abdur Rehman	1	2	2
Usman	2	1	1
Warda	1	1	1
Total	11	8	6

Table 3 gives detailed information regarding sub-themes and their relevant strength. 9 times students reported that their academic performance is declining. They reported that due to the adjustment problem they are unable to focus on their studies. 7 times students articulated that their teacher is neglecting them and are not giving them proper guidance related to academics. Moreover, 5-time students documented that due to lack of frequent visit of their parent in Pakistan, they can't convey their academic issues effectively to the teachers and to the institutions.

Moreover, 11 times students repeated that dual face of the society and their relative behaviour make them confuse and that become unable to understand them. 8 times students stated that they feel homesickness while studying in Pakistan and 6 times they reported that they feel depression during their stay in Pakistan.

Educational Obstruction

Participants discussed detail about issues which they are facing while studying away from their home countries. All participants reported that although they have faced the problems initially but with the passage of time when they get familiar with the culture and environment of their related universities and it became easy for them to get an education with a friendly manner. At the same time, students reported that still there are some issues that are unsettled and are creating disturbance in their lives.

"Yes, I faced a lot of academic problems like understanding the teaching style of teachers, management of the institute and culture of the classroom" (Farhan).

"The syllabus and semester system disturbed me. It took a lot of time to understand new assignments, new teachers and new subjects." (Warda)

According to the participants, they are experiencing different issues as nobody is watching them critically about the progress of education, and they are wholly responsible for their actions. The details of discussion along with quotes of the participants are given below.

Academic progress. Foreign students report that they were used to live their family in their home countries where parents and siblings are very caring and keen about their needs and keeping eye

on their study and attained grades as well. While living alone in another country where the family is away, then it is difficult to organize your own routine and especially academic progress (Friend & Bursuck, 2002). Most of the students articulate that they were more focused on studies while living with parents, but their academic progress graph went down while living away from their families.

"I am living in KSA with my family for fifteen years; my parents migrated to KSA from Pakistan as they got the opportunity for better earning. I used to live with my family where my mother is very caring and concern about my academic record while studying in school, and then my parents took the decision to send me Pakistan for higher education in Aviation because I wanted to study only in Aviation. Now I found that my academic progress is not as good as I earned while studying with living with my parents and family." (Mr Farhan)

"Being elder child of my parents I was very pampered and dependent on family but as I came to Pakistan for higher studies, initially it was very critical for me to focus on my studies as I was busy to settle down my other things, like accommodation of own choice, choosing friends of my type and eating habits etc. so somehow my grades sacrifices to establish in new culture and society." (Mr. Abdur Rehman)

Role of a teacher. Role of teacher is very important while achieving goals in higher education. The role of the teacher in student life should be stable especially for those students who are getting an education from and came from another country for study purpose as they need more care as compared to native students. International students are more sensitive about the behaviour and style of talking of teachers. So teachers are playing an important role in the grooming of the students. Sometimes faculty need to strict and take serious actions for the students who are not serious towards their studies.

"I have a very good relation with my classmates and teachers. In my student life, the role of the teacher is vital as in my college life, if a teacher used to say that I can do this task then to prove myself I did every possibility but if the teacher is unhappy and rude then I used to be with the cold response with that teacher." (Mr. Usman)

"My parents only willing to send me to Pakistan because of the nice behaviour of teachers, they are very supportive and regard of the students who are coming from abroad. This is the culture of Pakistan private institutes that students are treated with special care. I am very satisfied with the role of teachers in my educational life." (Miss Rimsha)

Parent teacher meeting. Parent-teacher meeting is considered an important element for the academic progress of students. If frequent meetings establish between parents and teachers happened even at higher education level then the progress of students can be vivid (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Moreover, parents are more aware of the goals and targets of their children and can play an important role to achieve that target. Parents who use to meet often to teachers get more fruitful results about their children to progress as a teacher can get awareness as well about the capacity of parents in playing a role for children growth (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

"I am always afraid of parent Teacher meeting because after every meeting since my childhood level it created a troublesome situation for me. So now I am studying at university level I always try to avoid the meeting of my Parents and teacher. I used to speak lie with my parents in this regard, I said to them that teachers can only meet Parents on Saturday whereas Saturday is off day to teachers. So this is how my parents cannot inquire about my education progress from

my teachers as they had a flight immediately after that Saturday.” (Mr. Ali)

Personal Psychological Issues

When a student is living a life away from his or her family, then they may suffer from many problems but at the same time, major issues they may experience are personal psychological issues. The international students shared their psychological issues while living away from their families Homesickness, loneliness, stress, depression, frustration, loss of status or identity, anxiety, confusion, etc. (see Table 3). The detail on emerging theme is given below.

Homesickness, depression, and confusion about relative's behaviour with and without Parents are explored as emerging themes while discussing with students by living alone in another country for study purpose and they derived them to some psychological issues.

When the foreign students` were inquired about their overall experience about getting higher education in Pakistan, then they discussed different experiences, they got while studying. They said their experiences vary from situation to situation. Some of the excerpts regarding overall experience about their education in another country are given below:

Confusion. The students reported to be in a state of confusion regarding their settlement and attitude of relatives.

“Although I have the wonderful experience of getting an education in Pakistan but still I am facing some problems regarding settlement, and understanding of culture and behaviour of Pakistani people.” (Warda)

“This is what my parents dreamt about to getting an education from Pakistan, as Pakistan is their home country and they are sure about my security and living easily in Pakistan as compare to any other European country or somewhere else in the world.”(Mr.Usman)

“The major psychological issues arise in my life when I observed dual faces of my relatives, their behaviour and protocols were entirely different with me when I was with my parents to that phase

when my parents were not with me.” (Mr. Abdur Rehman, Mr.Usman, Mr.Ali)

Homesickness. Homesickness is the agony usually those students feel who live without their parents in another country. It is a phase in which students` cannot concentrate on their studies appropriately and feeling homesickness when they live separately from their family. For this different symptoms have been observed among international students who came to Pakistan for study purpose. Indeed, nearly all people miss something about home when they are away, making homesickness a nearly universal experience. However, intense homesickness can be painful and debilitating.

“It was very difficult for me to stay and study alone but for the higher education, my parents and elder siblings forced me to get an education from Pakistan. So after spending one semester, I become familiar with friends, teachers, and society but during one semester I faced some psychological issues which I overcame with the help of my best friends and teachers.” (Miss Rimsha)

Depression. There are many challenges which international students are facing especially living away from their families because they are not that much responsible while living with their family. So it is not surprising if they are passing from any depression, psychological issues or adjustment problems in a new country (Bochner, Furnham, & Ward, 2001).

These relatively short-term visitors to a new culture (or sojourners), who come for purposes other than permanent settlement, are likely to experience ‘culture shock’ (Oberg, 1960) resulting from the sudden loss of all familiar signs and symbols of everyday life, with consequent psychological stress and use of coping strategies to deal with the stresses encountered.

“Initially I was excited to visit a new country, will meet new people but as I spent a little time it becomes difficult for me. As I had to manage all expenses like, electricity charges, house rent, cook, and other daily routine matters, I feel self-pity while managing cash for above all given expenses as it becomes difficult for me to handle.”(Mr. Farhan)

The complete distribution of themes, subthemes and coding is given in table 4.

Table 4
Main Themes, Subthemes and Coding

Main Themes	Sub. Themes	Qs.	Coding
1 Educational obstruction	1.1 Academic progress	d	dE1.1: Yes! I took a lot of time to adjust to a university atmosphere and create a lot of academic problems for me. The university life is very different from my life so it was quite difficult to adjust.
		f	dC1.1: Yes, I faced a lot of problems while living alone in Pakistan; I have to manage the things on my own guts and skills so I started to encounter them in my best possible way. My mother is not satisfied with my academic performance. fA1.1: Parents are not satisfied with my performance and especially my sister and brother who took the decision for me. They are saying to increase your CGPA from 3.
		e	fC1.1: Now I am familiar with my routine but my parents are dissatisfied with my studies and daily routine. So they use to give me a lot of instructions and keep inquiring about my daily things eB1.2: My parents never visited, I visit them twice a year for visa processing, and otherwise one visit is enough. My Father visited but on purpose I never allowed my parents to visit university because of the fear of teacher's complaints regarding my academic performance. First I decided to go to Germany for education, but people not guided us properly then my brother suggested me to study Pakistan.
	1.2 Parent-teacher meeting		

2. Personal Psychological issues	1.3	ROT	i	eE1.2: Yes my parents visit university twice a year for checking my education performance and my behaviour with teachers. iA1.3: The teaching environment is different in Gulf as compare to Pakistan, so initially I feel a lot of problems to understand the lecture of class teachers. The teacher did not try to facilitate and to understand my problem.
	2.1	Con.	r	rA2.1: Feeling without parents is just like living a dead life because the main cause of your joy and happiness is with them without them your just running life and spending your time period if you're out of the country for education purpose. Every day a new challenge, especially for a girl, a is difficult.
	2.2	HS	m	mA2.2: Yes many health issues arise while living alone makes you feel more when there is no family member with you when you want them to be with you during your fever or any other health problems.
	2.3	Dep.	i	iB2.3: My communication style is positive and decent with my teachers without parents I learnt many things, understanding people changing some of my habits and get ready for every day new challenge of life.
			i	iE2.3: Behavior is changed a lot, I become more daring and mature. With family, restrictions are applied but now are the only restriction that does whatever you want but in a positive sense.

ROT stands for the role of teacher, Con. Indicates confusion, Dep. Is used for depression and HS has been used for homesickness. small alphabets indicate interview questions and capital alphabets are used for respondents.

This section presents the findings and it indicated that international students faced different academic challenges and psychological issues. Finding of this study indicated that class environment and cultural differences create personal and academic challenges to the international students, so they became average performing or below average performing students. Moreover, the study found that new academic ways, teacher's teaching methodologies become a substantial challenge in the life of international students. International students find it difficult to accommodate new academic format and methodologies which ultimately affect their academic performance and learning abilities. Furthermore, in some cases, it has been found that in the absence of the parents, the student becomes confused and it will also obstruct their potential to collaborate information with their instructors, peers, and teachers.

Discussion

The goal of this study is to explore the problems that international students are facing in Pakistan while studying in HEIs. The results indicate that although Pakistan is their parent's country they were born and completed their schooling abroad, so they feel Pakistan, a totally new country. Moreover, in a new academic culture, sometimes they feel isolated that causes physical and emotional discomforts to the students. New atmosphere, lonely feelings and homesickness disturb their sleep patterns and reduce learning abilities (Lee, Farruggia, & Brown, 2013). Moreover, the students from Gulf countries bring a passive learning experience with them. In Gulf countries students sit in the classrooms quietly and listen to their teacher carefully, they are not supposed to argue with their teacher, so they lack in individual and critical thinking (Lee et al., 2013). However, in HEI s teachers are more concerned about student class participation thus to ensure the class participation, the teacher gives a class assignment and academic tasks in groups. Moreover, international student unfamiliar with this method of teaching and they are accustomed to expect more guidance and help from teachers, so they became unable to perform 100% during class discussion

(McClure, 2007). Resultantly, their academic grades deteriorate and it generates a bad word of mouth that raises the hurdle to attract more international students. No doubt adjusting university life is difficult for foreign students but university management and HEI policies should help them to adjust positively if Pakistan wants to generate remittance from international students. Moreover, institutions and HEI equipped the foreign students with new learning technique to maximize their academic performance. Academic performance of the international students is the first priority for the parents, who are living away from their children.

In literature, there is a consensus that international students face a problem, but the discrepancies exist in the nature of problems. For example, Li and Kaye (1998), and Wenhua et al. (2013), concluded that academic performance is a dominant problem among all the problems that international students faced. However, Robertson et al. (2000) concluded that language and culture are important problems. Some studies reported that financial (Galloway & Jenkins, 2009), loneliness (Mori, 2000) and homesickness (Zhang & Dixon, 2003) are the most common problems that international students are facing.

Implications

This study will help policymakers of higher education institutions that they should design some policies or create awareness among teachers that they should remain unbiased to international students. As foreign students are living without their family they may have to face more burdens to do the home task as compared to local students.

It is also suggested for higher education institutes that they must have a counseling office for international students. In that office, international students can get counseling of their issues which they are facing while living in that country, like homesickness, depression and adjusting in the local culture quickly from the advice of professional psychologists.

Limitations

This study was backed up by data from international students on different issues across the university. Such data sources allowed the researcher to view different academic and psychological issues from student perspectives, thus gaining a deeper insight. One of its

limitations is that this study used the homogeneous sample, all the international students belong to Gulf countries, this is true in many other studies (Gill, 2007). However, a homogenous sample has restricted the generalizability of the results. Moreover, this study collected the data from the students of HEIs of Lahore Pakistan, that ultimately narrows the scope of my study. But the results of the study may be more generalizable if this study is applied at the country level.

Conclusion

This qualitative research is conducted to explore the problems faced by international students which are academic, social and cultural issues. To discover this area interview was taken from different students belong to different countries. This study found that international students in Pakistan are facing some difficulties while they are getting a higher education here. But at the same time, these students find different ways to solve these problems. They become wiser and take a serious decision, as they are living away from their parents. This research will help policymakers to redesign some customized policies for international students that will help them to adjust quickly and they can put their efforts on the productive side. Universities themselves need to focus on the issues and adjust their international students in a good manner that it also helps for the goodwill of the country and nation in around the world.

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